The Influence of Leaders Orientation on Event Management Success: Event Crews Perception

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Abstract

A research on leadership styles of event manager’s influence the event success set the background of the study in this manner. Leadership styles are one of the factors that lead to successful event. Successful event can be a good benchmark for event planning in the future. The objective of the research is to examine the influence of leadership style towards event success. Population for this research consists 112 event companies who are doing consultant event management and organizing the event that are running their operation nearby Kuala Lumpur, biggest city in Malaysia. This non-probability sampling successfully collected 100 set questionnaires from event crews using convenient sampling method. The analysis shows that people oriented and decision-making oriented of leader have significant relationship towards event success. Last but not least, this paper ends with conclusion World Conference On Business, Economics And Management - WCBEM 2013, recommendation and suggestion for future research.

Keywords: People Oriented, Decision Oriented, Leader, Event Success;

1. Introduction

A research on leadership styles of event manager’s influence the event success set the background of the study in this manner. Leadership styles are one of the factors that lead to successful event. Turner and Müller (2005) cited from Lee-Kelley et al. (2003) that there is a significant relationship between the leader’s perception of project success and his or her personality and contingent experiences.

Leadership is one of the world’s oldest preoccupations. The understanding of leadership has figured strongly in the quest of knowledge. Purpose stories have been told through the generations about the leaders’ competencies, ambitions and shortcomings; leaders’ rights and privileges; and the leaders’ duties and obligation.

The absences of leadership are equally dramatic in its effects and organizations move too slowly, stagnates, and lose their way (Mills, 2007). Based on Leslie (2009) the study showed that crucial leadership skills in today’s organizations are, in fact, insufficient for meeting current and future needs.

Leadership is one of the factor might contribute to event success. Northouse (2007) defined leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leadership is the ability to lead and influence others in positive way, motivate, people, provide direction and being

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innovative (Chand, 2009). He mentioned that there are three keys of leadership styles which is autocratic, delegate and participative. According to Brown (2007), leadership styles can be identified by how authority is used, how a leader relates to others, employees' minds and muscles are used, and how a leader communicates. Different than E. Brown, he mentioned that there are four types of leadership styles: dictatorial, authoritative, consultative and participative.

In other research by Turner (2005), he indicates that there are four basic leadership styles: autocratic, bureaucratic, Laissez-faire and democratic, besides two other leadership styles: transformational and transactional. Successful event can be a good benchmark for event planning in the future. It will also show that the event has achieved its goal. It is important to study the event success because it can be used in events by helping organizations identify strengths and opportunities for improvement for both individual events and event program as a whole. This idea was supported by Farris, Doolen, and Van Aken (2010). Therefore this research will investigate the importance of leadership styles on event success in event business.

The research on project manager leadership in projects is scarce (Müller & Turner, 2010). Prior research studies indicated a correlation between successful performance and the manager leadership styles. However, the amount of studies concerning project manager leadership styles and its contributions to project success is limited (Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2010).

Leadership competencies relating to project success was lacks support for project manager leadership contributions. Although prior studies discussed performance, time and cost, and competencies in relation to project success, these do not evaluate project manager leadership impact. This study tried to address the gap in project management research of which project manager leadership styles contributes more to success of the event.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Determining the Success of Event

According to Northouse (2004) event success can be defined as the achievement of something desired, planned or attempted after the event organized. One of the factors that would determine the event success is the event meets its objectives. This means that, if the objective of the event is to gain profit, then if the event achieved the certain amount that has been targeted, the event will be considered as successful one.

Leadership literature, blogs, and seminars typically focus on telling leaders the right things to do if they want to succeed. That makes sense for most of us. We want seasoned professionals to help us learn from their mistakes and accumulated wisdom. By sharing the most valued aspects of what great leaders do to inspire others, leaders at any level can learn to improve their skills. Those of us seeking advice expect it framed in a positive way (Bell, 2012).

According to Wilson (2004), long and short-term goals set for the event should be used to evaluate its success. Success of the event should include both quantitative measures, such as the number of people in the audience and profit after the event; measuring the level of excitement in the room, before and after comments by “key” people at the event; and determining if people are looking forward to the next.

2.2. Leadership Styles

A Dictionary of Business and Management (2006) said that leadership styles are the traits, behavioral tendencies, and characteristic method of a person in a leadership position. There are many ways to lead and every leader has their own styles. Some of the more common styles include autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Leadership style depicts the way in which a leader attempts to influence the behaviour of subordinates, makes decisions regarding the direction of the group, and keeps a balance between the goal attainment function and the maintenance function of the group (Fertman and Van Linden, 1999).

The conventional concept of leadership styles assumes a top-down, role-based view of leadership. Traditionally it refers how the leader manages people and how they make decisions.

2.2.1 People

In explored delegation as a method of professionally developing employees within the context of the full-range model of organizational leadership and three different leadership models have been proposed by which to understand delegation. First model is the transactional operator, next model is the team player, and third model is the transformational. Self-defining leader or each model starts with different attributes of leaders based on their perspective taking abilities and leadership philosophies
(Kuhnert, 1994). Then, according by Spillane (2005), leadership through people is designed to equip leaders or managers with the latest and most influential set of performance management and people skills that will support their transformation to become leaders of change. Leadership behaviours can influence financial performance of an organization (Yulk, 2008).

