DYNAMICS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP, AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP AND MINDFULNESS

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ABSTRACT

Leadership has always played a vital role is organisational growth an culture. Mindfulness has been found to be one of the essential attributes that can increase leadership effectiveness manifold. Keeping this in view many companies are promoting mindfulness practices to improve the health and decision making of their leaders. In this study, the authors develop a framework of effective leadership through a blend of mindfulness and attributes of authentic and servant leadership. In-depth theoretical reflections from various articles, researches are presented in the paper to suggest the framework. The study establishes the relationship between the two types of leadership with mindfulness which can be helpful in training and coaching leaders for effectiveness.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, Servant Leadership, Authentic Leadership*

INTRODUCTION

The early reference of the term mindfulness was found in Buddhism and later introduced to psychology in the '70s by Ellen langer(Blank, 1978). Mindfulness is said to be a state of mind in which one is actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context(Langer,1995), Hahn (1976) defined mindfulness as keeping one's consciousness alive to the present to present reality. Nowadays, being mindful matters more as this can make our work in a more effective manner. The existing research on the potential benefits of mindfulness for leaders is mostly theoretical in nature(Reb, 2015) with few empirical results available. Some authors confirmed that mindfulness in leaders had beneficial effects on their mental health(Luthans, 2014) while others have found a significant affirmation relationship between a 'leaders' mindfulness and employee well being and performance(Reb,2014). However, very few studies have investigated the relationship between leaders mindfulness and specific leadership behaviour. Interestingly two of these studies indicate that mindfulness is associated with more effective team management and interpersonal communication(Ucok,2006). According to Kevin Kurses, Forbes 2013, Leadership is a process of social influence which maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of the goal. The evolution of leadership is useful for visualizing

theoretical development of leadership thoughts and theory. Evolution of formal leadership theories saw many scholars proposed the valuable concepts that built effective leadership in organisations with a specific focus on great man periods and trait periods(Galton, 1869). The influence era helped in recognizing that leadership is a relationship between individuals and not the characteristics of the solitary leader. It addressed the aspects of power and influence and this cause is known as power relation period and persuasion period (Mechanic, 1962). The behaviour era took a completely new direction by emphasizing what leaders do, as opposed to their traits or source of power(Hunt,1984). The earlier school of thought on leadership predominantly focused on traits or personality characteristics followed by process and content models, which were other individualistic in nature or unidimensional in approach. Later years saw the emergence of two strong concepts of authentic and servant leadership.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership posits that effective leadership is all about being honest, real and authentic will all stakeholders (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), (Fernandez,2017) found the impact of authentic Leadership on follower's job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, justice perceptions and task group and organizational performance. One of the most widely accepted concepts of authentic leadership is the four-dimensional model of (Walumbwa, 2008) which are characterized as follows:

1. Self-awareness, they openly show their emotions and their true self to their followers. Self-aware leaders strive for more than individual success. Self-awareness does not always lead to performance gains in negotiations situation(Der, 2004). Mindfulness interrupts the usual stream of internal chatter and provides the space to simply witness thoughts, emotions and body sensations. Shaprio (2006) asserts that as mindfulness nurtures an ability to be more engaged in the moment, a person may be more receptive to information that they may usually not consider.
2. Self-efficacy, Fast and colleagues(2014) defines managerial self-efficacy as The perceived capacity to be effective and influential within the organizational domain in which one is a manger. One's belief that performance can be enhanced within the parameters of a specific situation (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy is a cognitive and affective belief in one's personal competence and an assessment of one's ability to confidently act, in a specific situation (Paajares, 2002).
3. Balanced processing, the concept focused on consistent behaviour of leaders according to their own moral standards and values. Leaders when they are balanced in their approach objectively analyze all relevant data before coming to a decision. When they are balanced in their approach, Such leaders also solicit views that challenge their deeply help positions (Gardner, 2005).

Authentic leadership concept is relatively new but there been several empirical studies linking authentic leadership with work attitudes and outcomes. Positive relationships between authentic leadership and performace (Walumbwa, 2008); (Smith, 2009), organizational citizenship behaviour (Castern, 2008); (Peus, 2012), psychological empowerment (Castern, 2008); (Walumbwa, 2010), trust in management (Smith, 2009); (Walumbwa, 2010), organizational commitment (Peus, 2012) and work engagement(Carstern, 2008) had shown use of authentic leadership in organization.

