



Opinion

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Theory-basis of leadership training program within the Swedish Police



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Introduction

When the Swedish police force underwent a reorganization in 2015, the philosophy, based upon notions of “bottom-up”, as opposed to “top-down”, was inherent to the entire public sector in Sweden thereby inducing the need for a new type of leadership style. To facilitate leaders’ confrontation of the challenges and need for individual changes, the training program for leadership development required reformation. The reorganized leadership program was intended also to be aligned with the work of The Delegation for Trust-Based Public Management which on behalf of the Swedish Government has the assignment to support the Swedish public sector in developing a more trust-based management. The theoretical cornerstones of this leadership program have evolved from four basic factors: relations, trust, motivation, and participation. In general, it was argued that: i) the way people behave and treat each other affects the level of trust between them; ii) trust affects the facility for autonomy and reinforces relations; iii) the use of competence and relatedness in turn affect an individual’s level of motivation; and III i) finally, the will to participate, engage, cooperate and ‘pull-together’.

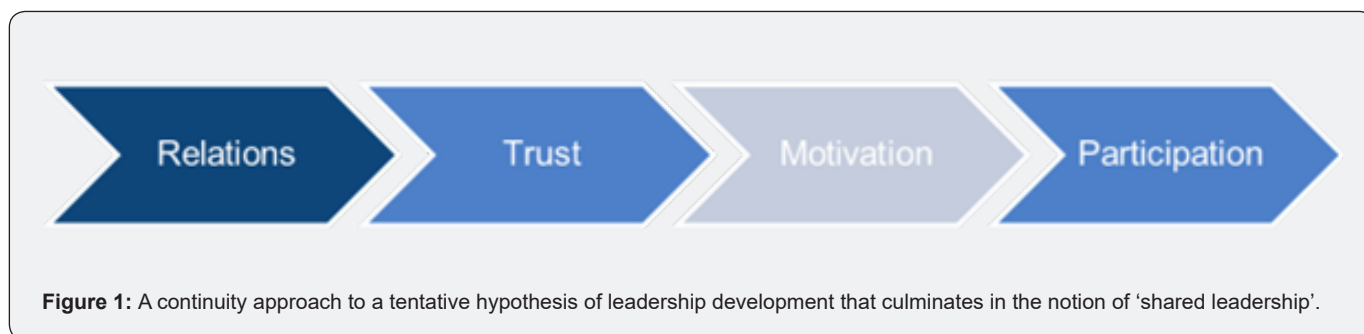
Relations

According to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary [1], the definition of relations prescribes “the way in which two people or groups of people feel and behave towards each other”. Good relations between individuals are based typically upon a few recurrent traits. When people are asked to define high quality

relationships, the words chosen include respect, responsiveness, directness, honesty, and consideration. These attributes define how we behave and treat each other [2]. Good relations do not necessarily imply that one obtains that which one points at or that one may do as one pleases. Sometimes, respect and consideration in a healthy relationship is to say “no” or to draw the line over which one may not tread. Building interpersonal relations provides a key factor for effective leadership [3], just as good relations have been shown to be the key factor in driving satisfaction and loyalty in customer relations [4]. Regarding leadership and above all effective leadership, Nathan, Mohrman & Milliman [5] have argued that “the jobs of supervisor and subordinate are interconnected; the success of one ultimately on successful performance by the other”. Subsequently, the leadership philosophy and style appear to exert an important effect on the overall organizational performance.

Trust

According to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary [1], the definition of trust is “to believe that someone is good and honest and will not harm you, or that something is safe and reliable”. Generally, trust is based upon good relations [6] and develops between people in a two-way interaction. It is dependent not only on how individuals present themselves within contextual situations, but also is dependent upon the trust-giving individual’s mindset and experiences of earlier interpersonal interactions [7]. Trust has also been shown to promote both exchange of information and problem-solving processes [8].



Moreover, trust offers a fundamental component in the reciprocal relationship between the employer and the employee [9]. The attribute remains essential for the provision and receipt of autonomy in the working situation [10] with marked effects upon motivation [11], employees' autonomy [12] and workability performance [13]. Trust does not necessarily imply the freedom to behave however which way one may choose but rather to accept responsibility and accountability for one's performance or one's behavior. Nevertheless, it was observed among IT-project leaders that shared leadership amplifies project success directly and via knowledge sharing and cohesion effects [14].

