Relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics at Gomal University DIKhan, KPK, Pakistan

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Abstract: *This study intends to identify relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics. Main objectives were to identify significant relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations, to explore significant relationship of situational leadership with group dynamics. Hypotheses to be tested were; there is no significant relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations, there is no significant relationship of situational leadership with group dynamics. This research study was quantitative in nature and methodology of the study was descriptive. Three self-made questionnaires were used to collect the data from respondents. Separate questionnaires were used for situational leadership, interpersonal relations and group dynamics. Validity and reliability of the questionnaires were checked. Content validity of the questionnaires was checked by the experts and then questionnaires were improved as per directions given by the experts. Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to check reliability. It was 0.781, 0.793 and 0.811 for the scale of situational leadership, interpersonal relations and group dynamics respectively. All the 507 teachers of the Gomal University constituted population. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 217 teachers were taken as a sample and were randomly selected using convenient sampling technique. After seeking proper permission from the Head of the Department, data was collected from the respondents. Pearson correlation coefficient was applied as suitable statistics. Findings showed significant relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics.*

Keywords: *Situational Leadership, Interpersonal Relations, Group Dynamics*

Introduction

The 21st century is the century of progress and development in every field. Every field needs a competent leader to accomplish task and to achieve goals. Like other fields, there is also development

in education. Education also needs a competent leader who may realize the vision and mission of the institution. A leader always focuses o vision and goal setting.

Bass (2019) stated that leader is a person having vision and goals. He/she energizes others to commit to that vision. Whereas leadership is the act of providing direction and energizing others so that they may voluntarily commit to that vision.

Hannah, Walumbwa & Fry (2011), stated that role of leaders is very important and the effectiveness of team performance is dependent upon them. An effective leader possesses competencies, traits as well as leadership styles that facilitate team effectiveness and affect overall organizational performance (Ruggieri & Abbate, 2013).

Bel et al., (2015) stated that leaders must know right mix of talents so that they may be effective when put together in the form of teams.

Bass (2019) stated that leadership style is beyond personality traits as well as observable behaviours. It involves cognition (motive, goals, attitudes) that guide to interact with group members.

Leaders must have awareness on team composition because it is relevant consideration regarding formation of team (Bel, Smirnov, & Wait, 2015). Recardo, III, & Jolly, (2009) stated that composition as well as effectiveness of a team leads to increased organizational performance.

Hannah et al., (2011) stated that successful leader is one who is able to cause team effectiveness as well as success of an organization.

Therefore, for a stronger leader to succeed in an organization and also to get team effectiveness, emotional intelligence is very important besides the "right stuff" (Hannah et al., 2011).

Therefore, productive teams are much more effective than their individual members. (Katzenbach & Smith, 2005). Successful teams don't just appear. Each and every organization requires a leader who can create productive teams within the organization (Goleman, 2014a). As a result, leaders are essential to an organization, particularly in terms of inspiring workers at all organizational levels (Tung & Chang, 2011).

Kesting et al. (2016) stated that leadership is the ability of a leader through which he/she influences followers. For this purpose a leader uses different ways of communication and he/she uses a clear approach so that goals may be achieved. According to this perspective, leaders frequently persuade others and enthusely encourage them to take vital action while having a clear vision and goals.

According to Kesting et al. (2016), leadership entails influencing people's behaviours as well as interactions within and between groups to accomplish goals.

Sfantou et al., (2017) stated that additionally, leadership is a type of collective control where the member needs the co-operation of subordinates to achieve organizational goals. It is thought that strategic planning affects leadership. Leadership is shown to be crucial in establishing a shared vision and commitment.

Sfantou et al., (2017) also stated that there s strong link between collective work approach and leadership style.

In any organization leadership style plays an important role. Odayappan (2000) stated that leadership style is an important factor and the success and failure of leader is dependent upon it.

Leadership Styles

There are different styles of leadership. A leader uses different leadership styles in different situations because no one style is appropriate for all the circumstances and situations and sometime a leader may use different leadership styles in a particular situation.

Goleman (2014c) stated that no leadership style is appropriate for all the situations. He mentioned that a leader uses a combination of six leadership styles i.e. authoritative, affiliative, coaching, democratic, coercive and pacesetter. Leaders may use different leadership styles depending on the situation.

