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<h1 style="text-align:center">ANALYZING LEADERSHIP STYLE OF A MANAGER</h1>

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process of social influence where one person (the leader) is able to get help and support of others (followers) in accomplishing a common task (Chemers 2000). There are several definitions and approaches for understanding leadership. Leadership theories have been categorized into trait approaches, behavioral approaches and contingency/situational approaches. These theories have focused primarily on characteristics of a leader and how these characteristics impact his effectiveness in various situations (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995). Newer theories and classifications of leadership styles, such as transactional, charismatic and transformational (Bass 1990) have broadened the perspectives (Lievens, Geit & Coetsier 1997). They focus on emotions, symbols and values (Yukl 1999). Transformational and transactional leadership theories dominate the current thinking about the topic (Judge & Piccolo 2004), with the former currently being the best-articulated and the most promising model (Moynihan, Pandey & Wright 2011). Other models, such as authentic leadership, ethical leadership and spiritual leadership are also being developed (Walumbwa et al. 2008; Hernandez et al. 2011). A more integrated, multi-level, multi-component, and interdisciplinary approach to leadership is being mooted (Avolio 2007). This essay discusses the workplace leadership behavior of a real life manager, and aims to examine his leadership style from the perspective of the relatively modern approaches, namely, transformational (the main theory), charismatic, and transactional theories. The objective is to understand which theory or theories explain the manager's behavior, his effectiveness at practicing those particular leadership style(s), and the strengths and weaknesses in theories used to explain his style. Before delving into analysis of the manager's leadership style, it is important to examine his behavior at workplace. Based on observations, the key characteristics are discussed below.

DETAILS ABOUT MANAGER'S BEHAVIOR

Names have been changed to maintain privacy of the individual / organization. Mr. X is the head of the marketing department of an FMCG company (ABC Limited). He is highly qualified in marketing management. He has two decades of experience in the field, a major part of which has been at senior positions. He joined the company about 4 years ago. Sales of ABC has increased significantly over the past few years, and senior management attributes a major part of the success to X's efforts. X is very busy as he has to take care of marketing activities related to several products. The activities involve strategic planning and execution. He has to head or

be part of regular meetings with his staff and members of the other departments (mainly finance and production). His staff has to often work under tremendous time pressure, and is known for delivering quality ideas and immaculate execution of the strategies. X also has to meet external agencies which help the company in its marketing efforts including campaign management agencies, event managers etc. ABC is not a flat organization, and there are layers of management between X and the lower level staff which executes most of his ideas. A closer look at his personality and behavior provides some insights into the type or types of leadership styles he practices.

On observation of X's behavior, the first thing which comes across is that he is a very friendly and charming person. He always dresses up very well, and smiles and responds whenever he is greeted by anyone. He communicates with his subordinates openly during meetings. He does not look at the level of the person giving the idea or the concept. What matters is the quality of the idea. He asks his subordinates to look beyond the ordinary, encourages creativity, and builds upon the ideas they give. The discussions are healthy, and he gives examples of other success and failure stories to explain why he thinks an idea is good or bad. He asks them to solve problems collectively. He gives them freedom to take decisions and make mistakes. He is liked by all, and he knows his subordinates by their names. He inspires confidence because he is extremely knowledgeable and accessible at the same time. He treats all his staff with due respect. He has a positive outlook, and exudes a lot of confidence in his abilities. He has built several systems in his department to establish order. He has made a monetary reward system for good ideas and execution. He has a vision for the company as a whole. He wants the company to grow and be known for its marketing success. He is ambitious. He often says that he and all his team members will automatically grow with the organization. He tells his subordinates to remain ethical, and himself does not indulge in unethical practices. To understand the leadership style of the manager, three, relatively modern, theories are briefly discussed.