Motivation

Also, according to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary [1], the definition of motivation is the "enthusiasm for doing something". Nevertheless, work-related motivation research is devoid of unified and distinctive definitions [15]. Most current motivational theories emphasize factors that durationally stimulate, channel, or maintain the behavior of the individual [16]. Motivation may be viewed as the 'drive' that generates the choice of direction, action, and the intensity and duration of action. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) linking personality, human motivation, and optimal functioning comprises of two main types of motivation, intrinsic (that comes from within the individual) and extrinsic (that comes from external sources and results in external rewards). Both are powerful forces in shaping 'who we are' and 'how we behave', and both drive us to meet the three basic needs

1. **Autonomy:** Autonomy implies that the individuals need to experience that they have control over i) their own destiny, ii) their lives, and iii) their own behavior.
2. **Competence:** Competence refers to achievements, knowledge, and skills through which individuals are required to create and develop: i) competence, and ii) sensations of efficiency regarding essential tasks.
3. **Relatedness (also called Connection):** Relatedness comprises the individual's need to belong to and connect with others.

In this context, it has been observed [17] that an empowering

leadership style as exemplified by 'shared leadership' of the formal leader is associated with higher perceived peer leadership quality upon four different types of leadership roles (i.e., task, motivational, social, and external leader). Furthermore, formal leaders who empower their team members are also perceived as better leaders themselves. Moreover, the improved perceived peer leadership quality was subsequently related positively with team effectiveness and work satisfaction, whereas it was shown to be related to negatively to evidence of burnout with 'team identification' mediating these relationships.

Participation

Finally, according to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary [1], the definition of participation is "the fact that you take part or become involved in something". Participation or the will to participate is closely linked to our level of engagement [18]. Active individual decisions influence human behavior based upon how motivated they deem themselves to engage in a range of certain activities. From a work-related perspective participation can be defined from: i) continuance and formalization and ii) level of influence. It has been observed that high levels of participation in work management and decisions are effective and lead to both increased productivity and work satisfaction.

Shared leadership arises under conditions wherein higher-level officers/managers/executives and subordinates work together upon project/task forces with an emphasis on the equal sharing of information and participation of enterprises. For example, in a sample of 1933 registered nurses working in 24 hospitals with shared leadership organizations, participation was associated with higher decisional involvement scores concomitant with nurse experience shown to be a statistically significant predictor of decisional involvement [19]. Furthermore, nurse manager and staff registered nurse scores were significantly different implying that shared leadership may promote staff nurse perceptions of involvement in decision-making. Managerial implications pertain to advantages of leadership through consideration and employment of all existing categories of factors in daily leadership activities and decision-making processes in the participation to drive a strong climate of task assignment and completion.

Interactions Between Relations, Trust, Motivation and Participation

Preliminary notions pertaining to components integral to a new leadership training program indicated that satisfaction and loyalty from good relations may also influence individuals' willingness to engage and perform within any kind of relationship whether it be the relation between spouses, friends, co-workers or employer and employees. Therewith these accounts implied that a satisfied and loyal employee would be more likely to engage in everyday work and perform at higher levels than a dissatisfied and disloyal one. Thus, the present framework is initiated with the factor relations, building relations, since improper/inappropriate interpersonal behaviors between the leaders and the employees, suppression techniques, harassment and misleading jargon may lead to devastating effects regarding the quality of the relationship.

It was postulated also that good relations constitute a solid foundation for trust. Trust in turn ensures the contingency whereby the employer may extend to the employee autonomy within the working situation. This augmentation ought to lead to the possibility for the employee to use his/her competence, skill, and experience in solving upcoming challenges. In doing so, the employee will continue to learn and develop within the enterprise. In everyday work there is also a need to build a relationship towards mutual concern. For this, there is required to be a certain level of understanding of the overall mission and the goals of the organization involved.

When these three basic needs are met, it is argued that intrinsic motivation will increase in conjunction with the employees' willingness to participate. This conclusion is also in accordance with the experiences derived from other kinds of interactions. For example, successful police investigators who have the ability of building a good relationship with the suspect also maintain a certain amount of trust that is needed for the suspect to be motivated to share information and participate in the investigation.

It was argued further that if the basic needs of intrinsic motivation are being satisfied, then an individual may be more likely to decide to participate and engage himself/herself in matters that endorse these needs. An employee whose basic needs are being met at the workplace is more likely to co-operate and contribute to the overall mission of the organization than one who lacks motivation or is driven only by extrinsic wishes and demands. Lastly, in the long term, organizations may gain much sustenance from working in accordance with the above-listed basic human needs.

Parallel Processes

As with every other civil organization, the police are not to be construed as an isolated island floating alone in an endless sea. The institution is a part of a society and proceedings within

the society will reflect upon the police in the same manner that those proceedings within the police will reflect eventually upon the society. These parallel and reciprocally interactive processes present significant importance for the understanding of how society may establish an effective police organization.

