

The Impact of Applying Leadership Principles on Administrative Performance among Educational Institution Managers

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the relationship between the application of effective leadership principles and the improvement of administrative performance in educational institutions. It focuses on the role of leadership in achieving organizational efficiency and increasing productivity by analyzing the theoretical aspects that link various leadership styles with levels of administrative performance among managers. Consequently, the study recommends training leaders in educational institutions to adopt leadership styles that enhance positive interaction and foster sustainable development in administrative performance, contributing effectively to the strategic objectives of these institutions.

Keywords: Leadership, Administrative Performance, Managers, Educational Institutions.

Introduction:

Leadership has emerged as one of the most essential topics across eras and fields, particularly in management. Leadership ability is no longer solely innate; it has become a science with its theories and principles, enriched by knowledge and enhanced through the accumulation of experience and practice. Therefore, a manager must possess a distinct style in general management and, more specifically, in the elements of the administrative process (planning, organizing, directing, and controlling). This enables mobilizing individuals' energies within the group, coordinating their efforts, organizing their affairs, and guiding their behavior toward the right direction to achieve desired goals and objectives.

Moreover, successful educational leaders demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence, enabling them to manage work pressures constructively and motivate their teams to overcome challenges, thus enhancing overall productivity. Leadership that fosters positive relationships based on mutual trust leads to improved administrative performance, increased innovation, and adaptability to changes.

Performance, therefore, is considered one of the most complex policies as it drives management to monitor its team to work actively and efficiently. Individual performance within an organization or institution contributes to achieving targeted goals at minimal cost, making performance crucial to the organization's (school's) life as the primary driver of its activities and sustainability amid internal and external changes.

1. Definition of Leadership:

• Linguistic Definition of Leadership:

In the Lisan al-Arab dictionary, leadership (in Arabic: "al-Qiyadah") is derived from the term "al-Qawd," which means leading from the front, as opposed to "al-Suq," which means driving from behind. It is said, "He leads the animal from the front and drives it from behind" (Ibn Manzur, 2000, p. 84).

• Conceptual Definition of Leadership:

Al-Ghamdi defines leadership as the ability to influence the behavior of a group through any acceptable and legitimate means, coordinating and directing their efforts toward achieving desired goals and objectives (Al-Ghamdi, 2011, p. 10).

Newman defines leadership as the ability to direct and influence the group's behavior in a way that drives them to willingly and convincingly cooperate to achieve goals (Mohammed Ismail, 2005, p. 227).

Leadership is also described as the bridge that officials use to influence the behavior and directions of subordinates, linking organizational goals with individual goals. It embodies a responsibility toward the group, as Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz said, "I am not the best among you, but I am one of you, yet Allah has made my burden heavier" (Al-Adlouni, 2000, p. 18).

• **Definition of Educational Administrative Leadership:**

Al-Badri defines it as "a set of executive and technical leadership processes achieved through cooperative human work that persistently strives to provide an intellectual, psychological, and material environment that motivates individuals. It stimulates the desire for active and organized individual and group work to overcome difficulties, adapt to existing problems, and achieve the educational goals set for society and educational institutions" (Al-Badri, 2001, p. 69).

Based on these definitions, it becomes clear that a leader is the one who stands at the forefront, guiding and directing others toward their benefits and shared goals. The leader shapes the institution's vision, and leadership primarily depends on the leader's personality, influence on followers, and experience in the field.

2. Manifestations of Leadership Behavior:

Leadership behavior has various manifestations, as highlighted by Ali (2008), including the following:

1. Initiative and Proactiveness: Introducing new ideas or innovative methods to address and solve problems.
2. Providing Opinions and Suggestions: Offering insights and proposals that help the manager enhance their administration, enable employees to overcome challenges, improve their performance, and renew and develop their expertise.
3. Evaluating Necessary Information and Data: Ensuring the smooth progress of work and steering it in the right direction.
4. Coordinating Efforts: Coordinating the efforts of employees, directing and assessing their activities to achieve the desired goals, and stimulating group work through various means employed by their leader (Al-Ghamdi, 2011, p. 12).

In addition to these characteristics discussed by the author, a leader should also possess emotional intelligence, allowing them to understand the feelings and emotions of those around them, manage their own emotions, and effectively provide guidance and counseling.

