Human Resources

by Xxx Xxx

Leadership approaches taken by different leaders in managing during a crisis (Covid-19)

MANAGING FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT

Numerous organisations were forced to use a range of leadership styles in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The study provides a foundation for understanding the notion, leadership styles, and, in particular, change management. The next portion of the article examines adaptable leadership and individual perspectives on how leaders are coping with pandemic transformation. Additionally, it contains an analysis of why the pandemic problem is critical for comprehending leadership tactics and their impact on stakeholders, as well as remedies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

When the last coronavirus epidemic struck, the whole globe was taken by surprise and unprepared. COVID-19 began in Wuhan, China, but swiftly spread over the globe, resulting in human tragedy and enormous financial loss. Governments across the globe enacted lockdown measures to halt the spread of Covid19 and limit the number of fatalities (Fong et al., 2020). Both the supply chain and human resources were harmed directly as a consequence of the virus's destruction. Businesses were more inventive when confronted with identical problems. In the face of the epidemic's chaos and uncertainty, information technology seems critical for preserving a feeling of normality. There was a significant issue with businesses introducing mandatory work-from-home rules. Remote labour was a monumental undertaking, made all the more challenging because it occurred in the aftermath of a global epidemic. Mental health issues impact employees' productivity and efficiency. Social isolation is associated with depression, anxiety, and financial concerns.

In leadership, social influence is utilised to harness the efforts of others to attain a goal. Excellent leadership is commonly acknowledged to be founded on a clear vision, the growth and management of people, and the development of organisational capabilities (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins 2019). Leaders must act swiftly and aggressively during a crisis, but they must also consider all available choices, as well as the probable consequences and side effects of their actions (2020). However, no one can predict the optimal responses, behaviours, or outcomes in this circumstance with certainty. There are no clear guidelines for doing business during a pandemic. The capacity of a leader to design and execute emergency solutions was critical during the coronavirus pandemic.

Continuous environmental changes inside a business may be planned and executed via a formalised "change management" (Christensen & Overdorf, 2000). Managing change is the process of developing new ideas and promptly implementing them in response to abrupt and unexpected changes in circumstances. Both internal and external causes may influence change. Throughout Covid-19, the CEO's capacity to handle crises and change has been increasingly critical to the company's success. Operating a profitable firm in these uncertain times will need a greater degree of problem-solving than in the past. Alternatively, corporate leaders may take a more proactive role in crisis and change management, which will need the involvement, collaboration, and cooperation of every member of the company's team.

The research discusses leadership and change management and the current leadership and changes management strategies used by today's leaders to address the COVID-19 epidemic's consequences. Finally, the study examines how leaders used flexible leadership to manage the pandemic's transition. The paper examines why the pandemic problem is strategically significant in leadership tactics and their effect on stakeholders.

2.0 DISCUSSIONS

2.1 Leadership Approaches and Change Management

Business leadership is characterised as the capacity to establish and accomplish difficult objectives, act swiftly and decisively when required, and outperform the competition. It is a kind of social influence in which a leader enlists the assistance and support of others to achieve a shared objective (Chermers, 2001). Leadership is a process, not a personality trait. A process may be described in a variety of ways. Some of the most often used methods to leadership development include trait approaches, behavioural techniques, contingency perspectives, and transformational

theories. The trait approach to leadership is used to predict leadership effectiveness by examining the characteristics of both successful and unsuccessful leaders. According to "trait theory," leaders possess unique attributes that enable their organisations to operate more efficiently while also enhancing the leader's reputation (Van Wart & Suino 2012). Behavioural leadership theories are those that place a premium on leaders' behaviour rather than their mental characteristics or emotional reactions. Individuals may develop leadership qualities by observing and listening to their peers. The idea of behavioural leadership has made a major contribution by emphasising that businesses need leadership in both production and human resources (Boin & Hart, 2003). When it comes to leadership, the leader's success is contingent on a number of elements, including those of their subordinates and group. The success of a given leadership style is context-dependent. According to behavioural theory, leaders should possess specific ideal behavioural patterns; but, according to the contingency approach, leaders must adjust their qualities and abilities to the situation's requirements, as well as the culture and environment of their organisations.

The purpose of transformational leadership is to effect good and beneficial change in those who report to it. Charismatic leaders, according to transformational theories, inspire and influence their followers. To separate transactional theories from other types of theories, there must be an exchange between the leader and their followers. It is critical for transactional theories to have a mechanism for aligning in order for the leader to reward (or punish) his followers correctly for completing leader-assigned obligations. Organisations' strategies, structures, and competencies must be constantly adapted to suit the changing expectations of their customers, both external and internal (Moran and Brightman, 2001). Organisational success is contingent upon the alignment of all change projects and activities with the company's strategy and objectives (Lucey, 2008). Organisational change begins with a thorough examination of the current state of things, followed

by the implementation of acceptable and effective measures. In other words: Globalisation's rising demands have a substantial influence on many facets of business and human life. To put it another way: An organisation is said to be "changing" when its activities, corporate structures, or business climate within a single firm change. It is a reality that change can only be done efficiently when the present system or state is transformed into the intended future state, maximising resources while minimising expenditures and increasing profitability. (2008) (Hotho).

