

## How Team' leadership is affected by Communication? - Theoretical study with application –

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### Abstract

This study explores the communication concept within team leadership which can generate organizational success. The purpose of the paper is to discuss how communication leads to a better performance both personal and organizational and how it impacts on Team leadership management. How communication can be performed by leaders to be effective on an organizational level and how can it lead to success.

Topics related with Team leadership on an action phase, as Monitor staff, Manage team limitations, Team Challenge, Execution Task Team, Solve problems, Provide resources, Encourage self-management team, Support social climate, will be analyzed.

The research question is “How Team' leadership is affected by Communication?” and will lead us to test and validate the impact of communication on performance through organizations structures.

With the increased use of teams in organizations, research began to focus on the leadership role in promoting the success of the teams. The understanding of team leadership process requires first understanding the nature of the operation of each team. The concentration of focus on the team makes this team leadership model differs from the traditional models of leadership precisely because of the central focus on the team as a unit.

This is a conceptual paper, which explores the concepts of communication within Leadership teams, framed by leadership models. The methodology used to was documentary analysis, including papers from the main scientific databases: Scopus and WOS, using the keywords communication, autonomy, responsibility and leadership. In the near future the field methodology will be "Action Research" to study methods, contents and ways of communication from leaders to their teams.

The study is going to be performed during 2017 in a specific company environment, using several techniques to collect data as observation, interviews or register of evidences in loco.

As expected results we hope to prove that Communication within organization hierarchies will generate more autonomy and better performance from employees which will originate better results from their tasks and thus more efficiency which in turn will lead to high organizational performance.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Communication, Autonomy, Responsibility, Performance

### Introduction

In the business world where we stand today, as a whole, competitiveness and technologies' era increasingly, there is something that should not be overlooked: The Human Factor.

Managing companies and organizations should now focus on the so-called Human Capital. Core values so often referred to in books, documentaries and even in their own internal rules of organizations are often left to bring for valuation of all financial-monetary factors. Effectively, organizations are to be managed but people are to be led.

Values such as honesty, transparency, respect, sharing of information and knowledge, to highlight just a few, are passed over for numeric values as profit, PBT, productivity ratios, volumes, market shares and so on. This way, also employees, employees that on a daily basis are giving everything for the fulfillment of goals, enter as variables in ratios and become simply numbers.

Relevant for this study will be leadership components, factors that are impacted by communication from leaders to followers. As reported by Axelrod (2002) "Effective leadership is still largely a matter of communication. An effective leader thinks about what he says, carefully prepares every expression of any meaning." (Axelrod, 2002)

### **Literature review**

With regard to leadership roles in Action Phase, DeRue (2010) states that during the action phase, important team leadership functions include monitoring the team and its performance environment, managing the boundaries between the team and the broader organizational environment, challenging the team to continually improve, becoming involved in performing the team's work, solving problems that the team encounters, acquiring resources for the team, encouraging the team to act autonomously, and cultivating a positive social climate within the team.

On this study we discuss these functions below.

Monitor team is one of the function that has as a main importance to ensure that the team performs up to its potential and is aware of external contingencies that may impact its functioning. The team must be monitored as it actively engages in task performance. Therefore, an important team leadership function during the action phase is to monitor the team. This function refers to examining the team's processes, performance, and the external team context as referred by authors as Hackman & Walton (1986), Komaki (1989), McGrath (1962) or Yukl (1989).

As stated by DeRue (2010) this function (monitor team) includes monitoring and evaluating the team's progress toward task completion, the resources available to the team, the team's external environment, and team member performance. Such monitoring is a critical team leadership function because it provides the key data that informs many of the other leadership functions

On the other hand, DeRue (2010) refer to Manage team boundaries as other important function on leadership. This next leadership function involves managing the team's boundaries. This function entails managing the relationships between the team and the larger organizational context as stated by Ancona (1990) or Ancona & Caldwell (1992) by communicating and coordinating with key constituents or units outside of the team (e.g., other teams and leaders, senior management, customers) and by buffering the team from external forces and events to integrate the team's work into the rest of the organization (Sundstrom et al. 1990).

Challenge team\_ DeRue (2010) mention that this team leadership function involves challenging teams with regard to their task performance and confronting the team's assumptions, methods, and processes in an effort to find the best ways of accomplishing the team's work. Pearce and Sims (2002) refer to this leader

behavior as challenging the status quo, and the authors mention that one aspect of empowering leadership is encouraging opportunistic thinking.

