MANAGEMENT VERSUS LEADERSHIP: A KEY THEORETICAL DISTINCTION

MARIA VASILESCU
ASSISTANT, PHD
“CONSTANTIN BRANCUŞI” UNIVERSITY OF TIRGU-JIU
e-mail: maria_vasilescu1983@yahoo.com

Abstract
Leaders and managers are not the same. Management and leadership have been used differently by researchers, scholars and practitioners, on one hand as synonymous terms, and, on the other, as two completely different words. This paper attempts to elucidate the differences between leadership and management, to show that management and leadership are two distinct functions that do share many similar duties, like working with people and influencing others to achieve goals.

The purpose is launched under the broad topics of definitional complexities, conceptual distinctions, behavioral differences and functional divergence. The paper also discusses the intersections of the roles of leaders and managers. They apply different conceptualizations and approaches to work, exercise different ways of problem solving, undertake different functions in the organizations, and exhibit different behaviors owing to their different intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Keywords: leadership, management, differences, similarities, relationship

Clasificare JEL: M10

1. Introduction

There is a permanent controversy about the difference between leadership and management. The two ideas that can be considered the origin of this continuous debate can simply be synthesized in the following syntagms: "not all managers exercise leadership” and “not all leaders manage”. Some authors argue that although management and leadership overlap, the two activities are not synonymous (Bass, 2010), the degree of overlapping becoming a point of disagreement (Yukl, 2010).

This paper seeks to analyze and correlate fundamental definitions of leadership and management and discuss the similarities and differences between the two processes in order to help creating a broader understanding of different perspectives of the two concepts and their evolution, to elucidate and to distinguish them, and to offer an answer to two important questions: “are management and leadership different” and “how can they be combined to obtain superior results in organizations?”.

2. Definitional challenges

Given the evolution in terms of functions and relevance of the two concepts, leadership and management, it is important to understand all facets of such notions.

Management, as a practical activity, can be detected in the 19th century, while its evolution as an academic discipline is inspired by the work of Peter F. Drucker, from the latter half of the 20th century, who noted: “to be sure, the fundamental task of management remains the same: to make people capable of joint performance by giving them common goals, common values, the right structure, and the ongoing training and development they need to perform, and to respond to change. But the very meaning of task has changed, only because the performance of management has converted the workforce from one composed largely of unskilled laborers to one of highly educated knowledge workers”.

170
Jacques defines management in terms of the act of manager, considering a manager “someone who is in a role in which he is authorized to get work done through employed subordinates for whose work he is held accountable” (1996, p. 35).

Rost (1993, p. 145), in an attempt to define management in opposition to leadership, comes up with the following definition: “management is an authority relationship between at least one manager and one subordinate who coordinate their activities to produce and sell particular goods and/or services”.

Generally speaking, we may consider management a process used in order to attain organizational objectives. Some authors explained management as a process by which definite set objectives are achieved through the efficient use of resources (Northouse, 2007).

In his attempt to define management, Kotter combines different tasks that include planning, organizing, budgeting, coordinating and monitoring activities for group or organization (Kotter, 2001, pp. 85-96).

Daft (2003) defines management as “the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational resources.”

The literature on leadership dates back to several centuries, when philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Confucius, Niccolo Machiavelli and many others were partially responsible for the development of the theoretical base of leadership.

The struggle to understand leadership, across different sectors and disciplines, has easily proved that literature is vast in this field. After decades of research it seems that issues are complex, leadership being considered “the most studied and least understood concept of any in the social sciences” (Bennis and Nanus, 1997). The effort is even bigger if we take into consideration that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Stogdill, 1974, p. 259).

Our effort to outline the features of the concept made it necessary to overview some common definitions of leadership. Thus, according to Cohen, leadership is “the art of influencing others to their maximum performance to accomplish any task, objective or project” (1990, p. 9). Leadership is the “art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations” (Kouzes, J.M., Posner, B.Z., 1995, p.30). Also, leadership is a purposeful relationship, which occurs episodically among participants, who use their individual skills in influence, to advocate transforming change (Michael S. Kearns, 2005). According to Wolinski (2010) leadership is a process that involves influence with a group of people toward the realization of goals.

In their *Handbook of Leadership*, which is often referred to as the Bible on the subject, Bass and Stogdill (1990) define the leadership as, “the principal dynamic force that motivates and coordinates the organization in the accomplishment of its objectives.” That means that leadership is a process that involves vision, motivation, and actions of the leader that enables the followers to achieve certain collective goals, providing direction and bringing change.