3. Elements of Leadership:

When discussing leadership or engaging in a study on leadership or the administrative process in general, we find three complex and interwoven factors: the leader, the group, and the situation. Each factor represents an approach to understanding leadership. In any in-depth exploration of leadership, the equation (leader, group, situation) serves as a critical foundation for the success or failure of leadership and the administrative process. If any element of this equation is unbalanced, it inevitably negatively impacts leadership and administration as a whole. These elements are explained as follows:

A. The Leader:

The first element in the leadership process is the leader. The essence of leadership lies in the leader's ability to communicate with others. An effective leader, attentive to the challenges of communication, can overcome these barriers and enhance their effectiveness. Leadership is an art built on effectively managing interpersonal relationships, with the ultimate role of the leader being to direct subordinates' efforts toward overall success.

B. The Group:

A systematic analysis of leadership must consider factors beyond the leader's direct control, as the leader does not operate in isolation. The leader is continuously interacting with followers, and the complex social dynamics between the leader and followers, as well as interactions among followers themselves, are crucial in the leadership context. As a result, many researchers emphasize studying leadership through a follower-oriented or group-driven approach.

C. The Situation:

The leader's influence on the group is always linked to a specific situation in which the leader both influences and is influenced, engaging and responding to subordinates. The circumstances, timing, external

factors, and complexities of the situation test the leader's abilities and activate their potential to guide the group toward the desired goal. Often, the situation governs the entire leadership process, as it is shaped by numerous factors beyond the leader's and group's control, which in turn impact decisions and actions (Al-Othman, 2013, p. 11).

4. Elements of the Administrative Process:

Most scholars agree that the administrative process consists of four essential elements: planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Here is a detailed look at each:

First: Planning

Planning is exercised in all aspects of life and across all levels, whether by individuals, institutions, ministries, or nations, and it spans various fields, such as education, economics, society, military, and politics. Scientifically, planning remains consistent, with differences only in the scope and type of goals to be achieved.

Planning involves defining objectives for future accomplishments and making decisions related to activities and the resources needed to achieve these goals. The importance of planning varies by organizational level; it is most crucial at higher levels and decreases as one moves to lower organizational levels. Strategic plans are found in senior management, tactical plans at middle management, and operational plans at lower management levels (Muwafaq Hadeed, 2000, p. 74).

Second: Organizing

Organizing is a fundamental management element as it defines the relationship between supervisors and subordinates at all organizational levels, allowing orders and instructions to flow from the top of the hierarchy to its base.

Organizing is associated with teamwork and collaborative efforts, which are central to administrative work. The importance of organizing grows with the expansion of both private and public administrative structures. Without sound organization, effective management, which harmonizes human and material resources to achieve desired objectives efficiently, cannot be expected (Muwafaq Hadeed, 2000, p. 74).

Third: Leadership and Direction

The function of directing is defined as leadership, guidance, motivation, and stimulation, focusing on managing the human element. This function involves issuing orders, instructions, and guidance to subordinates, who implement them willingly and with conviction, directing their activities toward specified goals. This function aims to foster collaboration, motivate employees to perform effectively, and encourage proper behavior by boosting morale. This is achieved through three primary actions performed by the manager: leadership, human motivation, and communication (Aqeeli, 1997, p. 50).

Skills Required for the Directing Process:

- Understanding organizational culture
- Discipline or applying pressure
- Forming effective teams
- Reducing stress
- Building trust
- Selecting an effective leadership style
- Designing motivating tasks
- Delegation and empowerment

Thus, senior educational leadership must possess the ability to guide effectively and lead subordinates in executing tasks aimed at achieving objectives (Muwafaq Hadeed, 2000, p. 85).

Fourth: Evaluation

Evaluation involves a set of scientific procedures aimed at assessing efforts to achieve specific objectives, based on agreed-upon standards and pre-established planning. It judges the effectiveness and efficiency of these efforts and identifies obstacles and difficulties encountered during implementation to improve performance.

This process requires the following:

1. Precisely defining the objectives to be achieved.

2. Conducting periodic and continuous follow-ups to ensure that implementation aligns with the plan and budget.
3. Carrying out evaluations to identify strengths and weaknesses or to assess positive and negative aspects of the program, project, plan, or organization.
4. Implementing corrective actions to address deviations from targets, by overcoming weaknesses and reinforcing strengths. Evaluation also includes actions to enhance positives and areas of strength.
5. Utilizing feedback, meaning learning from this process, information, and experiences for future planning, implementation, and improvement of programs, projects, and plans (Abu Al-Nasr, 2007, p. 343).