Prior to implementing any of the several efficient and frequently used change management methodologies and models, an organisation must ascertain why the changes are essential and how they will benefit the organisation. These include Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model, John Kotter's Change Management Theory, Kübler-Ross' Five Stage Model, and the Nudge Theory. The three primary stages in this technique are defrosting, altering, and refreezing.

Preparation for change is a step of the change process that occurs during the unfreeze phase. Additionally, it requires that the organisation initiate the transition process and recognise that change is both essential and desirable. Unfreezing a system may result in "disconfirmations" among its members, causing them to reject change and jeopardising the organisation (Cummings & Worley, 2008). During this period, a significant proportion of organisational reform efforts fail (Schein, 1999).

The true transition or transformation happens during the transformation stage. It may take some time for individuals to embrace new advances, innovations, and changes completely. Effective leadership and reassurance are critical at this point, not just to drive the process but also to make it simpler for employees or anyone involved in the process. As a result, effective communication and time management are critical for success at this level.

Once the modification has been approved, authorised, and implemented, the business or organisation's usual operations may continue. That is why it is referred to as a "refreeze." At this phase, individuals and systems begin to defrost and return to normal. However, the long-term effectiveness of change is contingent upon the subsequent step of institutionalising it (Kotter, 1996). This is one of the most often used and acknowledged hypotheses worldwide. According to the theory, for a chance to succeed, 75 per cent of a company's management must "buy into" it.

2.2 Role of leadership during Covid-19 pandemic

In comparison, COVID-19 has elevated workers' status as critical stakeholders. COVID-19 poses a hazard to employee health and safety, necessitating risk assessments by businesses. Businesses were legally required to guarantee the safety of consumers and workers throughout the outbreak, even if it meant losing profits to ensure the safety of customers and employees. A calamity does not form a person's character. It reveals what it really is. When faced with adversity, a real leader's inner strength is shown. Leaders must quickly adapt and acquire new talents to deal with a catastrophe. As a consequence, it is reasonable to say that CEOs across all industries have had a difficult few months. While leaders are obliged to emphasise the significance of employee safety, research indicates that they must also consider the financial and organisational costs associated with failure to do so. Due to the unpredictability created by unanticipated occurrences, crisis management necessitates leadership under duress (Brandebo, 2020). When presented with difficult circumstances, workers are sometimes hesitant to adopt established methods, which may lead to a sense of discomfort. In times of crisis, leadership style is seen as critical, and its response has the potential to quickly improve enterprises' social, economic, and health circumstances, ultimately improving employee well-being. 2020 (Dirani et al.).

Numerous leadership styles exist, but not all of them are appropriate for use during a crisis, just as not all of them are appropriate for daily usage. Accepting your weaknesses and maximising your talents requires an understanding of who you are.

Autocratic leaders exercise total control over their organisations. From top to bottom, there is a direct channel of contact. They want that their devotees obey their commands, restrictions, and activities. There is a great deal of power-playing between the leader and their subordinates. Disagreements may occur as a result of this style of leadership, which may have a detrimental effect on an organisation's overall performance (Sulastiningtiyas & Nilasari, 2019).

Transformative leaders inspire and instil in their followers an identity and feeling of responsibility for the organisation's purpose and objectives (Nahavandi, 2016). The need for collaboration is emphasised. This strategy and organisational culture have a significant impact on employee morale and loyalty. Additionally, strong ethical and religious principles are fostered, which are necessary for overcoming disasters such as Covid-19. Under the guidance of these leaders, they will be able to openly express their opinions and emotions in the face of change and uncertainty.

When making a decision, participative leaders solicit and consider input from employees. Employees are more engaged and happy when they feel seen and heard under participative leadership. Due to their admiration for their colleagues' perspectives and perspectives, this leadership style is well-known for inspiring employees to achieve their objectives (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

2.3 Role of flexible leadership and individual perspectives in relation to leaders managing change of the pandemic

Not only should businesses have adaptable crisis management methods, but those in charge must also exhibit their own flexibility. Adaptive leaders are more equipped to cope with the uncertainty and misunderstanding that often accompany crisis situations (Moynihan, 2009). Adaptability is required while doing data analysis for decision-making purposes during the Covid-19 epidemic. When analysing the changing environment and previously accepted leadership tactics, it is obvious that workplace concerns and the challenges of new leadership styles are inextricably linked. Flexibility enables leaders to adapt more swiftly to crises and other events that need a change in strategy. It has a significant impact on an individual's motivation, feeling of purpose, and growth. When confronted with a crisis, a leader who is adaptable to a range of scenarios is more capable of leading.