Building relationships between individuals is considered to produce positive effects, not just for the individual but also for society in general [20,21]. In the context of police work, it has been found that building relations with citizens even if it is through short, respectful, and fair interactions results generally in positive effects [22]. The case study of the 1910 Squad, Kansas City, Missouri Police Department has been cited as evidence. Here, the building of good relations, trust and respect within the force evolved a positive parallel process regarding the interaction with society. In turn, this progression was shown to lead to positive effects upon organizational outcomes due to interactions with the public [22]. The effects were based upon i) good relations within the organization and its employees, and ii) between the police and the public, which in turn promoted an increase of trust and the motivation to help and support each other as well as to participate in achieving a common goal.

In police work, this is found to be an important factor dealing with problems within certain challenged areas of society. If relations between the police and the citizens are healthy, trust develops into a willingness and a motivation to co-operate with the police, to file complaints, to testify, and to complete the lawsuit. It also promotes the will to participate and self-police juveniles and other criminally bent individuals and by sharing intelligence with the police for them to make arrests, to seize abuse drug, weapons and/or monetary thefts. The ability to act in accordance with this mindset does not contradict a firm, but just response from the police dealing with crime or criminal behavior. Sometimes, the competence of efficient interaction with individuals in policing is confused with being 'soft' on crime.

Conclusions and Discussion

Sharing leadership, making employees more involved in the management process, and taking responsibility has been shown to improve organizational outcomes and the capability to deal with emergency situations [23,24]. But research has also shown that the transformation from hierarchical lead organizations to a more participating organization often is exposed to leader's active obstruction [25,26]. The concept of 'shared leadership' offers an effective low-risk method of engaging employees in the daily operations of a police department through allowing individuals to the experience of being valued by their agencies and rendering them a stake in the operations.

A study of business manager participants, applying structural equation modelling, indicated a significant relationship between shared leadership and innovation, specifically the results demonstrated that the moderation effect of knowledge-sharing

contributed to the implied relationship [27]. Remarkably, about eighteen months following the implementation of 'shared leadership', in the form of an employee steering group called the "Leadership Team", questionnaire data confirmed the positive relationship between the Leadership Team and affective organizational commitment, which was mediated by empowerment [28].

Based upon the above line of reasoning, the Swedish Police argued that to be able to adapt to the new role laid in front the hierarchically trained leaders, these officers were required to be taught new skills, cognitive and behavioral, to be able to discard the old habits [29]. Moreover, it was important to outline the role as leaders within this new leadership philosophy, as succinctly expressed by Stewart et al. [30] "leaders may need to change their perceptions of who they are before they will change what they do".

Since leaders, on a regular basis, interact with their employees, they also exert a direct influence upon their behavior [31,32]. Andersson Arntén [20] found that leadership within the Swedish police had a significant effect upon intrinsic motivation, emotional organizational related engagement, and on the positive emotional level of the participants. In this regard, the tendency for individuals to express the ambition "to become their own boss" ought to be considered [33]. Although neither age nor sex were related to their leadership potential or to their actual desire "to become their own boss", nearly all the attributes were to be. Stepwise regressions indicated Competitiveness, Risk Approach and Conscientiousness were particularly related to self-related leadership potential. The authors imply that (i) working adults do have some insight into their leadership potential, (ii) Courage, Competitive, Conscientiousness and Curiosity are all related to both the desire to be a leader and success in leadership, and (iii) these attributes are easy and necessary to measure in candidates marked out for leadership positions.

The new leadership within the Swedish Police concerns the goal of rendering all employees, irrespective of grade or position, or organizational level, cooperate within given boundaries and in the direction of the organization. This notion focuses upon rewarding individual development and following up results with a perspective of learning and development in consultation with the employee.

As indicated above, organizations often focus on altering behavior to improve results and effects but then tend to forget the need for individual understanding of the task of functioning as a leader and as an employee [34]. Together with the individual mindset [20], this situation will determine the behavior and the subsequent outcome. The attitude and behavior of a leader consequently will have an impact on the work outcomes of the employees. The police officers' attitude and related behavior will have an impact on the people they meet and in the long term the effectiveness of the organization. Therefore, the new Swedish leadership training program focuses on the building

of relationships and trust to gain motivation and participation thereby putting a premium upon leadership-sharing. To reach this goal, achieve leadership development and avoid the risk of leader's obstruction, one of the primary tasks of this leadership program was to define the new leadership role and provide the tools necessary to gain competence to manage this new leadership role.

Limitations

The present paper gives the description of an educational program for officers of the law and as such will not provide any empirical evidence. Never the less, as with most conceptual enterprises, the sufficiency of observational background data ought to be sought. In the present circumstance a survey would be needed to confirm or reject the positive tendency, experienced by participants, to investigations of its nature [35-39].

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