5. Administrative Leadership Barriers:

Some of the most significant barriers to administrative leadership include:

- **Degree of Control Over Rewards System:** When a leader or manager lacks control over rewards, particularly salary increases and promotions, either due to state laws or the administrative system in the organization, their ability to influence subordinates' performance becomes very limited.
- **Administrative Precedents of the Organization:** These often create an organizational climate resistant to change, hindering leaders or managers who wish to implement positive changes.
- **Nature of the Leader or Manager:** Often, a manager's characteristics or the leader's personality can serve as obstacles to effective management.
- **Organizational Structure:** Some organizations may restrict the variety of leadership or management styles. For example, in military or paramilitary organizations, democratic or participative styles are often undesired or even prohibited, limiting the leader or manager's options for applying their leadership or management skills (Al-Rahahleh & Al-Azzam, 2011, p. 182).

6. Definition of Administrative Performance

- **Linguistic Definition:**

The word "performance" (Arabic: "Ada'a") is derived from the verb "adda," meaning to proceed at a moderate pace. Linguistically, it signifies completing or fulfilling something. For example, "adda the debt" means to settle it, "adda the prayer" means to perform it on time, and "adda the testimony" means to give it. Thus, in Arabic, the precise meaning of "performance" is the fulfillment or completion of something (Uqla & Jaradat, 2001, p. 42).

- **Conceptual Definition:**

Chaplin defines performance as any activity or behavior that leads to a result, especially behavior that changes the environment in any way (Ashwi, 1992, p. 244).

Obeid defines it as the extent of a worker's contribution to accomplishing assigned tasks and the type of behavior and actions they exhibit in their work performance (Al-Khuzami, 1999, p. 19).

Some view the term as referring to the results achieved from completing a specific task. Based on this, job performance can be defined as the outcome that an employee produces when carrying out any task (Al-Nisyan, 2006, p. 37).

Performance is also defined as a behavior that encompasses the manner in which an individual or team performs. Behavior leads to actions that represent the outcome of physical or mental effort, where behavior is seen as input, and results as output. Effort can thus be assessed independently of results (Sayed Mustafa, 2010, p. 29).

Based on these definitions, job performance can be understood as the behaviors exhibited by an employee, including their skills and abilities, while carrying out their duties and responsibilities within the institution.

7. Importance of Administrative Performance

Performance is essential for individuals; good performance can be a source of satisfaction, while low performance and unachieved goals may lead to dissatisfaction. As commonly understood, performance is often rewarded with financial value and other benefits. Employees who excel at their jobs are more likely to receive promotions and better career opportunities, unlike those with low performance (Belkaid & Bouri, 2017, p. 259).

Performance is a crucial element in every process because it is tied to the human factor, which manages the work. Thus, administrative performance holds significant importance within an institution striving for success and advancement, as high performance reflects the institution's success and marks its progression through various development stages (Faisal, 2001, p. 96).

The importance of administrative performance in any organization is highlighted through several points:

- Performance is one of the metrics by which we measure an individual's capability in their job, both now and in the future.
- Developing an individual's skills and competencies within the institution and improving their performance level helps them gain incentives and promotions.
- Optimal time management is achieved by adhering to work hours and understanding one's duties and responsibilities toward their job.

8. Factors Influencing Administrative Performance

Workers are influenced by a range of factors that vary with different roles, and it is challenging to pinpoint all these factors since almost every phenomenon in economic, social, or general life impacts performance. Two primary factors significantly influence individual performance:

1. Internal Factors:

These encompass everything within the organization, including various roles and resources, and consist of several key elements:

- **Management:** Management bears a significant responsibility for effectively utilizing all resources under the organization's control. More than 75% of performance improvement depends on management practices, such as planning, organizing, coordinating, leadership, and control. Any weakness in these managerial supports can reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration as a whole.
- **Human Resources:** The human element is the most critical resource in an organization due to its role in influencing all production processes and in decision-making and problem-solving. Human resources are fundamental in determining the quality, quantity, and cost of production.
- **Organization:** This includes task allocation, responsibility distribution, division of labor according to specialization, and coordination. Balance in organization and implementing necessary changes in work systems, employment, incentive systems, development, and training significantly impact performance and the achievement of higher efficiency levels (Belkaid & Bouri, 2017, p. 262).
- **Work Environment:** Various elements surround the worker while performing their tasks, such as the internal environment, including social relationships (both horizontal and vertical), incentive systems, development, and training programs. These components substantially influence performance and goal achievement.
- **Technical Factors:** Machinery and equipment play a central role in influencing performance. Maintenance practices, operational conditions, availability of spare parts, and knowledge about equipment operation all determine the scale and level of productive capacity utilized.

