

Advance Course in Social Psychology

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Lecture 42: Group Leadership- Part I

Hello friends, welcome back. Today I am going to start a new module titled group leadership. As the term implies I will talk about meaning, definition and different styles of leadership and some contingency theories of leadership which forms the basis of group behavior or group leadership based on understanding the individuals and the situation. Before getting into the details of this module, let us first define that what is leadership or group leadership. So, when we talk about leadership there is another aspect to discuss about this component there is another element that is influence which entails that any person who is influential can also lead the group in a particular direction. So, a person who has some formal authority to influence the members of the organization and lead in a particular direction then that person is also known as a leader.

So, a leader must have a power or authority to influence the members of the organization towards a common goal. The defining leadership entails that the individual possessing the greatest amount of formal authority is also the most influential that is what obvious the high the topmost authority has some power to make to get the things done in a very formalized fashion and that is an influence that is been created on other employees and in that influence is lasting in a way that the members are being directed to perform or get the things done in a particular manner. So, when we identify any person who exercises that authority in form of influence then that person in any group is known as a leader. Therefore, a leader is an individual within a group or an organization who wields the most influence over others.

A leader has maximum influence on the members may be the members do not have that influence on each other, but a leader who has some authority formal authority and can influence the members that person is identified that member is identified as a leader. Therefore, it is a process where individual influences other group members towards the attainment of defined group and organizational goal and this process is known as leadership. It is a process you influence you interact you tend to maintain relationships with the members and you try to influence in a way that members tend to agree with you to work in a particular direction. This entails the process of leadership. Thus, group leader is the process of providing focus and direction to a specific group of people.

According to James Gribbon it is a definition given by James Gribbon that leadership is a process of influence on a group in a particular situation at a given point of time and under a specific set of circumstances that stimulates people to strive willingly to attain organizational objectives and give them experience in helping attain the common objectives with satisfaction and the leadership involved. Now, a leader is an individual who can identify the situation and can create an alignment between situation and the members and the common goal. Then a leader can create an environment where members are motivated resources are being used effectively and to the maximum which makes the process of leadership successful because a specific leadership style has been used as per the situation and has been implemented on the organizational members to attain a specific goal. When there is alignment among all these elements then members are also motivated and they are also willing to contribute to the common task. This is leadership or process of leadership.

It involves facilitating and guiding the actions of group participants as well as accepting responsibility for the outcome of the group's efforts. It is not only leader but the members both share the responsibility of the outcome of the group efforts. So, this is the definition of leadership. Next is that what are the features of leadership? It is a process of influencing the behavior of the followers because the leader has some authority to guide and direct members. It involves interaction between leader and the follower the more interaction is there more direction is given to the members to achieve the goal.

It implies pursuit of common goals in interest of individual as well as the group as a whole and leadership is related to a situation. As I mentioned just now that when a leader identifies the situation a leader identifies what kind of leadership or guiding is required in a particular situation then employees are also motivated and willing to contribute to the group goal. So, when all these features are aligned all together then leadership is effective and successful in attaining the goal. These are the characters that a leader possesses the first is drive that is there is motivation and drive for achievement high energy is there, tenacity and sense of initiative is there. A leader is honest and full of integrity that means the leader is trustworthy, reliable and open to new ideas.

There is coordination within leader a sense of coordination which entails that the leader reconciles all the common objectives and interest of the organizational members and tend to represent to the higher authorities and also makes efforts to resolve the internal conflicts within the group and creates a community of interest within the group itself. That is reconciling the conflicts and creating a community of interest where members have common interest. Self confidence the leader believes in himself trust himself with his abilities and foster mutual understanding and team work. The leader has control the leader involves himself in managing the internal conflicts while working with minimum disruption and maximum effectiveness. The leader understands the conflicts resolve the conflicts and at the same time control members to reduce the conflict for maximum effectiveness and minimum disruptions.

The leader has knowledge of the business and all the technical matters if the leader is not having complete knowledge of the situation and the task it becomes difficult for the leader to execute the ability to lead people in a particular direction. There is creativity within the leader it is not only that the leader is open to the opinions and ideas of the other group members he himself has the ability to be original and innovative in his own ideas so that the group goal can be achieved. When leader also comes up with his own idea and innovation and creativity immediately the group goal also gets some direction and most importantly representation the leader has the ability to act as a personal embodiment of the group and defends the integrity of the group by reconciling the different viewpoints of group members. Representation here means that to the higher authorities it is not only that the leader is just reconciling the internal conflicts of the group but also the leader takes forward the interest of the group members and express the different opinions of the group members they have to come to a common judgment or opinion. So, these characteristics when possessed by a leader then the leader is supposed to be a great leader or a successful leader.