Situational Leadership

The demands and needs of different organizations and teams are different. Keeping in view these things a leader modifies his/her leadership style and in this way there is flexibility in the leadership style. Kindle (2009) stated that organization and team is assessed by the leader and in this way leadership style is modified as per demands of the team and organization. There is adaptation as well as flexibility in the leadership style and regular assessment of the environment by the leader so that effective and efficient style may be adapted as per needs.

1) In each event, a leader can assess his/her team and thus applies a range of leadership styles to meet needs of the group. Assistance is provided by the leaders to the employees to increase productivity and performance. In this way these employees are encouraged.

Psychologists assumed that same attributes are not shown by two different leaders. All the situations are different having unique characteristics.

In Situational leadership both directive as well as supportive dimensions are combined and each component is employed in a particular situation.

Leaders following Situational Leadership philosophy must assess their employees and in this way there must be assessment of commitment of employees to the task. Situational leaders must adjust their level of assistance to the subordinates depending upon current situation. These leaders must adjust leadership style as well as conduct keeping in view the subordinates' commitment (Kindle, 2009). Behaviour, task, dedication of workers are part of situational leadership and success of situational leadership is dependent upon these factors.

Situational leaders provide necessary directions as well as task support to their subordinates to achieve desired results. To overcome issues, situational leader must think creatively and this is greatly linked to the productivity (Cnaff & Wright, 2013).

In Situational leadership, a style is adapted by the leader which is suitable to the needs of the situation as well as needs of the team. Here the general abilities of the leaders are not too much important, but their abilities to decide as per need of the situation are very important. This style was given by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey. It is called as "Situational Leadership Theory" or "Situational Leadership Model" (Malherbe, 2008).

Interpersonal Relations

Interpersonal relations play an important role in any organization because performance and productivity of any organization is dependent upon on the interaction of group members with each other. Patricia (2015) stated that performance of any organization is dependent upon the interaction of team members with one another. Positive interpersonal relationships are necessary because these are helpful in obtaining beneficial outcomes for individuals as well as organizations. It is concluded that

interpersonal relations is an important issue in any organization. In many organizations there are people issues rather business issues. Due to faulty interpersonal relations in organizations people problems arise and in this way attainment of goal is hindered. Therefore, interpersonal skills may be enhanced at any workplace to achieve goals.

Association or affiliation between individuals is termed as interpersonal relations. Crabtree (2004) stated that things like aspiration, desire or a goal bring persons together and in this way relationships arise. Simply we can say that interpersonal relationship is a connection, affiliation or association between two or more people.

Positive interpersonal relations result in job commitment and job satisfaction. Zagenczyk (2010) in the research study found that good interpersonal relations and friendship at workplace are helpful in improving employees' attitudes and in this way there is job satisfaction, job commitment and engagement and vice versa.

Ellingwood (2001) stated that if there is friendship at work, then there is dedication and job satisfaction. It means interpersonal relations play an important role in achieving organizational goals and cannot be ignored.

Favorable interpersonal interactions in an organization have been linked to numerous positive outcomes for both individuals and companies.

Positive interactions are helpful to produce positive interpersonal relations, and many professionals feel joy in the establishment and maintenance of these ties. Employees may be able to fulfill their "desire to belong" in this favourable relational environment and in this way there is job satisfaction and job commitment.

Heaphy & Dutton (2008) stated that positive interpersonal connections are related to better personal as well as professional outcomes.

Furthermore, if there are positive relationships with mentors, then there will be better work related outcomes like salary and promotion. There will be also recognition and rewards (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lima, & Lentz, 2004; Dreher & Ash, 1990). There will be career mobility (Scandura, 1992). When there are positive interpersonal relations in an organization, then sense of community is developed (Baker & Dutton, 2007).

Besides official professional interactions, informal relationships developing outside the business result in better personal and work results. Coworker attraction is helpful to improve teamwork (Mainiero, 1989). Friendships in the workplace have been linked to a variety of favourable outcomes, like higher job satisfaction and job involvement. Workplace romances have also been linked to happier employees (Riach & Wilson, 2007). Finally, better social contacts have been linked to increased cardiovascular activity (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008).

Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail (1994) stated that if there are positive interpersonal relations there will be increased compliance and job satisfaction. Kramer (1991) stated that if there are conflicts, the productivity will be decreased. Positive interpersonal relations results in organizational commitment (Sparrowe, Wayne, and Liden, 2000). Positive interpersonal relations boost up team performance (Kostova and Roth, 2003).