As a conclusion, leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviours, influences, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of a position.
The conceptual foundations of leadership involves creating value, vision and strategy, influence and inspiration, a proactive strategy, a people focused person with charismatic style who has the ability to set direction and raise expectations. On the other hand, the conceptual foundation of management includes policies and procedures, power and control, work focused persons with authoritarian styles and reactive strategies, giving directions and planning details. The common area of the two processes refers to the fact that both accomplish a goal, explain vision, motivate others and mobilize resources.

3. Leadership and management – are they different?

Since Zaleznik’s well-known article, “Managers and Leaders: Are They different?” in 1977, the debate about whether leadership and management are divergent carries forward. Research exploring the differences between the two already mentioned concepts has grown considerably and it is far from over.

In 1977, Abraham Zaleznik wrote the first article about the difference between leaders and managers, mentioning that the organization needs both effective managers and effective leaders in order to reach its goals, but with different contributions (Zaleznik, 1977). Whereas leaders promote change, new approaches, and work to understand people’s beliefs to gain their commitment, managers promote stability, exercise authority, and work to get things accomplished. Therefore, management and leadership need different types of people (Zaleznik, 1977).

Other researchers mention that the leader is inspiring, innovative, flexible, courageous and independent, and has a soul, the passion and the creativity. While the manager is deliberate, authoritative, consulting, analytical, and stabilizing, and has the rational, the mind, and the persistence (Capowski, 1994).

Kotter stated that Leadership is different from management, but not for the reason most people think. Leadership isn’t mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having charisma or other exotic personality traits. It’s not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership...
necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment (Kotter, 1990)."

Table 1 summarizes the major differences between management and leadership, as described in the literature. We can easily sustain the idea that managing and leading are two different ways of organizing people. While leadership is setting a new direction or vision for a group that they follow, management controls or directs people in a group according to principles or values that have already been established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status Quo versus Change</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulates existing systems</td>
<td>Seeks opportunities for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts the status quo</td>
<td>Challenges the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works within current paradigms</td>
<td>Creates new paradigms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanistic versus Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on how things get done</td>
<td>Focuses on what things mean to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes complex systems work efficiently</td>
<td>Helps people accept and move through change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves telling others what to do</td>
<td>Involves energizing people to take action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relies on control</td>
<td>Relies on trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors results through methodical means to bridge performance gaps and solve problems</td>
<td>Inspires people to surmount obstacles by satisfying basic human needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency versus Vision</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieves efficiency and effectiveness within the organization’s mission</td>
<td>Creates vision, sells vision, evaluates progress and determines next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a function consisting of planning, budgeting, evaluating and facilitating</td>
<td>Is a relationship composed of identifying and selecting talent, motivating and building trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present versus Future</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consists of routine and structure that deal with the present</td>
<td>Is oriented toward the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on short-range goals, keeping an eye on the bottom line</td>
<td>Focuses on long-range goals, keeping an eye on the horizon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As you examine the information presented in Table 1, we may conclude that success in different types of organizations can be obtained only through a combination of effective leadership and management. By comparing the elements presented, we may sustain the idea that leadership is about getting people to comprehend and believe in the vision you set for the company and to work with you on achieving your goals, while management is more about administering and making sure the activities are happening as they should. In fact, the concepts of leadership and management are transposable, interrelated, especially in describing performance effectiveness within organizations.
4. Conclusions

Management and leadership are terms that are frequently used interchangeably, however, they are not the same thing; they are two distinctive and complementary processes. It is widely accepted that the two have important similarities, but they also have differences.

Leaders and managers are not the same people. They apply different conceptualizations and approaches to work, exercise different ways of problem solving, undertake different functions in the organizations, and exhibit different behaviors owing to their different intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Toor & Ofori, 2008).

Leadership and management must go hand in hand, because every intention to divide the two within an organization will, doubtlessly, generate more problems. For any company to be successful, it needs management that can plan, organize and coordinate its staff, while also inspiring and motivating them to perform to the best of their ability.

In today’s dynamic workplace, organizations need leaders to cope with new challenges, and transform organizations in order to achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace. In addition, organizations need managers to maintain a smoothly functioning workplace, and to utilize resources effectively. Finally, a well balanced organization should have a mix of leaders and managers to succeed (Kotterman, 2006).

References


[20]. *** [www.edu-cat-ion.com](http://www.edu-cat-ion.com)