Now the traits which I am talking about they are in general that what a leader should have in it any type of leader be it autocratic or democratic the leader must have all these kind of traits but social scientists have also identified some other traits beyond these characteristics. The first is leadership motivation the other is focus in morality and multiple domains of intelligence. These are the robust elements of leadership contents. The first is leadership motivation the desire to influence others to reach shared goal this is the common objective of any leader that I want my group to lead in a particular direction for the common goal but at the same time every leadership have two different motivations. The first is personalized power motivation and socialized power motivation personalized power motivation where leaders who demonstrate such motivation dominate others and have a desire to do so often reflected in an excessive concern with status.

The leader is more concerned with the state with his own status that to what extent I am able to get the job done irrespective what other members have to do or want to say. The leader is not concerned with that aspect but he is more concerned about his own status that how the task has to be performed which can enhance his own status. This is personalized power motivation where the leader is more dominating whereas in socialized power motivation when leader seek power as a means to achieve desired and shared goals. Leaders cooperate with them develop networks and coalitions and generally work with subordinates. Here it is about creating a relationship between the leader and the member and the members also reciprocate in form of coalitions cooperation and generally working with subordinates.

So, the leader and the members complement each other they are more concerned the leader is more concerned with the subordinates or with the members not totally with himself. Needless to say socialized power motivation is far more adaptive for organization than the personalized power motivation where there is no domination. The other is focus on morality it talks about the authentic leadership authentic which is very much moral based on morality which is very much based on ethicality. So, this emphasis has meaning with authentic leadership this kind

of trait or characteristics talks about authentic leaders who are highly moral they are confident hopeful optimistic and resilient and they are aware of the context in which they operate. That means a leader who has morality understand the situation in true sense that what is being expected from the leader and from the members in a particular situation.

If the leader understand the situation well then the leader can also understand the group members very well that how that alignment or coordination can be created between situation and the members. So, the high because of the higher positive perspectives authentic leaders play a key role in promoting personal growth and development of the subordinates and leads to sustained performance of their organizations. So, under such kind of leadership trait member the leader tries to transform employees not only as hopeful and honest and highly moral, but most importantly optimistic and resilient to what extent members have that capacity to bounce back from adversity and then perform effectively this is focus on morality. That is transforming members and grow personally and the other is multiple domains of intelligence social scientists have acknowledged that leaders need to demonstrate multiple domains of intelligence in the form of cognitive intelligence which entails intellectual competence that the leader must understand and integrate and interpret a large amount of information and the situation. Understand the situation and what kind of information can be collected and interpreted to lead the group in the right direction.

The leaders must be capable to integrate and interpret a large amount of information that is the intellectual competence which plays a salient role in achieving the organizational goals. Emotional intelligence as the term implies that the leader must have the ability to understand the emotions about other members of the group and function accordingly. There can be situation in any organization when any member of the group may have is emotionally upset or distressed and how that immediate response or reaction of the employees can disrupt the functioning of the group. Under such circumstances how the leader can handle that person who is going through emotional distress can help the group to sustain and individually personally help that member to overcome his emotional problems. This demonstrates the ability of the leader to connect with the members and the other is cultural intelligence the ability of a leader to be aware of the cultural differences between people and people and operate with different approaches to leadership in different countries.

For example, whenever any member of the group has been transferred from one country to another it is natural that any employee will experience cultural shock or he or she may be ostracized when members find lot of difficulty to adjust with the new employee. Under such circumstances members do experience loss of self-esteem or self-worth at workplaces and there the role of leadership or leader plays very important to help those employees or members to overcome or enhance their self-esteem and adjust with new places irrespective of geographical locations. So multiple domains of leadership includes cognitive, emotional and cultural intelligence. Next comes leadership styles. The behavioral pattern that a leader adopts is known as a style of leadership based on the situation.

Therefore, OB professionals have identified three leadership styles, autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership styles and laissez faire or free rein leadership style. I will first talk about autocratic leadership. It is also known as authoritarian leadership. This kind of leadership is characterized who makes all the decisions unilaterally. Unilaterally here means that the leader will not consult the other members, he will take all the decisions on his own.

He will not consult the members while formulating any policy and procedure, he will just implement those policies and procedures. So the leader adopting an autocratic leadership style does not give freedom to its members to influence their thinking, decisions or behavior. In other words, the members are inhibited to voice their own opinion, their ideas and the creativity is being curbed. So it tends to create highly structured and rigid work environment where members are not free to work on their own terms and conditions. The directors are very strong and straight forward.

It is an order from autocratic leader. This is the criteria or characteristics of any autocratic leadership style. But at the same time, every leadership style has its own benefits and drawbacks. The benefits of autocratic leadership style is that it is useful when employee is new on the job and he has no experience in performing the job. Under such circumstances, the new member can take all the directives from the autocratic leader and perform the job and learn the ropes of the job.