Group Dynamics

The group dynamics being the integral part of organizations provide strength to organizations and in this way group members are motivated and trust is developed leading to better output. Aishwarya (2020) stated that the word dynamics means 'force'. It deals with study of forces found in any group. Collection of people who interact with one another, assuming obligations and rights and trying to achieve common goal is known as group. It is social process by which people interact sharing a common goal and work collectively to achieve the goal. Group dynamics is an integral part of organizations. Group dynamics provide strength to organizations. Group dynamics motivate people and develop trust. These provide conflict resolution skills and help the organizations to get better output.

Group dynamics is the study of how groups are formed and structured as well as how they influence their members, other groups, and organizations. These relate to adjustments occurring in group structure due to changes taking place in any part of it.

According to Gupta (2015), the thinking of members is affected by the group. If there is good leader of the group, the group will do better. Group can have a synergistic impact; if there are positive thinkers, output is doubled. The attitudes as well as perceptions of the members are also affected by dynamisms of the group. If there is cooperation and the group is cohesive one, then there is maximization of productivity.

Group dynamics are helpful in creating bond among employees. These help them to understand the importance of cooperation. These are helpful in collective decision making as well as problem solving and in this way leading to overall productivity.

Each member of the team will work effectively to reach the goals if there is a positive dynamic inside the group working for a common objective. In case of poor group dynamics, there will be negative impact on the performance and thus there will be failure to achieve common goal.

Aishwarya (2020) stated that group dynamics are concerned with the attitudes as well as behavioral patterns of the group members. Group dynamics also discuss how groups are created, their internal structure, and the procedures that are used to carry out their functions. So we can say that these are concerned with the interactions as well as forces operating between groups.

Rationale of the Study

This study aims to investigate relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics at university level. The rationale behind the study is that situational leadership is an important factor regarding teamwork as well as productivity. Interpersonal relations and group dynamics also play an important role and these are managed by situational leadership. This study aims to offer practical implications that will help situational leaders to improve interpersonal relations and group dynamics. This study will also help them to achieve maximum productivity by improving interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

Statement of the problem

Many organizations lack effective leadership so their productivity is affected badly. At the same time interpersonal relations and group dynamics play an important role in any organization and productivity is also affected by these. This study is chosen due to importance of situational leadership in any organization, as in many organizations desired productivity is not achieved due to lack of situational leadership. Situational leadership directly affects employees. Kindle (2009) stated that

situational leadership is helpful in achieving organizational goals. Similarly in any organization interpersonal relations may affect employees as well as productivity. Group dynamics are also important as positive group dynamic increase the productivity (Shiver & Goldsmith, 2014). The role of situational leadership, interpersonal relations and group dynamics cannot be ignored in an organization (Khalil, 2017). In any organization, the role leader is very important. In Pakistan no research studies have been performed to identify relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics particularly at university level. So there is need to conduct research to identify the relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics at Gomal university. So this study is chosen.

Objectives of the study
Following are the objectives of the study:
1. To examine relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations
2. To examine the relationship of situational relationship with group dynamics.

Significance of the study
This study will also be useful for stakeholders (administrators and subordinates) to see the relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics at public university level to accomplish task and in increasing the productivity. This study will provide guidelines and direction to administrators that how they can modify their situational leadership style as per needs and demands of the organizations. The study will be useful for administrators to improve interpersonal relations and group dynamics with the help of their situational leadership style.

This may be helpful for administrators to relate difference in group dynamics with their situational leadership style. It will be helpful for stakeholders to relate interpersonal relations with their situational leadership style.

Hypotheses of the Study
Ho1: There is no significant relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations. **Ho2:** There is no significant relationship of situational leadership with group dynamics.

Research Methodology
This research study is quantitative in nature and the design of the research study is descriptive. Survey method was used for data collection. The total 507 Gomal university teachers constituted the population. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 217 teachers were taken as a sample and were randomly selected using convenient sampling technique.

Self made questionnaires were used for data collection. Separate five point Likert scale questionnaires were used for situational leadership, interpersonal relations and group dynamics. The responses of the teachers were taken with the help of these three questionnaires. Content validity of the questionnaires was checked. Then these were processed for reliability and were delivered for pilot testing. After pilot testing these were improved as per suggestions given by the respondents. Items having low Cronbach Alpha value were deleted and were given to respondents in order to take their responses. The study was focused to identify the relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics at Gomal university.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection involved distribution of questionnaires to 217 sampled teachers of Gomal university. Out of the total respondents, 198 teachers completed and returned the questionnaires. Among these 175 responses were deemed suitable for data analysis. Consequently, analysis of the data was performed utilizing, 175 questionnaires that were collected.