Servant Leadership

While traditional models of leadership involved accumulation and excretion of power by leaders at the top at the pyramid; servant leadership proposed to share power with followers, putting the need of the others before self and help develop people to the full potential. Servant leaders do not indulge in controlling activities and work towards a more synergistic relationship among parties(Greenleaf,1977) and act servants to their followers(Greenleaf,1991). According to Van Dierendonck and Muijten(2011), servant leadership is comprised of the following key attributes:

1) Empowerment facilitates a worker's commitment to the organization (Locke,1979) and has been described as the breaking down of traditional hierarchical structures(Blanchard, 1997). An empowered and committed leader is generally claimed to be essential for the effective functioning of the organization(Bowen, 1992); (Sparrowe, 1995); (Kirkaman, 1999)

2) Accountability, Gunnarsdottir (2014) states that to be accountable is an important part of servant leadership and related this to the acceptance of high standards at work. This makes accountability a mechanism by which responsibility for outcomes is given to individuals and teams(Konczak,2000) and for a leader, it becomes one of the essential questions to know what is expected of them and is beneficial for both employees and the organization(Froiland,1993).

3) Humility means being honest. When a leader can demonstrate honesty and look back on one's actions and behaviour, it will provide a tremendous opportunity for personal development. A humble leader is secure enough to recognize his or her weaknesses and to seek the input and talents of others. Humility in leadership focuses on a dare to admit that one is not infallible and does make mistakes(Morris,2005).

In contrast to the study, Larry Spears (1998), CEO of the Greenleaf Center, incorporated ten major attributes of servant leadership. Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment and building community. Whereas Spears(1998) argued that the primary attributes of servant leadership are vision, Honesty, Integrity.

Mindfulness

The term mindfulness is the English translation of the Pali language word sati meaning "memory" or "remembrance" (Nyaniponika, 2014). Mindfulness can simply define as just being able to be here now, being able to be present with the people you are with, with the task at hand. Because if we are not, we are wasting our time and everyone else's. The practice of mindfulness leadership gives a tool to measure and manage life as you are living it.

Mindfulness refers to open and receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience. In mindful state individuals fully engage with the present moment instead of focusing on past memories or future plans. Mindfulness involves a direct observation of experiences without analyzing or evaluating of what is occurring in the present moment (Hahn, 1976) Mindfulness doesn't eliminate stress or other difficulties, instead by becoming aware of unpleasant thoughts and emotions that arise because of challenging situations, we have more choice in how to handle them in the moment and a better chance of reacting calmly and empathetically when faced with stress or challenges.

Lakey (2008) suggest that people who are highly authentic function in a relatively autonomous fashion with relatively low levels of ego involvement. Inline, Fry and Kriger (2009) put forward a theory of leadership based on being, that goes beyond current theory which emphasized having and doing". Mindfulness is deemed as an impetus to facilitate a cognitive process that engages the whole individual and prepare the ground for behavioural change (Moldoveanu, 2000). Few characteristics suggest that mindfulness is an important part of leadership:

1. Empathy is considered by society to be one of the most highly valued values of human beings(Rogers,2006) and is an integral part of our social fabric(Dziobek,2007). According to theorist, mindfulness cultivates empathy (Anderson,2005); (Bloack,2007); (Johnson,2005). Leader empathy, ethical value and relations oriented behaviour all appear to be relevant for effective leadership(Yukl,2010), Yukl (1998) lists displaying empathy as an important leader behaviour for managing relations. Indeed, empathic abilities may underlie relations-oriented leader behaviour such as showing consideration (Stogdil, 1965), which is a friendly, supportive and concerned approach to employees.

2. Self-determination, Field and Hoffman(1994) defined self-determination as "one's ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself" a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers, self-determination also explains motivation and performance on leaders (Deci & Ryan, 1985) based on the satisfaction of three fundamental need, competence, autonomy and relatedness.

3. Attention demonstrates that the manner in which organization focus affects how they make a strategic decision(Nadkarni, 2008), whether they heed risks(Watkins, 2004) and if they notice key resources at their disposal(Weick, 1993). Mindfulness plays with respect to these and other performance-related processes and outcomes remain largely unexplored.