What are the nitty-gritties and nags to understand the job and how it should be performed. So under clear directives and supervision, the member can learn to perform the job effectively. It increases efficiency and gets quicker results especially in a crisis or emergency when a decision must be taken immediately. Under such circumstances, the management can go haywire in a state of crisis or emergency and it is only autocratic leader who can take a straight forward decision under the state of emergency or crisis and the decision can be implemented to control the situation. It is also useful when employees are not interested in taking responsibility and perform better under clear and detailed directives.

For example, it can identify the sense of diffusion of responsibility when members tend to shift, shed their responsibility on to others and the group performance goes down. Under such circumstances, it is only autocratic leadership style where a leader can allot, assign any roles specific to any person and the group can be functional in a very smooth manner. These are the benefits of autocratic leadership style. The drawbacks are that it discourages group input, the members are not allowed to voice their opinions, thinking or ideas. It mars employee motivation, morale and productivity.

Sometimes members experience lot of pressure from the leader and it reduces the level of motivation and morale and the productivity goes down. Also there is increased turnover in tension. And last ignores or impairs creative solutions and expertise from subordinates. When

there is no intake of opinion from subordinates, then there is a limit to make the group highly creative and innovative because it is only leader who is putting up his ideas forward and implementing it. Then this also creates a point of saturation and when members are not allowed to share their opinions, then their creativity is also inhibited.

So, these are the benefits and drawbacks of autocratic leadership style. The other is democratic leadership or is also known as participative leadership or shared leadership. As the term implies, this is a leadership style in which members of the group participate in the decision making process. Members have full freedom to voice their opinions, share their ideas, their vision and in decision making process, they have increased decision making latitudes. Every member has the opportunity to participate and exchange their ideas.

They while this process, this process tends to focus on group equality and free flow of ideas and the democratic leader is still there to offer guidance and control. Control is there, but at the same time, same degree of freedom is also being given to the members to voice their opinion, share their ideas, goals and mission and make the performance effective. They encourage collaboration, engagement and creativity. This is one of the most effective type of leadership which leads to higher productivity, better contribution and increased group morale where there is free flow of information, members are free, environment is free in form of interaction and communication. The benefits, there are more ideas and creative solutions to the problems.

Group members are committed to change, they accept change very easily because when their opinions are been accepted, their ideas are been accepted. Then they also reciprocate to the organization or to the leader in a similar fashion. There is high productivity and satisfaction and there is increased morale and fosters confidence, cooperation and loyalty. And the drawbacks are that there are communication failures since members are voicing their own opinions, they are free to participate in decision making process. Then sometimes there are communication lapses which fails the organization to perform at par when members are being allowed to participate in decision making process.

Sometimes unskilled members or labour do also participate which makes the decision making ineffective. Minority and individual opinions are overridden. This means that even any opinion which is not much effective for the enhancement of the production and performance then sometimes simple or ineffective ideas also been taken for granted or overridden in terms of that it is been implemented and it impacts the performance and there are potential security issues. Maybe people are participating in decision making process but people at the same time can also share the decision making policies or procedures to outside sources which can hamper the security of the organization. And the last is laissez-faire of re-reign leadership style.

It is also known as delegative leadership where the leader is hands off when the leader is directly not involved in the task and the group members are hands on to make the decisions. For example, in any laboratory, scientific laboratory there is a team working and at the same time the leader, team leader is not involved in the whole process of the experiment that has to be performed and other team members are performing the experiment. So, they are more involved hands on than the leaders and the decision is been taken by the members itself. The free name leader avoids using power and the group members establish their own work standards to attain the goal. The leader will not provide any directive or any guidance but the members define their own standards of work.

It is also helpful for leaders to re-recognize when the style should be best suited, utilized such as within team members who are experts at what they do. The team members are experts that is the most important point when any free reign leadership is being executed in a particular situation. But yes all the decision making lies in the hands of the other team members not the leader. The benefits, it encourages personal growth because members take their own decisions and learn how to be effective decision maker and employees have a chance to be hands on. The leadership style creates an environment that facilitates growth and development.

The freedom is given to employees and can encourage creativity and innovation. They use the resources in a very creative manner. It allows faster decision making as employees have the autonomy to make their own decisions. The drawback, there is lack of role clarity. When the leader is not intervening in the procedures of the group or the organization then it creates lot of potential for role ambiguity which makes job less interesting for any employee and there are chances of turnover, increase turnover intentions.

There is poor involvement within the group as the leaders are often seen as uninvolved and withdrawn which can lead to lack of cohesiveness within the group. This also leads to tendency of social loafing or diffusion of responsibility when members tend to shed their responsibility on to others and they avoid in taking any decision about the additive task. And there is low accountability as leaders avoid responsibility of the outcomes or the group failures and the blame directly to the members. Initially they are hands off but when they face any failure, any breakdown in the mechanism then ultimately they tend to blame on to the members which for not completing task or living up to expectations. So, these are the different kinds of leadership styles that is democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style.

In the next slide I will talk about the contingency models of leadership. Thank you so much. Thank you very much.