Leadership successes follow a familiar structure such as a charismatic leader, often the CEO or school principal, takes over a struggling school, establishing new goals and expectations and challenging business as usual within the organization. This leader creates new organizational routines and structures that with time transform the culture, contributing in turn to greater leader satisfaction, higher expectations as a leader, and improved the achievement. Leadership through people can help unleash the potential of your people to accomplish your most important goals and team cohesiveness (Wendt, Euwema and van Emmerik, 2009).

2.2.2 Authority

Power without authority is illegitimate. Authority without power is impotent. Behaviourist approach to power gives rewards for the performance of the desired behaviours. The rewards are linked to compliance and must always be ethical. The level of the reward must fit the level of expected behaviour to attract the follower (Vivian Herron, 2009). This type of power should be a last resort and should be avoided if at all possible. Coerciveness alienates individuals.

There may be compliant, but to individuals who are well adjusted and emotionally healthy, it may be accompanied with resentment. This power is energy intensive as the leader through punishment incentives, tries to move the will of another adult. According by Herron (2009) rationality prevailed, the leaders were able to turn everyone's attention to the goals at hand and this, however, went well beyond the goals of the districts' expectations and state-wide standards. The pervasive goal was to ascend to and maintain a school culture of excellence.

2.2.3 Decision Making

Numerous decisions are made during times of change. As a manager, handle decision-making will directly influence how the organization fares during these times (Hemmrich, 2011). Avery (2004) has studied how widely dispersed power is in European companies, and this is associated with an emphasis on gaining consensus in making decisions. The leader or manager makes Autocratic and Consultative decisions. These styles vary in the level of team participation, but in both leader makes the decision. Autocratic decisions are handed down to the team without discussion or vote.

There are times that the leader needs to make a quick decision but sometimes when leader will want input from the team before making a decision. This is use can be either to solicit new ideas for consideration, or to see how the team feels about some of the options leader is considering. According to Hemmrich (2011), when leader bring the team in and allow them to be in charge of the decision, he or she is either using the group decision or delegation styles but in both styles the leader give up his or her veto power and agree to allow the group to make the decision.

Group decision can be accomplished either by majority vote. When the leader assign the decision making process to a group or subordinates, he or she will not be part of the process, this is called delegation. So it is important for leader to set up some rules or limitation.

2.2.2 Flexibility

There is trait approach has been around for many decades, but there is increasing interest in several skills that appear relevant for flexible, adaptive leadership. Furthermore, these skills involve the ability to understand the situational requirements for effective leadership and to be flexible in adapting to changing conditions and crises (Mumford, Friedrich, Caughron, & Byrne, 2007). Flexible leadership theory uses ideas from several different literatures, including leadership, human resource management, strategic management, organization theory, and organizational change (Yukl, In Press; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004, 2005).

The theory is about strategic leadership that emphasizes the need to influence key determinants of financial performance for a company: efficiency, innovative adaptation, and human capital. In addition, the actions and decisions of managers at different levels in the organization and in inter-dependent subunits must be mutually compatible and consistent with the organization's competitive strategy and external environment. The theory of versatile leadership (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2003) also involves competing values, but effective flexibility is defined as an appropriate amount of skills or behaviour related to competing objective and development (Landry, Stowe, and Haefner, 2012).
3. Method

Population for this research consists 112 event companies who are doing consultant event management and organizing the event, which are located at Petaling Jaya, Selangor. This non-probability sampling successfully collected 100 sets of questionnaires from event crews using convenient sampling method.

4. Analyses and Finding

Regression

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t    | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------|------|
| (Constant) | 1.985 | .737 | 2.692 | .009 |
| mean_people | .403 | .115 | .404 | 3.496 | .001 |
| mean_authority | -.017 | .127 | -.018 | -1.35 | .183 |
| mean_dm | .242 | .098 | .298 | 2.548 | .017 |
| mean_flexibility | .019 | .138 | .018 | 1.39 | .176 |

a. Dependent Variable: mean_es

The analysis shows that people oriented and decision-making oriented of leader have significant relationship towards event success. Therefore, there is significant relationship between people oriented leader and event success. It is also significant relationship between decision making oriented leader and event success. The analysis also found no significant relationship between authority and flexibility towards event success.

5. Recommendations and Suggestion

Good leaders as well as keeping the main goal in focus are able to think analytically. Not only does a good leader view a situation as whole, but is able to break it down into sub parts for closer inspection. Not only is the goal in view but a good leader can break it down into manageable steps and make progress towards it.

Future research should conduct research by using other methods other than distribute questionnaires such as through observation and interview. Through observation they can find and experience by themselves what had happened. Besides, through interview some expert person who had experience with event industry they will more advance to get knowledge and true feeling of the respondent because this primary source normally give unbiased answer and penetrable

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