Leadership Essential Case study - Unilever , UK

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Article Info	*Abstract:*
	This research investigates leadership essentials through the conceptual and practical methods of leadership within Unilever UK. Targeting on Situational Leadership Theory, it examines how leaders accommodate their pattern to fulfill employee necessities and organizational demands. This study critically analyses the theory's flexibility and limitations, prioritizing its Importance in various and changing industry dynamics .Additionally, it analyses leadership programs in three vital areas: gender and diversity, leadership development, and supportable global leadership. Outcomes suggest that effective leadership needs to maintain equilibrium between adaptability with diversity and stability to improve both organizational productivity and staff dedication . Unilever's case proves that incorporating these elements strengthens its global competitiveness and ethical obligations .The research concludes that innovators must align dynamic leadership methods with values-driven plans to encourage long-term success of industries. ***Keywords:*** leadership, situational theory, Unilever, diversity, leadership development, sustainability

1. Introduction

An organization having effective leadership can positively affect the overall organization (Salihu, 2019). This will require leadership essential skills to be inculcated in the leader and therefore in this report, to understand the leadership essential, theory related to leadership have been explained which applies to chosen business organization Unilever, United Kingdom. There are other three relevant topics discussed in this leadership report. The first topic selected is Leadership, Gender, and diversity where how gender and diversity are being applied in the workplace and how leadership has a role in maintaining diversity and gender have been discussed. The next topic chosen is leadership development which has been critically analyzed in the section. Finally, the concept of sustainable Global leadership has been explained in context to Unilever's organization.

2. Situation Theory

Leadership refers to the ability to make people feel motivated and make somebody else achieve the aims and objectives of the business. However, no specific or single theory can explain the suitability of theory in every circumstance (Salihu, 2019). There is a slight change in the past on the basic principles of leadership such as directing, inspiring the other individual for a mutual goal.

Therefore, in this paper, the Situational theory of leadership has been critically analyzed to demonstrate how the theory relates to leadership practices occurring within Unilever.

The situational theory of leadership has been coined by Hersey and Blancard and as per these two thinkers is that the situational leader's main responsibility is to become habituated to their leadership style and to fulfill the needs of the subordinates (Thompson and Glaso, 2018). Therefore, to fulfill the requirement of the subordinates, the situational leader must identify the motivational factor and their abilities and assign the work according to their abilities. In this theory, the managers are required to choose from the four leadership quadrants which have a combination of relationship behavior and tasks (Ghazzawi et al., 2017).

The first quadrants state that there is commanding behavior of the manager for the organization Unilever and the manager has high productivity within his team due to commanding behavior but the relationship of the manager with his team member is minimal. Therefore, this characteristic of a leader can be best described as autocratic (Walls, 2019). The second characteristic segment of the manager according to this theory is the High Relationship and High tasks where the manager of the company has commanding nature but with motivation and an influential personality who can maintain a relationship with his team members (Manyuchi and Sukdeo, 2020). Hence, in this segment, the leader is equally inclined towards his work as well as gives importance to human relationships. In the third quadrant, the managers are supposed to be high maintaining relationships but they are lower in terms of performing a task which implies that there is less command and enough collaboration between the employees and the managers which is one of the renowned styles of working by the managers (Fuad et al., 2020). This segment of the situational theory highlights the characteristic of advice-giving managers. Finally, the fourth segment of the situational theory states that there is a low level of involvement of the managers with the team members as well as has lower involvement in the tasks. These managers generally ask somebody else to do their work and are only interested to know the progress of the work (Rosenhead et al., 2019).

Therefore, the situational theory holds the fact of employing delegating and communicating to followers what they need to do. Efficient managers therefore should know how to keep a balance between the tasks assigned to subordinates and maintain a human relationship with them as when the managers need to employ higher relationships as well as when to employ higher relationships with the employees (Henkel and Bourdeau, 2018). As discussed above, the situational analysis can be best explained using the four segments of the Task-behaviour matrix and based on the style of leadership, these different quadrants can be applied and efficient managers should be able to balance the task and

build relationships as there is always a change in the individual inspirations and abilities (Kalangi et al., 2021). For example, a manager should be able to keep the balance between change in technology and his relationship with the employees to match with the situation and therefore the managers should be able to demonstrate qualities such as passion, effective communication skills, honest, and have excellent skills of judgment (Kalangi et al., 2021). According to the situational theory, the managers should adopt a style of being flexible and be able to be habituated with the varying situations within the organizations.

Critical Evaluation of Situation theory

The situational theory of the leadership has an advantage due to its flexibility and authority in nature which further implies that this style of leadership helps the manager to adapt to different situations as manager possessing the characteristic of situational theory knows what to do under which situation (Fuad et al., 2020). However, as this theory holds the fact of having traits of sound judgment qualities related to the evaluation of humans and tasks but few individuals can judge and visualize the tasks as well as humans in every situation despite their characteristics, style, or abilities.

