

# **LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEAM COHESIVENESS: A STUDY BASED ON NON MANAGERIAL LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify the relationship between the directive and supportive leadership styles and the team cohesiveness if any. The identified research problem is whether there is any relationship between leadership styles and team cohesiveness exists in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka? Accordingly three objectives of the study are; to identify the relationship between directive leadership style and team cohesiveness, to identify the relationship between supportive leadership style and team cohesiveness and to identify which leadership is highly impact to develop team cohesiveness. The selected sample consists of 73 non managerial employees of public sector, those who employed in various public sector institutions in the Colombo district in Sri Lanka. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data, from the sample. The Person correlation analysis was used to data analysis and hypothesis testing. According to the correlation results, both directive and supportive leadership styles have indicated positive relationship with team cohesiveness, but supportive leadership has a strong relationship with the team cohesiveness.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Non Managerial Employees, Public Sector, Team Cohesiveness

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The success of an organization mainly depends on the behavior of members or employees of that organization. Leadership and team behavior are two such behaviors of individuals attached to organizations. At the same time the decisions, behaviors of individuals in organizations are not isolated, they are inter related. One action, decision or behavior of an individual or group in organizations may affect others and their behavior also. Hence the present study aims to identify the relationship between leadership styles and team cohesiveness in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka based on non managerial employees.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Since the leadership styles and team cohesiveness are important elements of the behavior, here the attempt is made to identify the relationship between the two elements. Accordingly the identified research problem of this study is whether there is any relationship between leadership styles and team cohesiveness exist in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka? Since there are many leadership styles, here the study is limited for two leadership styles, ie directive leadership styles and supportive leadership style.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

According to the problem statement, the objectives in this study are:

1. To identify the relationship between directive leadership style and team cohesiveness.
2. To identify the relationship between supportive leadership style and team cohesiveness.
3. To identify which leadership style is highly impact to develop team cohesiveness.

### **4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMWORK: LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEAM COHESIVENESS**

#### **4.1. LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is the process of guiding and directing the behavior of people in the work environment (Nelson & Quick, 1999). There is no uniform accepted leadership theory, model or style suite for all the occasions. So various models, theories ext. have been developed. Accordingly to Robert House, there are four leadership styles such as supportive leadership, directive leadership, participative leadership and achievement oriented leadership (Robins & Judge, 2007). The supportive leader behavior is directed towards the satisfaction of subordinate needs and preference. The leader shows concern for the followers psychological well being. The directive leader behavior refers to situations where the leader lets followers know what is expected of them and tells them how to perform their tasks. The participative leader behaviour involves leaders consulting with followers and asking for their suggestions before making a decision. The achievement oriented leadership; bahaviour refers to situations where the leader sets challenging goals for followers.

### **4.2. TEAM COHESIVENESS**

A team is a group whose members work intensely with one another to achieve a specific common goal or objective. One important element of team dynamics that affects team performance and effectiveness is team cohesiveness, the degree to which members are attracted to or loyal to their group or team. When team cohesiveness is high, individuals strongly value their group membership, find the group very appealing, and have strong desires to remain a part of the team. (Jones & George, 2008)

### **5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The available literature could be separated according to their theme of the study.

#### **5.1. LEADERSHIP STYLE AND TEAM COHESIVENESS**

Steinhardt, et.al (2003) found the relationship between hardiness supervisor support and group cohesion. They tested conceptual model based on research supporting the relationship between the predictors of hardiness, supervisor support and group cohesion and the criterions of job stress and job satisfaction and between the predictor of job stress and the criterion of job satisfaction. The findings of the study show that there is a direct relationship between leadership and team cohesiveness.

Wender, et.al (2004) revealed that there is no relationship between individualism and team cohesiveness. Directive leadership behavior had a negative effect and supportive leadership behavior had a positive effect on team cohesiveness. The negative effect of directive leadership was stronger in individualistic cultures.

## **5.2. TEAM COHESIVENESS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

A number of researches tried to find out the team cohesiveness and its relevant to employee performance.

Chansler, et.al studied the determinants of group cohesiveness in self-managing work teams. They found that there is evidence that support a link between group cohesion and performance.

Hongyan (2008) identified the consequence of group cohesiveness and the performance is very difficult, but one thing is certain, the higher organization cohesiveness and the higher achievements have the close relation.

Wang, et.al (2005) confirm that leaders should demonstrate more charismatic behavior to establish the enterprise resource planning project team members cohesiveness and thus improve team performance. The positive relationship between team cohesiveness and overall team performance was also statistically support.

T Ziner & Yoar (1982) formed that man crews of real male soldiers were studied through their performance on routine military activities. Level of cohesiveness was determined through a self-selection sociometric procedure.

Boner, found that leadership impact of group effectiveness in four ways.

1. Help the group shared goals increase group performance.
2. Better decision making
3. Increased confidence in abilities

4. Groups who view their leader as part of the cohesive unit have members who are highly engaged and also put forth increased effort on the group's behavior

## **5.3 TEAM COHESIVENESS AND CULTURE**

Team Cohesiveness may differ with the cultural background.

