LECTURE 6

LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Lecture overview
Welcome to our 6th lecture on Leadership in Education Management. This lecture will discuss the importance of leadership, leadership theories and leadership styles.

Objectives

By the end of this lecture you should be able to:

i.   Define leadership

ii. Explain the difference between leadership and management.

iii. Describe the importance of leadership

iv. Examine leadership theories

v.   Evaluate leadership styles

What is Leadership?
- Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards goal setting and goal achievement (Stodgill 1974).
- Leadership can also be defined as the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically.
- Leadership is the process through which person one influences the behavior of others to do things willingly towards goal achievement.

It is the human factor which binds a group together and motivates it towards goals achievement.

Importance of leadership
- Leadership is indispensable if an organization has to meet its target or be successful.
- Leadership guides organizational efforts towards achievement of organizational goals.
- Leadership gives direction since members/employees need to know how they can contribute to organizational goals.

- Leadership motivates members, provides direction and leadership towards the attainment of organizational goals.

Leadership versus management

- Management implies more formalities as compared to leadership
- A manager usually directs others because of formal authority and power
- A manager is by essence required to perform the functions of management: planning, organizing, directing, controlling e.t.c
- A leader can exist in both formal and informal groups
- Leadership focuses on human interactions while management is more concerned with procedures and results i.e. the process of setting things to be done.
- Leadership binds a group together and motivates it towards agreed goals. Unlike a manger, a leader does not rely on any formal authority, because while a manager can force people to comply by using formal authority, a leader has no such power-he/she influences the subordinates' behavior to do things willingly.
- Effective leadership gives direction to the efforts of workers. Leadership guides organizational efforts towards achievement of organizational goals.

Leadership theories

Leadership theories attempts to explain and predict what makes a leader and why some leaders are more effective than others.

Several leadership theories have been developed. This lecture will discuss the following leadership theories:

a) Trait Theory/Leadership traits
b) Situational theory
c) Contingency theory
d) The charismatic theory of leadership

1. Trait theory/leadership traits

A trait is a physical characteristic/personality that can be used to distinguish leaders.

Around early 20th century, several attempts were made at explaining leadership. The prevailing belief then was that leaders were born not made. Certain people were believed to possess in-born traits that made them successful leaders.

However, later researchers began to accept that leader's traits are not completely inborn, but can also be acquired through learning and experiences (Okumbe, 1999).

This new thinking on leadership stimulated a lot of research which aimed at determining common traits possessed by leaders

In 1948, Ralph Stogdill reviewed 124 empirical studies on a leader attributes covering 27 recurring characteristics (Okumbe, 1999).

In this review of literature, he concluded that leaders exhibited the following characteristics: (i.e. categories of leadership traits)

Capacity: this included specific traits such as intelligence, alertness, originality and judgment.

Achievement: a leader must be a scholar with knowledge or athletic. He must have   accomplished in a certain area.

Responsibility: a leader must have self-confidence, desire to excel, persistence, initiative, aggressiveness and dependability.

Participation: a leader must embrace sociability, cooperation, adaptability and humor.

Status: - a leader must have socio-economic position and must be popular.

Situation: status, skills, needs, and interests of followers.

Stogdill's review concluded that different groups of workers and different activities require different types of leaders. A trait approach to leadership is therefore the evaluation and selections of a leader based on their physical, mental and psychological characteristics.

2. Situational Approach to Leadership

This theory is the opposite of the trait theory. This theory argues that what matters in a leader in how he/she handles a situation regardless of his/her physical, social or psychological attributes. According to this theory, appropriate management actions depend on the situation prevailing at the time.

This theory stresses on the fact that you cannot limit the concept of leadership on personality. The key author of this theory was Campell who did a lot of research in identifying the variables associated with situations. The situational approach theory emphasizes that the forces in the environment of an organization may affect the performance of a leader. The situational determinants are: -

(i)   *The structure of an organization:* this refers to the size of an organization. The bigger the size the harder the situation.

(ii)   *Organization Climate*: this is the openness between the leader and the subordinates.

(iii)   *Subordinate Characteristics*: this refers to the characteristics of the people being led. Are they responsible, knowledgeable etc?