Data Analysis

Table1 Showing relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations

Variable	Sample size	Pearson correlation coefficient	p-value
Situation leader ship and Interpersonal relations	175	0.92	0.001

It is clear from the table that there is significant linear relationship between Situational leadership and Interpersonal relations with high correlation coefficient of 0.92. As p=0.001<0.05, so the hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations, is rejected.

Table 2 Showing relationship of situational leadership with group dynamics

Variable	Sample size	Pearson correlation coefficient	p-value
Situation leader ship and Group Dynamic	175	0.756	0.000

The above table shows that there is significant linear relationship between Situation leader ship and Group Dynamic with high correlation coefficient of 0.756. As p=0.000<0.05, so the hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship of situational leadership with group dyanmics, is rejected.

Findings of the Study

The research findings indicate significant linear relationship between situational leadership and interpersonal relations. Similarly findings indicate significant linear relationship between situational leadership and group dynamics. These results highlight the need of training programs for leaders so that they may adopt leadership style as per need of the organization and at the same time through training programs they must be enabled to focus on the importance of interpersonal relations. Through training programs awarenes must be created in the leaders about group dyanmaics so that they may focus on group dynamics and they may know the importance of group dynamics in an organization. These measures will contribute greatly to the overall wellbeing as well as effectiveness of leaders in their roles.

Discussion

The research study results show significant linear relationship between situational leadership and interpersonal relations. Similar result was found by Efendi et al (2022) and Koswara et al. (2021). They explored that situational leadership has significant linear relationship with interpersonal relations.

The results also indicate significant linear relationship between situational leadership and group dynamics. *Vivas. J (2015)* arrived at the identical conclusion. She discovered a strong significant linear relationship between situational leadership and group dynamics.

Conclusion

The study findings indicate that a leader's approach significantly influences employees, which in turn affect effectiveness of the organization. Workers are inspired by effective leadership style and in this way desired organizational objectives may be achieved easily.

A thorough statistical study was carried out in this research work to determine the effect of situational leadership on employees since it is crucial for a company to understand the relationship between leadership style and employees.

As a result of the findings, it is evident that, situational leadership behaviours of the leaders/administrators have an impact on personnel working in Gomal University D.I. Khan. It is also concluded that situational leadership is based on the manager's comprehension of his subordinates' demands, interpersonal relations and group dynamics which increase their productivity. The findings indicate that there is significant linear relationship of situational leadership with interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

Recommendations

Based on the above results (table 1 and 2), here are some recommendations for the improvement of situational leadership style as well as interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

1. As there is significant linear relationship of situational leadership style with interpersonal relations and group dynamics so leaders are recommended to improve their relationship behavior with employees to increase productivity.
2. Managers are strongly advised to adopt a strategy that emphasizes each individual's needs.
3. Arrange training programs in order to enhance situational leadership style and leading competencies of the leaders.
4. Arrange training programs for leaders so that they may get awareness about interpersonal relations among subordinates.
5. Arrange training programs for leaders so that they may get awareness about group dynamics among subordinates.
6. Create a supportive and friendly environment to make situational leadership style effective and at the same time this environment must be created so that interpersonal relations and group dynamics may be improved.
7. Emphasize skill development in leaders to improve and modify their leadership style as per needs of the organization as well as according to the nature of interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

By implementing these recommendations, situational leaders can enhance their leadership skills as per need of the organization and employees keeping in view the interpersonal relations and group dynamics, leading to improved work performance along with effective decision-making, and better interpersonal relations and group dynamics within subordinates.

Credit Author Statement

Gul Zaman: Data curation, writing original draft preparation, **Tyeba Ambreen Siddiqi, Maryam Gul:,** Data curation, Writing-Reviewing, editing, **Prof. Dr. Muhammad Shah:** Conceptualization, Methodology.

Future Prospects

- This research study was delimited to public sector university i.e. Gomal university D.I. Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the future researchers may conduct researches on both public and private sector universities in other districts of KP as well as in other areas of the country.
- In the present research study smaller sample size was taken. In the future researchers may take larger sample size.
- In the future researchers may use qualitative research techniques like interview and observations for data collection.

Ethical Standards

It is declared that all authors don't have any conflict of interest. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all the individual participants included in the study. It is also declared that this article was not published by any other author.

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