REVIEW OF THEORIES

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is based on the personal values and beliefs of the leaders. Key behaviors of transformational leaders are clear articulation of goals, exuding confidence, motivating followers, and building an image. These behaviors help avoid the process of exchange which characterizes transactional leadership (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987). Charisma,

inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration are the key characteristics of transformational leaders. Charisma implies providing vision and a sense of mission, instilling pride, and gaining respect of followers. Inspiration involves communicating high expectations, and use of symbols to focus efforts. Intellectual stimulation refers to promoting intelligence and rationality. Individual consideration relates to giving personal attention to employees, guiding them and treating them individually (Bass 1990). Transformational leaders can facilitate changes and innovations by emphasizing on the vision and motivating the subordinates to work towards those higher-order goals (Lievens, Geit & Coetsier 1997). Transformational leadership can work through formal management processes, and such leaders exert influence through performance management systems (Moynihan, Pandey & Wright 2011).

Charismatic leadership

Though charisma is an essential part of transformational leadership, theories of charismatic leadership emphasize on impacts, such as emotional attachment to the leader, emotional and motivational arousal, increase in follower's valences regarding the leader's mission, follower's values, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and trust and confidence in the leader (Shamir, House & Arthur 1993). Charisma resides in the relationship between a leader who has charismatic qualities and a follower who is open to charisma. The overall environment has to be conducive to charisma (Klein & House 1995). Referent power, an influence based on affect and feelings of personal acceptance, and expert power, based on expertise, has been considered part of charisma (Kudisch et al. 1995).

Transactional leadership

Transactional leaders give followers what they want in return for something the leaders want from them. These exchanges can be of lower-order (e.g. monetary incentives) or higher-order, such as promises and commitments based on trust and respect (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987). Characteristics of transactional leadership include contingent rewards (exchanges, recognizing achievements etc.), management by exception (active and passive), and abdication of responsibilities or avoiding decision making (Laissez-Faire) (Bass 1990).

Explanation of Manager's behavior

For explaining X's behavior, it is also important to consider the commonalities and overlaps between various theories. There are more similarities than differences between concepts of

charismatic and transformational leadership (Hartog, Muijen & Koopman 1997). In fact, charisma is a fundamental factor in transformation process (Barbuto 2005; Bass 1990). The relationship between transformational and transactional leadership is that charisma impacts the performance of the followers after the impacts of contingent reward are considered (Barling, Weber & Kelloway 1996). While transformational factors are more highly correlated with effectiveness and satisfaction of the employees than contingent reward, contingent reward is most influential factor in transactional leadership (Bass 1999). However, studies have also shown that transformational leadership is strongly correlated with contingent reward, and contingent rewards have higher validity than transformational factors in some contexts (Judge & Piccolo 2004). Transactional leadership is needed to establish clear standards and performance expectations, and a basic level of trust can be built if the leader fulfills his promises. Transformational leadership may build upon this basic trust level by forming a deeper sense of identification amongst the subordinates (Bass et al. 2003). If the goals are aligned, transactional and transformational elements need not be mutually exclusive (Bass & Avolio 1993).

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that X is primarily practicing transformational leadership style, but inherent elements of charisma, and underlying objectivity and processes of transactional style are also present. As evident from the theory as well, these three styles are not mutually exclusive. In fact, transactional exchange is one element of trust building between the leader and the follower. The power of charisma is virtually indispensable if the transformational style is to be practiced. This is because inspiring people to move above and beyond the personal agendas requires personal identification with the vision.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MANAGER

As X is qualified and experienced in the field, he has perhaps learnt to leverage important elements of the three styles discussed above. X appears to be effective at practicing a combination of these leadership styles, though the transformational style appears to dominate his behavior. The transformational style is based on charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individual attention. His demeanor and bearing at workplace, coupled with his expertise has helped him build a charismatic influence. The open communication environment has helped build a charisma-conducive environment. He has shared his vision with his employees to make ABC known for its marketing prowess. This vision is the vehicle of growth for the employees, and is linked to the growth of ABC. He inspires the subordinates to work

towards the higher goals. Intellectual stimulation is fostered as he supports discussions, empowers employees, and is tolerant to mistakes. He refers to his subordinates by name, and guides them by giving examples (individual attention). He has built good relationships with his subordinates, and he appears reliable and respectable because he actively practices and promotes ethical behavior. He also practices contingent rewards through the monetary rewards scheme, a part of the transactional style. Apart from motivating the employees, these lower order transactions help in building trust which is an essential element of the transformational style. However, he is not practicing management by exception (active or passive), and takes active part in the strategy and execution process (e.g. during meetings). It is clear that X is actively and deliberately building a good image. Most importantly, he exhibits the relevant qualities and practices the behavior required for the three styles. His efforts have yielded results in terms of organizational performance.

