

An Emerging Concept- Integrating Traditional Leadership and Virtual Leadership with special reference to Indian IT Industry

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ABSTRACT: *The term leadership has been probably the most talked about subject. Decades of academic analysis have given us more than 350 definitions of Leadership (Bennis Warren, Harper and Row, 2005). Literally thousands of empirical interpretations of leaders have been conducted in the last 75 years alone but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders. The time has come to not to talk of leadership in abstract terms but in concrete and measurable terms. Leadership has to be demystified, brought down from its lofty pedestal, dissected and finally understood by the common man. Now as they say war is too important to be left to the Generals, likewise, leadership in an organization is too important a subject to be left behind to intuition, chance, whims and fancies of an individual. This is because leadership provided today has implication in the long term.*

Working and leading virtually have become a growing concern and hence a growing area of focus in the last few years, generated by an increased care for the environment, a concern for a better life quality, the need to cut costs and/or the desire to welcome Generation Y (people born in the '80s who have grown up with all virtual media) into the corporate world. However for most managers and leaders in organisations, working and leading virtually has remained an area of frustration, at best a 'second-class' way of working, something that you do when you have no other choice.

Keywords: Virtual Leadership, Information and Communication Technology, Generation Y, Virtual Teams

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1. Introduction

There are plethoras of issues in an organisation that are detrimental in achieving the organisation goals. The issues related to technology can be easily resolved with appropriate strategic decisions of the top management. But the issues related to people and their development of their competency has myriad of issues to be looked into as it plays a pivotal role in achieving the

organisational goals. The human resource of an organisation should coordinate, cooperate align with the organisation's thinking to achieve the desired goals. In the absence of focus from all, the achievement of the goals will remain a mirage for all. On the other hand, if all work together with team spirit, the daunting and insurmountable will be achieved with ease and effortlessness. In this context, the competencies such as empathy, interpersonal relationship, innovation, trust, communication etc on the part of the leaders will play a very vital role.

The present study is focused on understanding the leadership styles being adopted by Information Technology Companies. Further, the study examines the Leadership Styles and Leadership Effectiveness prevalent in the organisation. The study will be useful for the organisation to develop Strategically Effective Leadership Styles to be adopted by modern day leaders who have to handle both face-to-face employees as well as virtual workforce. Few of the other needs for which this research will prove beneficial are:-

1. Changing requirements of organizations in the context of cross border, cross culture functioning which calls for higher leadership effectiveness.
2. Increased literary emphasis on changes in and addition to, the existing patterns of traditional leadership styles.
3. The concept of E-leadership is redefining the traditional practices of leadership in today's context.
4. The role of Virtual Leaders in managing Virtual Workforce.
5. The various strategies of Traditional and Virtual Leaderships to be adopted by modern day leaders for organizational effectiveness.

2. Objectives of the Study

The present study has made a wider attempt to understand the important determinants of organizational effectiveness of traditional and virtual leadership with special reference to IT Organisations namely IBM India Pvt. Ltd., Infosys Technologies Ltd., Accenture Services Pvt. Ltd., Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., and Dell India Pvt. Ltd. The detailed objectives of the present research are given below:-

- To provide a new insight into the practice of leadership, its basic concepts, theories, and advantages
- To analyze the importance of leadership in the current business scenario
- To find out the difficulties faced by leaders in the study locations
- To bring out the changing trend in styles of leadership being adopted in organizations
- To make a comparison between traditional leadership and e-leadership styles in the context of current business environment and
- To indicate as to how they are complementary to each other
- To establish a model on organizational effectiveness which is a synthesis of traditional and e-leadership styles

3. Hypothesis of the Study

The overarching issue of this study relates directly to the management dilemma determining how and to what extent traditional and virtual leadership style, characteristics (specifically effectiveness and flexibility) in organizations affect organizational effectiveness. The management question for this research is **“Do e-leadership style and characteristics, apart from traditional leadership styles, used by modern day managers; affect the success of the organization?”**

The following is the hypothesis for the study:-

H01: There is no significant relation between traditional and virtual leadership and the organizational effectiveness.

HA1: There is a significant relation between traditional and virtual leadership and the organizational effectiveness.

