
Promoting and Advancing Leadership through Education: Few guidelines

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Abstract

People throughout the world are highly concerned with lacking in the right kind of leadership to resolve the social, economic, political, and environmental challenges that we are encountering. World leaders could not address many serious problems effectively. There is a leadership crisis all over the world. Some countries, for instance, Canada, Switzerland, South Korea, and Norway, are going ahead because of having effective leadership, while others (Bangladesh, Myanmar, Ghana, Iraq) are lagging behind. It is leadership that makes a big difference. It is claimed that managers are inferior to leaders in terms of personality, risk taking behavior, attitude and goal orientation. Many poor countries have transformed into mid-level income countries, for example, Korea, Malaysia, Brazil because of effective and efficient political leadership and economic diplomacy. This indicates that leadership is key to success and prosperity of a country or organization. Thus, we need more leaders than managers. Leadership is distinct skill. There are many managers who run their organizations without adequate leadership qualities and eventually organizations make huge losses. They probably use the wrong criteria to select leaders by focusing on technical rather than leadership skills. Questions are often raised, why is leadership so hard? Can leadership skill be acquired through education and experience? Why is leader's superior to managers? Becoming a great leader in the workplace is a not an easy job. There is an age old debate about whether or not leaders can be made, or if you have to be born that way. There are plenty of arguments for and against this debate. Many theories so far have been formulated and developed in support of this debate. It is believed that leadership qualities can be advanced and promoted through education. The literature reveals that great leaders are made, not born. People are not born to be great leaders. The review of the literature confirmed that appropriate education and experience can make people great leaders. This paper is an attempt to highlight the role of education or educational institutes in promoting and advancing leadership in business, political and social arena. This paper also addresses the major differences between a leader and a manager. Leadership is a distinct skill and this skill can be attained through proper education at the school, college and university levels.

1. Introduction

The burning issue of today is the right kind of leadership, which can address the social, political, environmental and economic challenges that the people throughout the world are facing. World leaders could not address many serious problems effectively and efficiently.

Leadership is pervasive. Organizations of all types require the right kind of leadership. But the supply of effective leaders is scarce. It is believed that leadership is the key to success. Some companies (Microsoft, Samsung, Sony) and countries (Scandinavian countries) are going ahead because of having effective leadership, while others are lagging behind. There is no doubt that leadership makes a big difference. Leadership acts as the catalyst that makes all other elements work together; without leadership, all other business resources (for example, land, labor, capital) remain inactive. Successful leaders anticipate changes, vigorously exploit prospects, inspire their followers to optimize productivity and lead the organization toward its objectives (Day and Lord, 1998). This indicates the significance of leadership. It is the leader who usually provides the direction toward goal attainment. A leaderless organization is like an army without generals (Ingram, 2013). Leaders are precious because they have to formulate and communicate new strategic directions and motivate to increase employees' commitment to the goal of organizational. Leadership is distinct skill. There are many managers, but number of leaders are few. It is the leader who makes a difference in an organization's performance. The success and failure of an organization depend, to a greater extent, on the quality of leadership. Questions are often raised, why is leadership so hard? What kind of role can educational institutes play in advancing leadership? Are leaders made or born? This is one of the most frequently asked questions in all leadership development.

2. Meaning of Leadership

Before answering the question whether leadership can be made or taught, let us define leadership. There is no acceptable definition of leadership. It indicates many things to many people. Leadership is the dynamic that galvanizes individuals into groups to make things different or to make things better for- the leaders, enterprises, and society as a whole. In its essence, leadership is about putting theory into practice -- figuring out what needs to be done, knowledge how to do it, and identify the motivational factors to take meaningful deed. According to Yukul (2002), "leaders influence the behaviors of their followers and vice versa. Successful leaders understand how to be valuable followers. Leadership may be defined as working with and through others to achieve objectives. Given this definition, a leader needs the support of others to get things done. It is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goal. Leadership is defined as the potential to influence and drive the group efforts towards the achievement of goals. The early search for a set of universal leadership traits failed. Today, thoughts and visions of leadership are more egalitarian. Leadership itself is a joint function; the leader and the followers need to build a synergistic relationship. And it is the trustworthy relationship that determines power and influence rather than of a position.