The leadership function of performing the team's task (*Perform team task.*) according to DeRue (2010) involves taking a more active role in the team's work by participating, intervening, or otherwise performing some of the team's task work. Hackman and Walton (1986) discuss this function in terms of "taking action" and suggest that the leadership skill at its most basic level is "the ability to get things done" (p. 108). Authors (Hackman & Walton 1986) also mention that this function is oriented toward external leaders who are not involved in the team's day-to-day task performance (and can become involved as needed), it does have some relevance for internal leaders who might only be responsible for a portion of the team's task and can periodically help other team members with their tasks.

Solve problems is another leadership function, as referred by DeRue (2010). Teams often confront complex, ill-defined problems that lack a single solution. Numerous scholars have posited that a critical team leadership function is to diagnose and solve any problems that keep teams from realizing their potential (Hackman & Walton 1986); (Zaccaro et al. 2001). As an example, Shea and Guzzo (1987) argued that effective team leaders must know how to "diagnose problems accurately and intervene effectively." Other author as Zaccaro (2001) suggested that team leadership should be defined in terms of "problem-solving activities directed at the generation of solutions that advance team goal attainment."

According to DeRue (2010) on his study, the next leadership function is to provide resources for the team (*Provide resources.*). This includes obtaining and providing informational, financial, material, and personnel resources for the team. Because teams must have the resources necessary to complete their tasks as mention by Hackman (1987), this leadership function involves taking action to secure these resources. Shea and Guzzo (1987)) mention that there are dual benefits to providing a team with resources. Not only are resources essential to task completion, but the provision of adequate resources sends an indication of support in the team.

Next leadership function, *Encourage team self-management*, is mention by DeRue (2010) as also an important function. The team leadership functions identified thus far generally require an individual or individuals to directly intervene in team functioning in order to satisfy critical team needs. In DeRue (2010) perspective we now turn to a more supportive and indirect form of team leadership where the team is encouraged to manage itself, and in many cases, to perform its own leadership functions. Such leadership is consistent with the self-management philosophy that underlies the use of more autonomous work structures. The idea of encouraging self-management as a leadership function is rooted in behavioral theories of self-control as stated by Thoresen (1974) and social learning theory (Bandura 1971), and was first identified by Manz and Sims (1980) in their theory of self-management as a substitute for formal leadership.

The final team leadership function that is analyzed on this study is about support social climate. (*Support social climate*), during the action phase is to support the social climate of the team. Numerous researchers have discussed the importance of tending to the team's social environment (Fleishman et al. 1991);(Hackman & Walton 1986); (Marks et al. 2001), with social roles consistently emerging as critical in team contexts (see Mumford, et al 2006 for a summary). This support function occurs throughout the task cycle when it is particularly important to tend to the team's social environment and to address interpersonal issues within the team that may interfere with the team's performance. A study conducted by Champion, Medsker, and Higgs (1993) brings to light the importance of positive social interactions among team members by highlighting the positive relationship between support and team productivity.

## **Methodology**

Action Research is the methodology to be used in this study, which is an intervention methodology that is to link research and practice in a process in which the actors involved participate interactively trying to understand the reality, trying to identify problems and solutions (Kuhne 1997). As stated by Sousa (2015) In this context, there is a change in the paradigm of research and the role of the researcher is to change from observer to an actor involved in the process (see also Arbnor & Bjerke, (1997)). The researcher, rather than maintaining a supposedly objective distance situation, intended to disturb as little as possible, collecting data from one or a number of parts, since learning occurs over time and through interventions planned in a dynamic situation (Sousa et al. 2015).

Practitioners may also be active participants, helping to shape the issue or research question, helping to generate and analyze data, and then through the use of new information, change your own behavior. (Sousa et al. 2015). The study is exploratory, with the main objective to identify the environmental limits within which the problems, opportunities or situations of interest is likely to reside, and identify salient factors or variables that can be found there and be relevant to the search.

Two approaches could be used: qualitative and quantitative. Methods of quantitative research in general (but not always) are usually associated with deductive approach (based on logic), while the qualitative research methods are usually associated with inductive approaches (based on empirical evidence). Likewise, deductive-quantitative models are usually more structured than the inductive-qualitative designs. In these cases, it is more appropriate to begin with the inductive approach (ie, observing patterns, behaviors and results and draw conclusions from empirical data). For these reasons the approach qualitative methods were selected. The qualitative analysis allows a better understanding of the situation and favors an interpretative approach. (Sousa & Costa 2014)

The objective of the study is to analyze how leadership functions impacts on followers results through implied motives and leads to personal engagement, commitment and organizational performance. The sector where the study will be developed will be the banking sector. More precisely one "Bank Captive" belonging to a large group where the core business of the Bank is to support the sales company and all sales channel of the main company of the group, giving financial solutions for network stakeholders. The study will cross the entire bank organization.