4. Literature Review

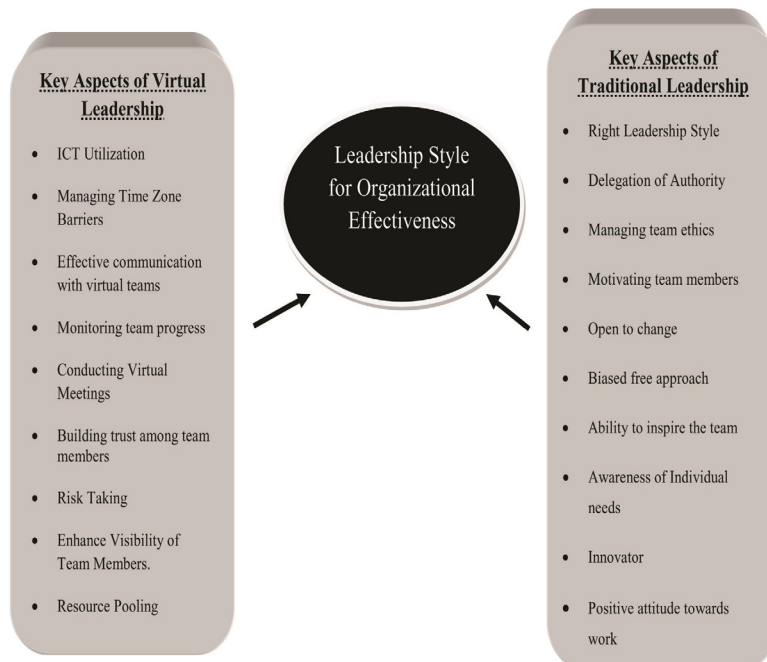
Today’s organizational leaders work with two interrelated forces, the increasing dispersion and subdivision of the world and tremendous explosion in communication technology and the exponential explosion in communication technology that has led to greater frequency of daily interactions with colleagues, coworkers, subordinates and bosses dispersed geographically. As a reaction to these changes, organizational scientists have begun to talk about “e-leadership” to refer to leaders who conduct many of the processes of leadership largely through electronic channels. The authors postulated that in view of the rapid technology growth in organizations and their increasingly global reach, in the near future e-leadership will be the routine rather than the exception in our thinking about what constitutes organizational leadership (Zaccaro and Bader, 2003).

(Avolio, Kahai, and Dodge, 2000) defined e-leadership as “a social process which effects the methods used by AIT process mediated by AIT (advanced information technology) to effect the attitude, thinking, action and feeling of person, group or corporate.” They also asserted that e-leadership can occur at any hierarchical level in an organization, involving both one-to-one as well as one-to-many interactions over electronic media. The authors adopted Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) to research on the relation between technology and leadership and their effect on each other. AST is a theory based on the actions of man guided by structures, which are described as the rules and resources which acts as framework for planning and completing assignments. The authors’ research indicated that technology creates organization structures of which leadership is a part, but at the same time, these organization structures continue to be transformed by the impact of leadership and technology. Leadership and technology, therefore, enjoy a recursive relationship, each affecting and at the same time being affected by the other; each transforming and being transformed by the other.

(Zaccaro and Bader, 2003) noted that virtual team is a phrase that has recently entered prominently into our leadership lexicon. The authors examined the trend toward establishing e-teams that can span distances and times to take on challenges that most local and global organizations must address, focusing particularly on the similarities and differences between physical teams (face-to-face teams) and virtual teams with particular reference to team effectiveness. As the authors asserted, the term virtual is misleading because it suggests a degree of unreality, as if such teams exist only in the nether world of electrons.

5. The Emerged Model for Organizational Effectiveness- The Virtual - Traditional Leadership Model (VTL)

When we take a look at top performing virtual leaders, we can find that they always adopted a blend of traditional and virtual leadership, which finally yields organizational effectiveness. On the basis of this analysis I have come up with a model on Leadership Style for Organizational Effectiveness, named **VTL Model** which stands for Virtual and Traditional Leadership Model.