3. Why is Leadership So Hard?

Becoming a great leader in the workplace is not an easy job. One might have a leadership position or a leadership title, but that does not necessarily make a person a leader. Title and position alone aren't enough to be effective. It is very tough for leaders show that they are excellent at leading, and that they are be familiar with what they are doing. Leaders have to come across a lot of burdens. They need to direct people towards a common purpose and vision, manage change, and maintain a balanced personal point of view. Leaders need to make bold and courageous decisions. Leadership decisions may involve a fight with integrity. Many decisions

exist in a gray area: there are no clear cut correct answers. Leaders may have enough ideas or very few ideas and so they need to stimulate or discourage ideas as the situation demands. Decisions must be made without all the facts. In some cases, leaders need to say "no" to an unhappy audience. Leadership requires an understanding of the difference between authority and responsibility. Authority and responsibility must be well balanced.

A person lacking self-confidence will find it much harder to make decisions for others. There may be a lack of appreciation for the leader's efforts and sacrifices. There may be a lack of support from the leader's superiors. Too many expectations from the followers may create a stressed situation. Leaders may fail to meet up too much expectation of stakeholders. Many factors like lack of appropriate resources, poor support infrastructure, dearth of interest by stakeholders and commitment by participants make leadership more complicated. A leader may not be allowed the time to learn from mistakes or introspect after setbacks. A leader finds it difficult to get people with disparate ideas. Due to time constraint, the leader may limit follower involvement.

4. Role of Education in Advancing Leadership

Organizations spend billions of dollars on leadership training every year. Organizations send managers at different levels in a wide range of leadership training activities such as a formal MBA program, leadership seminars and workshops. Research confirms that we can train people to be better leaders (Eden and Avoolio, 2002) Much of leadership education is devoted to teaching style and technique. It is entirely possible to learn and even to put into practice what is taught. To be a good leader, one must acquire some basic skills. Leadership is an attainable skill. Recently, a study conducted by Richard Arvey (2014) at a Business School in Singapore revealed that the vast majority (70%) of leadership skill could be learned. That means anyone, who is serious can learn leadership skills. Leadership skills can be learnt through education, training and experience. It is the actual doctrine of the army that Leadership can be taught and learnt. Rigorous training makes army personnel an effective leader (for example, Colin Powell). Powell, former US Secretary of State, also argues that effective leaders are not born rather they are made. In the words of Collin Powell (2003) "True leaders learn from trial and error, and from experience. When something fails, a true leader learns from the experience and puts it behind him. Don't worry about what happened in the past". Mark Boucher, one of the South African cricketers rightly stated that ability or expertness is the combination of 90% hard work and 10% talent. This holds equally true in the case of leadership as well. A person can develop and grow in his/her leadership capacity The essential components of leadership have remained more or less constant: intelligence, insight, instinct, vision, passion, courage, persistence communication, discipline, courage, reliability. All can be studied and studied again. Leadership is a skill and it can be taught, but it cannot be learned easily. Formal education is a great thing. It provides a lot of great insight and keeps the mind fresh. It often gives a person an opportunity to better understand concepts and why they are important. Educational institutions can be a countervailing force when they create spaces for young people to work together over sustained periods to identify problems and engage in problem solving that encourages them to ask few questions, draw connections, and find new ways to address old problems. The role of education in making leadership is discussed below: Encourage active learning. Great classroom is one which is energetic, vigorous, and demanding. Active and interactive learning is exciting. Community-based learning, international education, and two-way learning can enhance the impact of our

educational institutions. We need classrooms and educational institutions that support this approach to teaching and learning.

Question and answer method. At present in most cases in Bangladesh all leadership decisions are made at the top level. In an effective educational environment, leadership capacity should be developed and supported at every level. Staff/educator development is another area of shared leadership. Command and control should be replaced by active participation and communication. Question and answer method should be introduced in the classroom to encourage active student participation. In most cases, students feel shy to ask questions. Classroom environment should be non-threatening. Students demand that a teacher should have a high sense of humor as well as he should be approachable and friendly. He should encourage students to ask questions and share their real life experience in the classroom. Students do not tolerate bad teachers. The teacher as a leader should be trustworthy and straight with students and staffs. Teacher as an educator should clearly state goals, expectations, and standards -- for students, staff, and parents. The teacher should help students develop leadership skills among the students. A teacher or chairman is the primary leader in his department or classroom. A good leader always leads by example. Friendly but unbiased student-teacher's relations: Teachers should possess the same attributes as good leaders in other fields. For example, Teachers should have pervasiveness, open-mindedness, flexibility, confidence and expertise in their respective fields. Teachers should be positive, enthusiastic. Good leaders stay calm in tough condition and gives more emphasis on the needs of the educational institutes before them. They must have ability to listen with patience and facilitate group discussion on a course of action and monitor progress. This will increase the student's communicative skill. The student evaluation system can be introduced to make teachers seriously in their profession. Evaluations should be fair and well documented pointed out both strengths and weaknesses. Teachers can know the expectation of the students through evaluation and then teachers get suggestions for improvement if those expectations are not being met.