It is critical to remember the following leadership concepts during times of crisis.

Despite appearances, the quantity and quality of a leader's messages do important. When there is a lack of certainty, employees get anxious. Communication that is consistent and clear is critical. The importance of telling the truth cannot be emphasised. When management withholds information from employees, their trust in management erodes. To maintain people focus on the target while dealing with current events, it is also vital to communicate with clear underlying notions (Klann, 2003).

Decision-making: Successful leaders generate an immediate sense of direction by quickly defining and communicating their preferred path of action. A crisis needs a paradigm shift and an openness to new, more promising ideas (Leschke-Kahle, 2020). Decisions made by an employee should be

valued, and they should be rewarded for them. If people only hear from you when something unpleasant occurs, this is a sign of ineffective leadership. Those in control must assess the crisis's influence on the spectrum of products and services offered by their firm to determine if they need to reorganise. The coronavirus epidemic demonstrated how inextricably linked change and innovation are. Technology has facilitated the transition to working from home. Additionally, it is critical in assisting the globe in escaping its present impasse.

2.3 Critical analysis of why the issue has strategic importance

Sectors, enterprises, and industries around the globe are in disarray as a consequence of the pandemic's human tragedy. If the wrong strategy and strategic direction are adopted, the business will encounter significant difficulties. It is critical to building a model of strategic leadership as soon as possible in order to address the difficulties. The capacity to make better judgments is contingent upon one's leadership style. Covid-19 and other pandemics have altered the corporate environment for the worst, necessitating CEOs who are adaptable and possess the appropriate skill set. Strategic leadership is a defining feature of contemporary management. In today's environment, organisations need more foresight and proactiveness from their leaders than ever before. Without question, strategic leaders confront more serious difficulties and dangers than their colleagues in more conventional organisational positions (Adair, 2010). Strategic leaders develop and maintain connections with individuals outside the organisation, as well as communicate the organisation's image. As a result, leaders are finding it difficult to satisfy the needs and expectations of all stakeholders after COVID19. Strategic leaders have a stronger influence on the organisation and its employees. Stakeholders are considered in the majority of business decisions. Strategic leaders can balance operational and financial demands on the organisation with long-

term strategic potential. To achieve long-term success, vision, creativity, and innovation are joined with operational focus and expertise.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate executives worldwide are coping with the consequences of the global COVID-19 epidemic. Global economies, like many others, are currently at risk. What to do, how to predict, and how to act are all contingent upon the leadership of leaders. In times of uncertainty and instability, having a calm, confident, and trustworthy leader is more vital than ever. Governments and businesses will need leaders with new perspectives to aid them in managing the crisis and escaping unharmed as the virus continues to wreak devastation. Leaders must be conversant with a variety of perspectives and tactics in order to grasp their staff' reactions to changing situations. A global COVID-19 infection might result in unprecedented leadership behaviours. According to a current study, some leadership styles are more suited to crisis situations than others. Transformational and participatory leadership styles may have performed better in this instance. There is an enormous opportunity right now to increase employee engagement for businesses that employ remote employees from all around the globe. The attitudes and productivity of employees, particularly those who work from home, are greatly impacted by the company's leadership style. Leaders must constantly innovate and help their workers in order to maximise production during times of crisis. While remote employees have a harder time learning and mastering new tools and technologies, by guiding them through the process in advance, the workflow can be expedited, and workers can complete their tasks more rapidly. Meetings, for example, are conducted online due to the social distance, utilising Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Skype, among others. Management should clearly clarify work from home regulations and processes to ensure that workers are not

left in the dark if they make a mistake. Allowing staff to work from home when required promotes flexibility, but it also raises the risk of cyberattacks. Employees working remotely may jeopardise a company's security. To assist your team in becoming more cyber-savvy, you must give proper training. Develop a learning plan that works for you by including online and virtual study, as well as periodic email mentoring. It is critical for leaders to be receptive during times of crisis, soliciting input from other stakeholders such as employees and suppliers on how to resurrect a business. This strategy is likely to persuade company officials to make significant changes. Effective communication is critical for employee engagement during times of crisis. Customers and stakeholders should be kept informed of the pandemic's status and your company's plans to combat its effects on a regular basis. As a consequence, your staff will develop a higher feeling of trust and loyalty. Due to the fact that many individuals now work from home, it is more critical than ever to maintain contact with colleagues. Employees that work in a team environment are more motivated and productive. It will be vital to rethink how leaders connect with and support their people. Workplace flexibility may help keep workers motivated throughout a health crisis. Allow employees to take regular days off for rest and relaxation. Put your trust in your personnel to do their best to meet corporate objectives, and offer them the tools they need to do so. This boosts worker morale and productivity by making them feel appreciated. Reassessing talent optimisation via leadership must be done regardless of where a team member sits on the team.

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