In an organization like Unilever, various external and internal factors make the teams, individuals, and the aim of the business vary, this style of leadership is only appropriate where there is a change in the situation (Elder, 2021). In this case, the efficient leader should be able to solve problems of the organizations regardless of the situation which makes this style unique and rational. For example, there can be chances that a new employee has a great inclination towards a particular task or a project but he may not possess appropriate skills to work on the tasks and hence such employee will need to be trained in advance to complete the task (Daniëls et al., 2019). However, the employee may feel demotivated if there is a wrong judgment of the employee abilities and hence the employee has low confidence incomplete a specific task which will result in demoralization and underdevelopment of the employee performance. Also, the overvaluation and undervaluation of the employee's skills and abilities may have a direct impact on the company's overall objectives as this will degrade the employee performance, and also the productivity of the employee gets reduced (Solomon and Steyn, 2017).

As time pass the employee will be able to grasp the work and there will be no direction or coaching required to form the manager side. Also, it can so happen that there is more motivation required in mid of tasks or project as the employee might develop boredom as there is the probability that the employee feels no challenge in the work to gather his interest for a particular task (Gandolfi and Stone, 2017). Hence during this period, the situational leader must re-assess the task of the employee as well as

maintain the relationship with the employee so that appropriate direction or feedback can be provided to the employee (Solomon and Steyn, 2017). However, if the leader fails to do a judgment of the situation, it can lead to more severe issues in operations of the business such as task failures or project background. Hence the leader must be fully aware of the situation and be vigilant about the boring situation of the employee in their tasks (India Today, 2021).

The leaders belong to the situational theory traits does not only gives importance to the positive side of the employee but also helps the employee in overcoming the weaknesses of the employees as in current time, there should be diversity and inclusion in the various organizations and hence this should also be adapted to the leadership skills (Fuad et al., 2020). However, it may be not possible to prejudge the employee's strengths and weaknesses of the employee in advance and therefore have chances to misjudge the qualities of an employee resulting from an ignorance of the strengths and weaknesses.

To get habituated to the leadership behavior, managers should be involved in the production process and various issues related to the workers and if the manager gets accustomed to the employee behavior, the manager will be able to achieve the business goals as well motivate the worker to achieve the same. Therefore, it can be argued that the connection has enhanced the character of situational leadership (Manyuchi and Sakdeo, 2020).

However, it should be noted that the leadership skills matching with the situational theory are less effective as there has been lesser research carried out by researchers on this theory as compared with other theories related to leadership skills (Rosenhead et al., 2019). Despite these shortcomings, this leadership theory has been proved to be effective in various organizations such as educational institutes, military, and various business organizations. Having said that, this situational theory has been broadly used in these areas to address various problems related to leadership and so in the case of the company Unilever where this theory has been applied and the organization is benefitted from it. However, Rosenhead et al., (2019) argue that there have been several prejudices in the surveys related to leadership which are in favor of this theory as the questions in surveys often are considered to be an obstacle for the interviewee from choosing a suitable answer which is in favor of the leadership style. However, it should also be noted that the theory of situational leadership is a helpful model for Unilever as it is a helpful tool when there is appropriate adoption of the theory (Henkel and Bourdeau, 2018).

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the traits of a situational leader are that it makes compulsory for the leaders to get accustomed to their behavior whenever there is variation in the situation as every time the relationship between the human relations and task vary, there has to be a proper adjustment on part of the leaders in their behavior to fulfill the need of the situation (Kalangi et

al., 2021). Therefore, if the leader can consecutively apply this theory, he or she will be able to act appropriately in a given situation and help the employee to feel motivated and confident.

3. Topic related to Leadership practices in Unilever, UK

Leadership, Gender, and Diversity in Unilever

The company Unilever's integral and important part is its leadership and having diversity in the lead concerning gender is one of the core values of the company. Leaders are the ones who constantly put an effort to implement plans with a balanced approach as well as motivate the employees to achieve the company goals. According to Yashadhana et al., (2021), an effective leader is the one who encourage the team so that they achieve more than what they had without a leader and therefore an effective leader is the one who promoted diversity in his team by having both males and females as well people from a different cultural background working in a team. Also, as a leader, he or she can encourage both genders equally without any biases so that the overall objective of the company can be achieved (Gaston et al., 2020). Also, besides the gender, various employees belong from a diverse culture contributes to the company in a significant way as diversity allows the company Unilever to do the business operation at a global level as it has a workforce with diverse skills, cultural understanding which help them to interact with the customers and have a broad point of view related to businesses which will further help the company in achieving the business objectives (Warrell, 2021).

Also, along with promoting diversity, the leadership should focus on providing equal opportunities bot both males as well as females to help them achieve their career goals and objectives which in turn the company also gets benefitted. The leadership should promote shared responsibilities and equal participation of both the female employees as well as male employees in decision making as well as day to day operations the businesses as a result the company will be able to achieve its goals and the fruitful results can be shared equally both by male and female working together (Acosta et al., 2020). However, this concept of providing equal opportunity initiatives always targets a specific gender which can prove to be a potential cause of the problem by targeting a specific group rather than trying to make sure that the company goals are in such a way that it encourages equal opportunity for all. Gender is one of the social groups enlisted in the Human Rights Commission in the UK which monitors and regulates these groups and inequality done with these groups and these groups are protected by the law and hence the customers, as well as the employees, should have equal rights in getting an unbiased treatment from its leadership team (Yashadhana et al., 2021). Therefore, the leadership should be

aware of these facts and be able to promote gender equality as well diversity in the workplace so that there are no discrimination and the company can carry out its business operations smoothly.