6. Research Methodology

Based on the literature review, 20 factors of traditional leadership and 20 factors of e-leadership were drawn which effects

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.735	.139		5.287	.000
1 According to you, the right leadership style in TT is an important factor for OE	.053	.012	.136	4.509	.000
Is building trust among the TTM an important element for OE?	.088	.015	.172	5.714	.000
Is managing ethics in a TT a very essential aspect for OE?	.070	.013	.162	5.502	.000
Should a leader following TL strive to always motivate his team members to achieve OE?	.072	.013	.160	5.401	.000
Should a TTL following TL be open to change and accept it with the changing times for OE?	.066	.011	.176	6.021	.000
According to you for effective OE a TTL should have a biased free approach while working with his/her TTM?	.105	.022	.163	4.745	.000
For achieving OE, should a TTL have such a personality that he is able to inspire TTM?	.073	.008	.259	8.923	.000
A TTL should be personally aware of individual needs of his/her TTM for OE?	.054	.014	.121	3.932	.000
A TTL should be an innovator by personality and always be innovating new ideas to achieve OE?	.055	.008	.211	7.244	.000
For OE, a TTL should have a positive attitude towards work?	.208	.029	.252	7.196	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Effectiveness

organizational effectiveness in today's current scenario. A pilot study was conducted to study the sequential priority of these factors in which they effect organizational effectiveness. A research was conducted on 110 respondents which included project managers, team leaders and team members. These respondents belonged to the five companies under study which are namely IBM India Pvt. Ltd., Infosys Technologies Ltd., Accenture Services Pvt. Ltd., Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., Dell India Pvt. Ltd. The research was conducted with the help of a questionnaire. Based on the responses of the respondents a factor analysis was conducted to reduce the number of factors to 10 of traditional leadership and 10 factors of e-leadership which effects organisational

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.124	.130		.952	.342
According to you, for OE, the utilization of ICT in VL is very necessary?	.488	.041	.421	12.032	.000
For OE, a VTL should be able to manage time zone barriers	.069	.007	.231	9.919	.000
For OE, it is necessary to maintain effective communication between the VTM situated across the globe.	.048	.006	.199	8.397	.000
According to you for OE, is monitoring team progress of VTM an important aspect of VL?	.061	.014	.111	4.363	.000
To monitor the progress of VTM, is it necessary to conduct virtual team meetings so as to achieve OE?	.038	.017	.060	2.205	.028
Is Delegation of Authority a very important aspect of VL for OE?	.054	.005	.231	10.110	.000
Should a VTL have the ability to take risk while leading VTM for OE?	.047	.006	.189	8.191	.000
Is it the responsibility of a VTL to enhance the visibility of team members, scattered across the world to achieve OE?	.051	.009	.134	5.611	.000
According to you aiming for OE, a VTL should effectively manage the resource pool?	.054	.011	.119	4.881	.000
Is decision making a vital role of a VTL in a virtual environment for OE?	.059	.017	.092	3.398	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Effectiveness

effectiveness. And after reducing the number of factors, the proposed VTL model was developed.

7. Data Analysis

7.1 Testing of Proposed Model

Traditional Leadership

The relations between OE and items related to traditional leadership were examined using SPSS.

The multiple regression model is as follows,

The beta coefficients of the all the items of traditional leadership were positive and t value were positive. The corresponding p values were less than 0.05. Hence we can conclude that there is a positive and significant association between the items of traditional leadership and OE.

In order test whether there is a significant association between the items of virtual leadership and OE, a multiple regression analysis was applied by using SPSS.

From the table below we can observe that all the virtual leadership had positive beta coefficients and t values. The p values were less than 0.05. Hence we can conclude that there was a positive and significant association between OE and items of virtual leadership.

8. Conclusion

This study concludes that, traditional leadership provides importance to human touch and it paves a way to develop a strong relationship between leaders and the team members. At the same time, e-leadership style does not provide importance to human touch. In general, the absence of leader from the workplace may impact on human dynamics. This study concludes that, when compared to e-leadership style, organizational culture, performance, motivation and commitment were high in the traditional leadership style. Trust is considered as most important factor in leadership. Building trust in virtual team is complicated one where it can be easily built in traditional leadership. This study concludes that, traditional leadership style leaders mostly follow face to face communication and at the same time, e-leadership style leaders communicate through various electronic modes such as e-mail and other electronic formats.

In general, all types of communication will be conducted electronically throughout the organization. E-leaders balance their team in a way like traditional leadership but in a new style by using the technology in order to communicate their virtual team. In general, e-leaders fully use technology to reach-out their team members. In the current business scenario, e-leaders lead entire projects from distance and also interact with their team members or followers solely with the help of information and communication technology. From this study, it is clearly understood that, both style of leadership has its own advantages and disadvantages.

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