In contrast, the existing research on the potential benefits of mindfulness for leaders is mostly theoretical in nature(Reb, 2015) with few empirical results available. For example, some authors confirmed that mindfulness in leaders had beneficial effects on their mental health(Roche,2014) while other authors have found a relationship between leaders mindfulness and employee well being and performance(Reb,2014).

Servant Leadership and Mindfulness
The idea around servant leadership is to share power, put the needs of others first and help people develop and perform as high as possible. Servant leaders focus on their people and the witnessing of talent, skills and drives. This is the reason why servant leadership and mindfulness go hand in hand. Mostly servant leaders put followers first(Liden,2008) develop and value people(Laub,1999) are humble(Dierendonck,2011). Rather true servant leaders follow the path of mindfulness and work for a stable life. A study done on young adults by Chan(2011) shows the linkage between mindfulness and servant leader attitude, (Reb,2015) says the most effective use of mindfulness is for the people who want to be servant leaders.

Authentic Leadership and Mindfulness
Authentic Leadership proposes the development of leaders with positive moral value and this is possible when the world by experiences can be reflected to strengthen understanding

of self(Gerorge, 2010) supported by environmental factors. Authentic leadership show a high level of passion, practice value consistency, long term relationship, leading with heart and self-disciplined in their approach(George,2007) Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova and Sels(2013) provided evidence that the non-judgement awareness of one's thoughts, emotions and behaviour facilitated through mindfulness promotes greater awareness of one's true self. In that sense, mindfulness may function as a window into the self that allows for greater clarity and self-awareness.

Model Proposed

Authentic Leadership
1. Self-awareness
2. Self Efficacy
3. Balanced processing

Servant Leadership
1. Empowerment
2. Accountability
3. Humility

Mindfulness
1. Empathy
2. Self-Determination
3. Attention

Dynamics of Leadership

Discussion

Mindfulness is a way of befriending ourselves and our experience (Jon Kabat Zinn) Authentic leadership theory and servant leadership theory offer two complementary frameworks for developing effective and ethical leaders in higher education and business context. New Age leaders have a different mindset altogether. A mindful leader embodies leadership presence by cultivating focus, clarity, creativity and compassion in the services of others. Mindfully conscious leaders get extraordinary things done from the many ordinary employees in their enterprise(Minter, 2011); (Sanders,2008) and Savitz and Weber (2006) proposed that mindfulness in leaders and managers plays a critical role in developing and nurturing a vision of sustainability that thrives in people-centric and eco-centric approach to business. As proposed in the conceptual model, it is argued that the central pillar of authentic leadership is self-awareness, Self- efficacy and balancing processing. Whereas for servant leadership the central pillars are empowerment, accountability and humility. Combing both pillar mindfulness came up with three pillars empathy, self- determination and attention.

Authentic Leaders practice self-awareness to choose a path of self-discovery and mindfulness. They invite feedback and insights about self, choosing to engage in practices that enhance leader self-awareness. These practices may seek feedback regularly, engage in self-reflection to understand the meaning of triggers to the actual self and emotion responses and last spending time is self-observation or mindfulness to make oneself more aware about immediate feelings and thoughts. The practice of balanced processing in the process of leader self- awareness just described authentic leaders come to understand that all people are biased processors of information. Just like the people in the Bargh's

experiments who responded to non-conscious priming from words related to being young or old or to aggression(Bargh,1996).

Whereas in servant leadership, A growth mindset requires leaders to be more inclusive to the unique needs and perspective of others. The new age leaders say self-awareness and self-efficacy together can show the openness of experience and receptive behaviour which can increase the empowerment of employee. Shaprio (2006) asserts that as mindfulness nurtures an ability to be more engaged in the moment, a person may be more receptive to information that they may usually not consider. In addition to it, balanced processing can affect the accountability and humility which can end as non-judgemental behaviour in a leader. Gunnarsdottir (2014) states that to be accountable is an important part of servant leadership and related this to the acceptance of high standards at work. The conceptual framework demonstrates the importance of mindfulness in different dynamics of leadership.

Future Direction for research

The research mainly focuses on mindfulness and servant/authentic leadership but lacks in the linkage between other leaderships like transformational, transaction etc with mindfulness which can in studied in future. Other models of authentic and servant leadership can be studied for future research. Mindfulness as a whole can be viewed in the various sector on leadership.

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