(iv)   *Role characteristics*: role refers to the job description of the leader and how much power he has.

- Situational approaches to leadership suggest that situational factors must be considered and that one kind of behavior may work in one setting but not in another.

3. Contingency approach to leadership (Modern Approach)

The main author of this theory is Fiedler, (1967).
He referred to this theory as contingency because according to him leadership effectiveness is said to be contingent or dependent upon many variables.
He argues that one needs to identify a combination of a person's personal traits, situational variables and task structure in order to label one as an effective or ineffective leader.
He combined the trait theory and the situational theory to come up with the contingency theory.
This theory suggested two basic leader –orientation syles:

a) **Task oriented leader**: this emphasizes the job performance in the organization. It is concerned with the accomplishment of the task.
b) **Relationship oriented**: it is people- oriented style. The emphasis is on the human elements of an organization. For example, welfare of individual employees.
- The theory, therefore, argues that a specific trait under a particular situation makes a particular leader effective. This same trait in another situation may not make that leader effective.
- The goal of contingency approaches is to identify the variables that managers need to consider in assessing how different forms of leadership will be received.

4. The Charismatic theory of leadership
"Charisma" is defined as special personality characteristic that gives a person superhuman or exceptional powers.
- Personal characteristics of a charismatic leader include dominance, self-confidence, desire to influence others, adorable and admirable strong sense of own morals values, role model for the beliefs and values they want their followers to adopt.
- In this theory, authority or power stems from the appealing personal characteristics of a leader which followers might want to identify with.
- In an organization, this is the authority that comes informally from personal qualities of an individual or individuals.
- Their authority as leaders is legitimized through the overwhelming devotion to them by their followers.

Leadership Styles

Leadership style can be defined as the consistent pattern of behavior a person uses in an attempt to influence the behavior and actions of others.

It is a particular behavior applied by a leader to motivate his or her subordinates to achieve the objectives of the organization.

The following styles of leadership will be discussed:
- (i)   Autocratic style
- (ii)   Democratic style
- (iii)   Laissez Faire: Free Reign style
- (iv)   Charismatic style

2. Autocratic leadership style

This style is also known as **authoritative** or **coercive** style

- It is a one-man decision – the leader does not believe in delegation
- All authority and decision making is centered in the leader
- He makes all decisions, exercises total control by use of rewards, believers that payment is just a reward for working and the only reward that will motivate employee.
- Leader demand/unquestionable obedience from the members- orders are issued to be carried out with no questions, no explanations given "I have said," "I have decided."
- There is use of force and dictatorship – the leader doesn't care about interpersonal relationships
- The leader has little trust and faith in members

Group Members

- Staff takes no responsibility
  - Members have no say in matters that affect their welfare.
  - People merely doing what they are told they are negative, and indifferent.
- Production is good when leader is present but poor when the leader is absent

Advantages

- Decisions are implemental very fast.
- Decision making process is fast with the leader at the centre of all activities
- There is high probability of work being finished on time

- There is immediate feedback. Employees receive direct and immediate assistance towards achieving their goals. (Immediate feedback)
- Work can be well done due to the fear of the leader e.g. school setting, teachers and students

Disadvantages
- Employee's knowledge, skills and experience are not fully applied to their work
- Suppresses initiative – people have to be told to undertake tasks
- Staff cannot develop their maximum potential
- In the absence of the leader, work may not be finished because every decision is upon him
- Decision making is one way.
- Breeds problems – e.g. strikes may occur due to the pressures the leader is exerting on the subordinate/workers
- Lack of efficiency – thus, people will not like their jobs (children may have phobias for school).
- Workers needs are not taken into consideration, - therefore leading to resentment and dissatisfaction.

Democratic style
This style is also known as **participative** or **consultative leadership**. This type of leadership decentralizes power and authority.

This style of leadership seeks to obtain cooperation of workers in achieving organizational goals by allowing them to participate in decision making. (However, it does not relieve the leader of his decision making responsibilities or of his power over subordinates – it requires that he recognizes subordinates as capable of contributing positively to decision making.
- Criticism or praise is given objectively.
- Decisions are arrived at after consultations with employees.