2. External Factors:

External factors affecting organizational performance include:

- **Social and Cultural Environment:** This includes inherited customs and traditions, individual conflicts within society, literacy rates, and types of vocational and technical education programs.
- **Economic Environment:** This encompasses the political system, political stability, flexibility of regulations, legislation, and foreign policies (Behnas & Slimani, 2020, p. 36).

9. Administrative Performance Standards

The purpose of setting performance standards is to monitor performance continuously, identifying any fluctuations in order to intervene at the right time to address shortcomings and weaknesses. These standards differentiate between effectiveness and efficiency in performance, with the primary standards outlined as follows:

1. **Quality:** This standard assesses performance based on the level of precision and product quality. Quality standards should align with available resources, requiring a benchmark agreed upon by superiors and subordinates for judgment when necessary. There should also be an agreed-upon quality level in task performance based on prior design, goals, and expectations.
2. **Quantity:** This measures the volume of work completed, reflecting individual capabilities without exceeding or falling short of them, as underperformance may lead to apathy and disengagement. Therefore, agreeing on the volume of completed work encourages achieving an acceptable growth rate in performance aligned with experience, training, and available resources.

3. Time: Time is a unique resource, as it cannot be renewed or replaced. It is a form of capital, not income, highlighting the need for optimal utilization at every moment, as it constantly diminishes and passes irreversibly, making it invaluable.

4. Procedures: Procedures are ordered steps for applying necessary skills. Agreed-upon methods and techniques should be used to achieve goals, despite procedures being documented in the organization's records as rules, laws, systems, and instructions. It is beneficial for superiors and subordinates to agree on the procedures for completing work (Shami, 2010, p. 79).

These standards can also be classified into human, personal, professional, quantitative, qualitative, and behavioral categories, representing the same concepts with only a difference in classification.

10. Barriers to Administrative Performance

Administrative barriers can be categorized into two main sources: external and internal.

A. External Sources (External Environment):

The environment is the primary source of obstacles faced by organizations in any society. In the environment surrounding management, there are social forces, customs, and traditions, as well as other organizations that "include all elements outside the boundaries of the institution that may affect the institution as a whole or parts of it. Additionally, a general environment indirectly impacts the organization and other institutions, as well as stakeholders and influential figures who may hinder the achievement of the institution's goals."

B. Internal Sources (Internal Environment):

The human element is one of the most critical internal obstacles within local administration, as individuals have an independent will, shaped by organizational culture. This culture encompasses "the values, beliefs, concepts, and norms among employees, often unwritten but observable through their actions. It is also evident in the ethical standards and behavioral patterns that members of the institution follow in completing their assigned tasks, and their degree of adherence or flexibility in implementing administrative procedures" (Al-Sakri, 2008, p. 138).

Common barriers to administrative performance in educational institutions include weak leadership, resistance to change, lack of training and professional development, work pressure, overlapping responsibilities, weak incentive systems, and excessive bureaucracy. Overcoming these obstacles requires leadership skill development, sufficient resource allocation, and improved incentive systems to enhance administrative performance efficiency and effectiveness.

11. Impact of Applying Leadership Principles on Administrative Performance

Applying leadership principles in educational institutions significantly enhances administrative performance and effectiveness. Educational leaders who adopt motivational and transformational leadership styles foster a spirit of cooperation and commitment among employees, creating a positive and supportive work environment.

Effective leadership also improves decision-making quality, promotes innovation, and enhances administrative team skills. It builds trust between managers and employees, which improves performance and aids in achieving educational objectives efficiently. Additionally, effective leadership helps create an organizational culture that supports positive change and continuous development, meeting student needs and contributing to the institution's overall success.

Moreover, leadership based on guidance and motivation enhances internal communication within teams, reducing conflicts and increasing collaboration. This helps managers achieve greater harmony in the work environment and increases administrative performance efficiency. Promoting a culture of continuous learning and development makes the institution more adaptable to challenges and responsive to changes, supporting its educational goals and positively impacting the community.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, applying effective leadership principles is a crucial factor in improving administrative performance in educational institutions. Good leadership not only enhances the efficiency of daily operations but also strengthens employee commitment and positive interactions, benefiting the educational environment as a whole. By implementing motivational leadership styles, fostering teamwork, and promoting a culture of professional development, educational institutions can elevate their performance and achieve their goals more effectively. Therefore, investing in leadership skill development for managers and providing them with the necessary tools is essential to creating a successful, sustainable educational environment that serves the community and meets its expectations.

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