RUNNING HEAD: THE LEADERSHIP CONTEXT ESSAY

The Leadership Context Essay

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**Introduction:**

Leadership is an important concept when it comes to management and handling of certain tasks that are goal driven. There are many ways to define leadership in different contexts. In general, it may be very difficult for an individual to define leadership with exact traits of the leadership. It is due to the fact that leadership context will change with a change in a situation or organizational culture or in a cross-cultural situation. In the individual perspective, leadership is an interpersonal process in which a single person tries to influence and change the behaviour of others. There are a number of different leadership styles, not all effective in a single context. Different leadership styles are required in different situations to achieve a common goal.

To achieve a collective goal, a leader must not train followers but must be able to prepare them for future leadership roles as well. Therefore, an effective leader may also be regarded as a mentor of the team. However, some researchers use the term management and leadership interchangeably because they claim that there are no distinct differences between the two. Leadership has followers while the management has subordinates (Hallinger, 2018). The first step to start with any leadership situation is the identification of the personality traits of the leadership. The second step is the attempt to execute different leadership styles such as democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, strategic, transformational, and transactional. Each of the leadership styles has its own pros and cons that can be helpful in the achievement of the goal.

Democratic leadership style is based on input from the team members. Autocratic leadership makes a decision without input from the members. Laissez-faire leadership is a style of leadership that provide the members' opportunities to grow on their own with an alternative reward system, rewarding best performing members with perks. Strategic leadership tries to achieve team goals by incorporating smaller team goals with broader organizational goals (Truong and Hallinger, 2017). Different leadership styles can be employed in a changing context because it plays a significant role in the selection of the leadership style. The essay describes the context of leadership, style, and traits in two different scenarios such as leadership by a sports coach and leadership by a supervisor on a construction site.

**Analysis:**

Leaders are required in all of the significant fields of life such as in sports. Sports play an important role in the life of societies and athletes. Athletes and players are directly influenced by the leadership and personality traits of their coach. A sports coach is responsible for the individual as well as team success or failure. The job of a coach in a sports team is only guaranteed if the team is successful as a whole instead of individual players of the team. A coach has to integrate individual performance and direct them for team victories that require considerable leadership qualities. Given the responsibilities of a coach and leadership context of a sports coach, authoritarian leadership cannot be practised by a sports coach (Maak et al., 2016). To achieve a team goal of winning a match suitable leadership style and personality traits of coach must be examined as a coach is not only influencing the physical performance of the players but their psychological performance as well.

There are many correlates related to the behaviour of the coach that influence the performance of the team such as team cohesion. Research studies have revealed that there is empirical evidence that team cohesion is tied to coaching behaviour. Such as in a military context of leadership, the cohesiveness of different combat groups found to be related to the behaviour of unit leaders. In the healthcare context, evidence revealed that leaders that show less directiveness and more personal warmth have more cohesive groups. In an organizational context, evidence suggested that leaders having cohesive teams reward productivity of their team members (Vignola et al., 2017). Therefore, a single leadership style cannot be effective all the time even in the same team setting. In the context of sports coaches, the research primarily focused on the identification of the coaching characteristics, behaviour patterns, and leadership styles most effective in achieving team goals.

In general, a sports coach will be considered as an effective leader if he becomes attuned to the personal and individual needs of athletes under training. It is important for a sports coach to be effective because he is not only affecting the physical performance of the team but their psychological well being as well. Therefore, despite having a solid command on the particular sports game a coach must play the role of a mentor, limit setter, follower, and teacher. Effective coaches are those who realize that they can make a difference in team performance by improving their own skills that influence the behaviour of the team as well. A sports coach must have to apply a mediational and multidimensional leadership role catering individual needs of the athletes to achieve the team goals.

On the other hand, when it comes to the leadership context and personality traits of a construction supervisor, the situation is entirely different from that of a sports coach. The construction industry is among one of the economic sectors suffering from the increased amount of occupational injuries. Research studies related to occupational safety revealed that the safety of workers on construction sites is directly related to the leadership style of site supervisors (Van Hemmen et al., 2015). Contingency leadership practices and situational leadership styles depend on contextual factors. Most of the site supervisors in the construction industry tend to utilize the autocratic leadership style. It is due to the fact that they tend to treat their workers as their subordinates rather than encouraging them to innovate the process.

Construction workers may have to perform fix duties or jobs during construction work and autocratic leaders impose their decisions on workers without understanding the safety requirements. Occupational safety is an important context in the choice of leadership style for a construction site supervisor. If the supervisor is not aware of the safety hazards of a particular action, then he may force workers to perform the task and indulge into severe injuries leading to far-reaching consequences (Muralidharan and Pathak, 2018). Authoritarian and autocratic style of leadership by construction supervisors is not appropriate in the context of occupational safety. As the construction site supervisors have to deal with a large number of workers and handle tasks at operational as well as strategic level, the transformational style of leadership is appropriate based on research studies.

A transformational leader in construction work can push workers out of their comfort zone while maintaining the occupational safety requirements as well. In many situations of the construction industry emphasis is placed no technical significance of the project rather than leadership requirements to perform the task safely. If the worker's perception is that their supervisor is concerned with their safety then team cohesion will be increased greatly resulting in better results. Otherwise, it would be extremely difficult to achieve such results in construction work while giving occupational safety a due place. A construction site supervisor must practice a transformational role to increase the safety of workers helping them to achieve team goals without any significant occupational injury cases.

**Conclusion:**

The essay described the influence of leadership styles and traits of leadership in two different contexts such as leadership by a sports coach and leadership by a construction site supervisor. There are different leadership styles and a single leadership style cannot be the most effective style in all of the situations. A sports coach cannot deploy autocratic or authoritarian style of leadership because he is not influencing the physical performance but the psychological performance of the players as well. The leadership style of the coach must be tailored toward the individual requirement of the players as they will contribute towards the team goal of victory. An autocratic leadership style from a sports coach will not only disrupt the cohesion of the team but will lead to the failures in achieving the team goals as well.

In the other scenario discussed in the essay, the leadership context of a construction site supervisor is analysed. The construction industry is suffering from an increased number of occupational injuries. Research studies have tied the increased number of occupational injuries in the construction industry to the authoritarian style of leadership practised by the site supervisors. In following the strict orders, the workers may not follow safety precautions appropriately leading to personal injuries. Such injuries disturb s the cohesion of team and affects the overall performance of the team. A transformational leadership style is appropriate for a construction site supervisor because it will allow him to push workers out of their comfort zones without compromising on safety precautions. It will also create a sense of compassion between the workers for their supervisor and they will happily follow the instructions as well. In conclusion, it has been described that leadership is entirely contextual. No single leadership style can conquer all of the situations. A good leader is one that changes the leadership style based on the context of the job being performed to achieve team targets.

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