Advantages
- It can improve workers' morale by involving them in planning and decision making.
- It increases the workers job satisfaction by broadening their responsibility and making their work interesting.
- Leads to decreased dependence on the leader and better acceptance of decisions since they have made the decisions, they tend to own them
- It uses workers' specialist knowledge and skills in achieving objectives

- There is consideration of everyone's point of view thus, satisfaction of the members
- There is atmosphere of freedom in performing duties
- People obey and participate because they are part of the decision making.

Disadvantages
- Decision making process is a slow process because time it taken consulting workers. "Group think"
- Time consuming
- Lack of close supervision may make the workers complacent
- Diluted decisions due to compromising
- Minor groups' views and needs may not be taken into consideration – e.g. **"The voice of reason in popular decisions".**
- Based on popular election – thus a good leader may not be elected due to the fact that he is not popular

Laissez faire – free reign style
- This term means "let the people do what they desire".
- It is a free reign style of leadership – leader gives complete freedom to the people
- It tends to avoid power and authority.
- There are very few regulations

Leader Characteristic
- He seems to have no confidence in his leadership ability
- Doesn't set goals for the group – depends largely on the group to establish goals and means for achieving them
- Doesn't exercise any initiative, the leader is a symbolic figure
Group members
- Decisions are made by whoever in the group is willing to do it
- Productivity is generally poor because of lack of guidance
- Morale and teamwork is generally low.
Advantages
- It can **facilitate initiative** for those who want to maximize their potential
- It gives **room for creativity** one can work in a committed and self-motivated atmosphere, increases workers' independence and expression.

- It motivates the workers because his decisions are accepted and implemented.

Disadvantages

- it may lead to **reluctance** on the part of the workers as they are the ones to decide for themselves
- A leader is held accountable for decision not made by him- thus is demoralizing on the leader's part.
- Some decisions require technical skills and knowledge which the workers might not have and so they require guidance.
- Without a strong leader, the group could lack direction or control – this may result into frustrations on the part of the workers.

Charismatic style

"Charisma" is defined as special personality characteristic that gives a person superhuman or exceptional powers.

- Personal characteristics of a charismatic leader include dominance, self-confidence, desire to influence others, adorable and admirable strong sense of own morals values, role model for the beliefs and values they want their followers to adopt.
- Authority or power stems from the appealing personal characteristics of a leader which followers might want to identify with.
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Examples of leaders with this kind of charismatic behavior are: Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammed and Hitler.

Advantages

- Such kinds of leaders exhibit confidence in their followers.
- The leader commands unchallengeable influence and respect among the followers.
- Tasks are well performed and immediately on the other hand followers may focus on the personality of the leader other than important task.

Activity

In your view, is there any best leadership style? Explain.

Summary
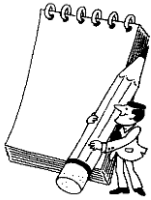
In this lecture we have discussed the importance of leadership, theories of leadership and styles of leadership. We have noted that leadership involves creating change, not maintaining the status quo-the changes are not dictated by the leader but reflect purposes shared by both leaders and followers. We have also noted that effective leaders must combine different styles of leadership.
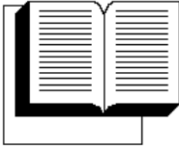
Self-assessment questions

1. Discuss the qualities of a good leader
2. Explain how a leader can integrate the above theories of leadership.

3. Give any FOUR characteristics of Laissez Faire leadership style. (4marks)

4. Discuss any THREE theories of leadership, closely linking them to education practice.
    (10marks)

Further Reading

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: Republic of Kenya. (2003). *Schools Management Handbook*. Nairobi: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.

Amanuel, A.T (2009). *Managing Education: A handbook for student teachers, trainers and school Principals*. Nairobi: CUEA Press.

Okumbe, J.A. (1998). *Educational Management: Theory and Practice*. Nairobi: University Press.

Olembo, J.O; Wanga, P.E. and Karagu, N.M. (1992). *Management in Education*. Nairobi: ERAP.