MAJOR WEAKNESSES & STRENGTHS OF THE THEORIES

The theories of transactional, transformational and charismatic leadership have some conceptual weaknesses in their ability to explain effective leadership. Some studies have found overlaps between transformational and transactional leadership, and lower-order transactional factors (e.g. rewards) have been found to influence transformational elements (Judge & Piccolo 2004; Yukl 1999). Apart from monetary incentives, higher-order exchanges, such as promises and commitments based on trust and respect are also considered a part of the transactional style (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987). Transformational leadership can even work through formal management processes (Moynihan, Pandey & Wright 2011). Competition amongst leaders within an organization is also not discussed adequately. Some studies have found components of transactional leadership, such as passive management, to be distinct factors in their own right. Some incompatible aspects of essential behaviors for transformational and charismatic leadership make it difficult for both to coexist. For example, empowerment makes it less probable for followers to consider that the leader has exceptional abilities. In transactional leadership inclusion of praise and recognition has some overlaps with transformational elements of personal attention. The reason for including passive management, which is devoid of any exchange process, is also not clear. Even for active management, the process of correcting a follower's mistakes is not described (Yukl 1999). Charisma is a part of the transformational style (Barbuto 2005; Bass 1990) and influences the performance of the followers beyond the impact of the transactional exchange (Barling, Weber & Kelloway 1996). There is a focus on socially acceptable behaviors, and other behaviors, such as manipulative

practices to influence subordinates are not adequately deliberated. Impact of this style on organizational effectiveness is also not clear. The processes through which the three styles influence followers is not clearly understood (Yukl 1999). The causal mechanisms which relate leadership to organizational outcomes (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber 2009), and creation of conditions by leaders for improving organizational performance need to be explored further (Avolio 2007).

Most of the transformational leadership theories have a dyadic perspective as they explain a leader's direct influence on each follower. The leader's impact on the group or organizational level processes (e.g. mutual trust amongst group members) is not explained. Importantly, the theoretical reasoning for differentiating between key transformational behaviors is not clear. For example, the behavior of 'supporting' employees is known to have little impact on employees' motivation and performance, but it is included as a key determinant. What is actually done by leaders for intellectual stimulation is not clear. There are overlaps between this factor and some aspects of inspiration and individualized consideration. Further, these theories do not focus on task oriented behaviors of leaders, such as setting clear task related goals etc. Interaction with superiors, peers and outsiders, which play an essential part in achieving organizational objectives, is not discussed. The impact of the situation or context on supporting or moderating leader's influence is not delved in detail (Yukl 1999).

Strengths of the theories are evident from the fact that they have an intuitive appeal. Many aspects have been empirically tested and proven. The transactional style is widely implemented through management practices, and the charismatic and transformational styles are practiced by leaders to motivate followers to achieve better than expected performances (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987). In the current case as well, the theories are able to explain leadership behavior of X. However, the overlaps and blurred lines between theories are evident, and the exact process of X's influence on staff members, or the group, or ABC is not clear. It is difficult to determine which style has the maximum impact on the followers. Other influences on subordinates, such as ABC's organizational culture or intra group equations, cannot be distinguished.

CONCLUSION

As evident from the above discussions, the leadership style of X is primarily transformational, but charisma plays an important role in his relationship with employees. He also practices

transactional leadership, which, in-turn, supports his transformational leadership by building a basic level of trust. The behavior of X incorporates several essential elements of the leadership styles he practices. His style has been effective for the organization in terms of financial outcomes. To conclude, managers may simultaneously practice multiple styles at workplace. Transformational, charismatic and transactional styles are not mutually exclusive, and overlaps are clearly evident. Further, considering the weaknesses and overlaps, no single theory seems to be sufficient for explaining leadership behavior. A more holistic view is warranted.

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