Utilization of technology as a tool, not replacement of teachers. Modern technology like computer, multimedia/projector cannot be a substitute for teachers. Technology is a helping tool to enhance the effectiveness of learning. Learning is about great teachers. However, technology can be used to free teachers from the mundane aspects of it, to engage students more often and deeper ways. For example: technology can free teachers from some content delivery so they spend less time standing in front of students and more time engaged with them.

5. Leader Versus Manager, who is superior?

Leadership and management are two terms often confused. Leadership and management are the terms that are often considered synonymous. But both are not the same. They are different in many points. They are different in terms of motivation, commitment, attitude and personality. Who is superior? Leader or manager. What is the distinction between management and leadership? It is a common question that has been asked many times and also answered in many different ways.

It is easy to be a manager, not a leader. Becoming a great leader is not an easy task. To be a leader one must take responsibility. The leader may make mistakes, but he must admit it. One cannot learn if one has made no mistakes. Failure is the pillar of success. They have common

sense and know how to establish common ground with others. The leader must believe in win-win solution. He should not capitalize all benefits. Winning through exploitation and manipulation is not lasting. A leader must take risks and he should not be afraid of doing what he believes. A leader must embrace changes courageously. Every leader needs to learn how to accept and adapt to changes. Leaders develop and begin strategies that build and sustain competitive advantage. Organizations require robust leadership and robust management for optimal organizational efficiency.

Table 1 contains distinction between a leader and a manager.

Point of Distincting	Leader	Manager
Make up of role	Change	Stability
Decision making	Facilitates	Makes
Approach	Sets and leads direction	Plans details about constraints
Vision	Long term	Short term
Control	Personal charm	Formal influence
Appeals to	The heart	The head
Culture	Shapes	Endorses
Action	Proactive	Reactive
Risk	Takes	Minimizes
Rules	Breaks	Makes
Directions	Challenges norm	Keeps status quo
Values	Achievement	Results
Coercion	Doing the right thing	Doing the thing right
Focus	Leading people	Managing work
Human resource	Followers	Subordinates
Power	Personal charisma	Legitimate power
Energy	Passion	Control
Style	Transformational	Transactional
Exchange	Excitement for work	Money for work
Likes	Action	Striving
Conflicts	Uses	Avoids
Direction	New roads	Existing roads
Truth	Seeks	Establishes
Concern	What is right	Being right
Credit	Gives	Takes
Blame	Takes	Gives
Seeks	Visions	Objectives
Persuasion	Tell	Sell
Exposition	Make heroes of everyone around them.	Try to be heroes

From the above table it is clearly evident that the leaders are superior to management on many different points.

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can safely be asserted that formal education plays a significant role in promoting and advancing leadership skill. Becoming an effective leader is not an easy task. It is also clear from the review of literature that leaders are superior to managers on many points. Leadership is a distinct skill. There is a debate whether nature or nurture is important to be a leader. A person may be endowed with God gifted talent, but without education, practice and experience, he/she cannot be a matured leader. It is true in sports, politics, literature, etc. People are not born to be leaders. It is education and experience that make a person a great leader. Education helps a person grow and develop his leadership capacity. Formal education-books, seminar and certificate in leadership provides an individual a framework. Formal education is a springboard in self-development and there is no option for continued learning. But formal education is not a roadmap for successful leadership. Successful leadership must be aligned with the values, knowledge, and attitude of an individual. Real life experiences may be a good source of learning leadership skills. There is no leadership school that teaches us everything. But to learn much of it, it is suggested that leadership education can be supplemented with lots of realworld experience. Leadership is an art. We can learn from the success and failure stories of the great leaders. Our students, who will be future leaders should study the life of great leaders with great care (for example, Gandhi of India, Sheikh Mujib of Bangladesh, Churchill of England, Martin Luther King of USA, Mandela of South Africa, Linclon of the USA and Lenin of Russia and so many others) in the classes.

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