Observation and interviews will be made to elements (Leaders and staff) of different department, so different division of the Bank. The proposed study will be done in a set time period from July 2017 to December 2017 (6 months) matching the methodology cycle: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Afterwards, it will be time for conclusions from observation and preparation final disclosure. Within this timeframe it is supposed to cover all critical and important points of time within this sector: seasonality, the end of the year, rapid early next year, end of quarter and analysis of mid-year. The chosen business sector is the Bank's sector.

## **Research Design**

This study will be conducted as an exploratory study. Is the more useful research approach (and appropriate) for projects that address a subject about which there are high levels of uncertainty and ignorance on the subject, and when the problem is not well understood (i.e., few research on the subject). Such research is generally characterized by a high degree of flexibility and lacks a formal structure.

The main objective of exploratory research is to identify the environmental limits within which the problems, opportunities or situations of interest likely to reside, and identify the salient factors or variables that can be found and that are relevant to the research

Exploratory questions that structure the phases of the research: What kind of case is this one? What are the key factors? What are the critical success factors of a high performance team? What are the characteristics / distinctive characteristics of a good leader? What are the reasons for the lack ideas or information understandable?

The objective of the study is to analyze how leadership functions impacts on the followers which can generate engagement, commitments and organizational success.

Control: Without a specific type of control. The spiral of Action Research initiated within a specific context and with a clear purpose. This is likely to be expressed as a goal (Robson, 2002). Diagnosis, sometimes referred to as investigation and analysis is done to enable planning of actions and decide on the actions to be taken. These are then taken and evaluated actions (cycle 1). Subsequent cycles involve further diagnosis, taking into account the previous assessments, planning of new shares, with these actions, evaluates them. The last theme suggests that action research should have implications beyond the immediate project; in other words, it must be clear that the results will inform other contexts (Lewis 2007)

Since the methodology is Action Research, all control process is done by analyzing the observation cycles. Monitoring will be done by the transfer of reflections resulting from participating research and the integration of its inputs that may lead to improvements or new investigations if they are identified by other research topics and / or other problems to be solved.

Context: Field (Natural). As mentioned all the observations will be made in the field, within a company where employees and managers (hierarchies) will be observed and the techniques and reporting procedures regarding leadership methods analyzed. The study will be developed on the banking sector.

Time: "Cross-Sectional". This study is cross-sectional study of a particular phenomenon (or phenomena) at a given time. Considered Cross-Sectorial because it is recognized that this research project is necessarily limited time due to the academic program schedule. However, the time horizons in many courses allow sufficient time for a longitudinal study, but this is not supposed to be the case. (Lewis, 2007)

### **Field work**

The objective of the study is to analyze how leadership functions impacts on followers results through implied motives and leads to personal engagement, commitment and organizational performance. The sector where the study has being developed is the banking sector. More precisely one "Bank Captive" belonging to a large group where the core business of the Bank is to support the sales company and all sales channel of the main company of the group, giving financial solutions for network stakeholders. The study will cross the entire bank organization.

This organization of the Bank is composed of several divisions as "Sales and Marketing", "Operations", "Finance" and "Management", all these division has various departments and a range of roles within them, Observation procedures and interviews will be done to the elements (Leaders and employees) from different department's therefore different divisions of the Bank.

The first approach was to do a pilot research with 4 elements belonging to the first line management. The complete research is going to be made until December 2017. Observation and interviews will be made to elements (Leaders) of First line management of different departments, and different divisions of the Bank. The proposed study will be done in a set time period from July 2017 to December 2017 (6 month) matching the methodology cycle: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Afterwards it will be time for conclusions from observation and preparation final disclosure reflected on this paper. Regarding that this was a pilot research included in a major and complete research about the topics mentioned previously. With time it is supposed to cover all critical and important points of time within this sector: seasonality, the end of the year, rapid early next year, end of quarter and analysis of mid-year. The chosen business sector is the Bank's sector.

As mentioned, interviews will be made. For Executive Interviews questions (type A) it was used Delbecq model (Delbecq et al. 2012) These interviews were prepared to be done to the top management of the Bank. Another set of questions were prepared to interview the so called "Fist Line", which are the Team Leaders. For these team leaders was adapted the Variable Items (type B) from Delbecq model (Delbecq et al. 2012).and already performed as a pilot to 4 team leads, first line management.