Leadership Development

Leadership development refers to the evaluation of the leadership skills which helps in identifying and determining the strength and weaknesses of the leader concerning the operations of the business organization such as Unilever UK (Vogel et al., 2020). There are various signs of the development of leadership skills that will help in developing an effective leader who can increase the motivation in employees, build trust and cordial relationships with the employees as well as inculcate effective communication within the team (Lewis et al., 2021). Therefore, the companies such as Unilever, UK should aim at investing in leadership development so that the company can grow and can promote healthy learning. Also, the company should invest in leadership development to empower the leaders as well as to drive their productivity and performance (Vogel et al., 2020).

The development of leadership can create a greater engagement among the employees as the employees are trained to build effective communication at the workplace and value the employees resulting the employees who are valued are encouraged to do their best capabilities and with the leadership development programs will help in enhancing the engagement within the team and consequently there is development and growth of the organization (Fransen, 2021). However, the benefits leadership development programs show their results after a long time which can be a challenge for the organization as it is time-consuming with a lot of effort required.

The leadership development programs are designed in such a way that it challenges and motivates the leader to perform his job more effectively as it provides skills that are required for real-world scenarios. However, the various programs related to leadership development fail because of the ineffective way of implementation of the program (Kjellström, 2020). For example, training related to all employees including the leaders may not be fruitful for the leaders to develop the leader's strength. But, the implementation of effective development programs helps in increasing the financial position of the company as there are various skills developed with the development programs which makes the leader enough capable to help the organization grow with their effective leadership (Fransen, 2021). Also, with the proper development programs, talented leaders are attracted and tend to stay longer in the organization as it provides an opportunity to learn and grow by improving the confidence among the leaders by inculcating skills of communication, employee engagement, and other work-related learning which makes them confident and motivated. However, it may be possible that only developing the leadership skill will not prove to be enough for a leader to carry out managerial tasks as with only

gaining the leadership skill, the managers somewhere ignore the management skills (Kjellström, 2020). For example, there is ignorance on the activities of organizing, planning and coordinating as the priority developed from the leadership development programs are only based on how to lead the people whereas the leaders should also know about how he or they can influence their subordinates by inculcating various other skills rather than only having leadership skills.

Sustainable Global leadership

The term sustainable leadership means to inculcate sustainable activities in the businesses processes. In other words, it is thoughtful behavior and action by taking into consideration a global view to identifying the connection between the environment and the people (Muff et al., 2020). Developing global sustainable leadership qualities implies that embracing the practice related to sustainability at a global level. global sustainable leadership is based on a few principles through which the leaders take action and have a vivid impact on the organization through their sustainability practices at a global level. these principles include the understanding of the related factors which impact each other (Ziadlou, 2021). For example, understanding the business operation and its impact that will have on the environment. Global sustainable leadership always thinks globally and how an activity caused at the global level can impact future generations and therefore the sustainable leaders focus on making decisions that would be beneficial for the earth, animals as well as humans in a long run. Sustainable global leadership also contributes to change in habits which reduces wastes such as reducing paper use which will have a greater impact on a national and international platform through their sustainable practices at a global level (Kell, 2021). However, for leaders as well there is a continuous challenge in inculcating new habits over the deeply rooted habits of implementing sustainability through own practices which is the major cause of conflict within an individual and also for leaders, therefore, to bring about a global and sustainable change, there must be a comprehensive effort on the leadership part to change the habits which does not support sustainability and with the leadership skill, the leaders should implement plans and policies related to sustainable development globally so that people can act in a more sustainable way (Hallinger and Suriyankietkaew, 2018)

Sustainable global leaders must also encourage the employees to work towards sustainability goals and help them in empowering them through skills required for sustainable development. Hence it can be said that sustainable global leadership is an important part of the growth of the organization through learnings such as collaborative skills, systematic thinking, and assumption of the businesses (Pureza and Lee, 2020). Also, sustainable global leaders help to overcome the challenges that organizations are facing related to sustainability by implementing sustainable practices at the workplace which is

beneficial for the environment, the business, the customer at national and international levels (Pureza and Lee, 2018).

4. Conclusion

To summarize, this report consisted of the requisites for leadership as to how leadership can be more effective by applying various theories. In this case, the situational theory has been considered to analyze the characteristic of leadership by critical evaluation it with context to leadership practice in Unilever UK. Along with the analysis of the situational theory, there are three other topics discussed which showcase the attribute of the leader such as Leadership, Gender and diversity, Leadership development, and sustainable global leaders in context with the leadership essentials for company Unilever UK.

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