Regarding future and deep research it was also prepared a set of question to all employees, these set (type C) will be used as mentioned in future research and was adapted from Team Leadership questionnaire from Morgeson's model (Morgeson et al. 2010)

Type A and Type B , as research instrument were already pre-tested and for that it was asked to 4 team leaders and 1 Top Management member to validate the structure, the content and the clearness of the interviews. Both research instruments were considered validated with positive feedbacks as the following statements: "well structured and understandable"; "Deep level of detail, which is good"; "These questions will lead you to a deep and constructive analyses"; "Understandable and clear"; "Great quest. You will get lots of information to work on".

The main plan consists on doing Interviews (Type A and B) and conclude them on 3QT17 and Data analyse planned for 3Q/4QT17. One Workout (w/First Line) planned to 3QT17 to discuss results (Type B). After results' conclusion an Action plan will be implemented by Area or department. During 4QT17 Analysis to the actions implemented and collection conclusions. 4QT17 more analysis circle and data collection.

In the meanwhile the pilot phase were concluded already with 4 interviews to First line employees who are team leads.

### **Data Collection**

As all research will be done in the field based on observation and interviews all data is growing primary data of observation, interviews, and other types and data collection methodology.

Data collection techniques to be used is the "Work out" with workgroup. The researcher and the group's leaders (Managers. First level) will work together to share experience and team management stories, based on the day-to-day. According to Sousa (2015) this technique will help to further information on the organization and the relationship between employees and managers.

Executive Interviews questions (type A) (Delbecq et al. 2012) and Team Leaders' Variable Items (type B) (Delbecq et al. 2012) as research instrument were already pre-tested and for that it was asked to 4 Team Leaders and 1 Top Management member to validate the structure, the content and the clearness of the

interviews. Both research instruments were considered validated with positive feedbacks (e.g. "well structured and understandable"; "Deep level of detail, which is good"; "These questions will lead you to a deep and constructive analyses"; "Understandable and clear"; "Great quest. You will get lots of information to work on").

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In the meanwhile the pilot phase were concluded already with 4 interviews to First line employees who are team leads.

As for the observation process the intention is to collect all the details on a daily basis, taking into account the business day, observing the attitude of leaders to followers, and the impact of employees with feedback information, reporting criteria in practice demands, behaviors all topics that may be considered relevant in a perspective of leadership. Field notes are taken at each relevant moment to describe the job was different perspective (leaders and followers).

For interviews, the plan is to involve the leaders of various departments from different teams and also the members of the teams and try to analyze matches on the methodologies and the impact on performance, depending on the type of leadership that results from observation.

As mentioned by Corbin (2008), one of the virtues of qualitative research is the multiplicity of data sources. The researcher can use interviews, observations, videos, documents, drawings, diaries, memoirs, biographies, newspapers, historical documents, memoirs and other sources not listed here. Throughout the study, the researcher may use one or more of these sources alone or in combination depending on the problem to be investigated. Other considerations are the desire of data triangulation obtaining various types of data on the same problem combining several techniques: i.e combining interview with observation and documents analysis or another data source.

### **Conclusions and future applications:**

The engine of this process is the variable "Communication". Communication by leaders and the way they promote autonomy and responsibility on the followers (types of leadership and methodologies).

As studied through Leadership roles described above,, and stated by DeRue (2010) these roles considered include ensuring the right mix of people in the team; defining the overall mission of the team, setting goals or targets and performance standards; Structuring roles and responsibilities in the team; ensure that all team members are able to run the deliberate effectively; ensure that team members make sense in team environment; facilitation processes and team. These leadership roles will be the nuclear elements of the leadership model it will be tested and implemented during the research process.

Analyzing all conceptual and theoretical concepts or roles, we can deduce that there're a link that leads us to the variable "communication" as an important aspect on leadership methods, methodologies and even behaviors. To have practical and useful operational leadership strategies and to establishing expectations and objectives or goals on teams the way leaders communicate it's very important to employees receive it the better way possible... In the phase of "Structure and planning" the understanding of what leader

wants to communicate is highly demanding so the way communication is used is really a must because it will lead to promote high performance.

On the other hand the leader also has to promote communication, autonomy and accountability within the team, the better all team elements understands their roles, and tasks, the rules they have to fulfil, the targets they have all together as a team, the better results they can find at the end of the day,,, For all of this, autonomy and responsibility is needed all along the process,

When connected, autonomy and responsibility through communication leads to a good personal and organizational performance and thus the results will be shared and communicated within the company to managers or employees, just to name a few within a hierarchy, as this will be a cycle. This theory can be applied to a leadership training model for managers within organizations.

The intent with this article is to review the literature on team leadership, describe how this form of leadership is distinct from traditional forms of leadership and present an integrative view of team leadership that both summarizes past research and points to areas of promising future research. Although considerable progress has been made, much research remains to be done.

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