Xie & Johns (2000) examined the interactive effects of group cohesiveness and absence culture salience and found that aggregate measures of salience and cohesiveness each had a negative relationship with work-group absenteeism. Group absence norms mediated the effort of cohesiveness, culture salience and their interaction on self-reported absenteeism.

Wented, et.al (2009) examined the relationship between leadership and team cohesiveness in difference social cultures. According to them directive leadership and Supportive leadership are negatively and positively related with team cohesiveness respectively and these relations are stronger in individualistic societies.

Dumas, et.al (2008) formed that although self-disclosure has led to closer relationship in past research, it may not increase cohesion for employees in demographically diverse work group or those who are demographically dissimilar from the majority of their co-workers.

According to above researches it is clear that there is no uniform finding on leadership styles and team cohesiveness. Different researches have made different conclusions. Therefore the present study aiming at finding the relationship between a directive and supportive leadership styles and team cohesiveness, could be justified.

## 6. HYPOTHESIS

Based on the available literature and the problem statement of the study, following hypothesis formulated for this study.

- H1. Supportive leadership is positively related to team cohesiveness
- H2. Directive leadership is negatively related to team cohesiveness

## 7. METHODOLOGY

### 7.1. STUDY SAMPLE

The selected sample consists of 73 non managerial employees of public sector those who employed in various public sector institutes in Colombo district in Sri Lanka. Random sampling method is used to select the sample.

### 7.2. MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSES

A developed questionnaire based on the leadership study of Weredt et.al (2009), used to collect primary data from the sample. The questionnaire consist four sections, covering basic information, team cohesiveness, directive leadership style and supportive leadership style respectively. Pearson correlation analysis is used to test the hypothesis.

## 8. DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS

### 8.1. SAMPLE BACKGROUND

The sample consists of 73 non managerial employees; where 29 were female and 44 were male employees. Age wise, 18 persons are in between 18 – 30 years of age, 47 persons are in between 31 – 45 years of age while 08 persons are in between 46 – 60 years of age.

The experience also inquired. Accordingly 13 persons are having 01 – 05 years of experience, 20 persons having 06 -10 years of experience and 40 employees having more than 10 years experience in the public sector.

Further they were inquired about team work. Accordingly 42 persons have mention that team work is compulsory for them. Other 29 person say that they are also in work teams in most of the times.

Since the study deals with leadership styles, the sample was asked to mentions the job position of their superior or immediate boss. As in the table one there are number of managerial positions available in the public sector, those who are the leaders in the present study.

**Table 1: Managerial positions in public sector**

	Managerial positions in public institutions	No of Sample employees under the position
1	Director	11
2	Secretary	11
3	Director General	09
4	Manager	07
5	Finance Manager	05
6	Head of the Department	04
7	Chairman	04
8	Administrative Officer	03
9	Managing Director	03
10	General Manager	03
11	Accountant	02
12	Commissioner General	02
13	Engineer	02
14	Officer in Charge	02
15	Bursar	02
16	Divisional Secretary	02
17	Development Officer	01

Source: Sample Survey

## 8.2. TEAM COHESIVENESS

The questionnaire consists of nine questions to evaluate the team cohesiveness of non managerial employees. The Table 02 consist the mean value for each cohesive instrument. The table reveals that the mean values of all the instruments are above the average of litter scale of five. This proves that the team cohesiveness is quiet high among the non managerial employees in the public sector.

**Table 2: Team Cohesiveness**

	<b>Cohesion Instrument</b>	<b>Mean Value</b>
1.	Friendly atmosphere	3.71
2.	Trust each other	3.56
3.	Warm and friendship	3.12
4.	Treat each other	3.28
5.	Work well together as a	3.19
6.	team	3.53
7.	Cooperate with each other	3.35
8.	Willing to share resources	3.43
9.	Speak well of the group	3.39
	Proud to belong the group	

Source: Sample Survey

## 8.3. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The hypothesis was tested using person correlation analysis. These results are given in table 03.

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis**

Person Correlation		Directive Leadership Style	Supportive Leadership Style	Team cohesiveness
<b>Directive Leadership Style</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.211	<b>.198</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.073	<b>.093</b>
	N	73	73	73
<b>Supportive Leadership Style</b>	Pearson Correlation	.211	1	<b>.485**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073		<b>.000</b>
	N	73	73	73
Team cohesiveness	Pearson Correlation	.198	.485**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.093	.000	
	N	73	73	73

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results support the hypothesis one:

H1: Supportive leadership is positively related to team cohesiveness.

According to the above result supportive leadership is highly significant under 5% or 1% level of significant as it prove 0.000 p value. Therefore H1 could be accepted.

The results do not support the hypothesis two:

H2: Directive leadership is negatively related to team cohesiveness

Directive leadership style shows 0.093 P value. Therefore there is a positive relationship between Directive leadership and team cohesiveness. Therefore the H2 should be rejected.

#### **8.4. EMPLOYEES OPINION ON TEAM COHESIVENESS AND LEADERSHIP STYLES**

Nine characteristics of team cohesiveness were tested by the questionnaire. Majority of the sample agreed that their teams having friendly atmosphere, members trust each other and cooperate with each other. At the same time the majority of the sample is not very happy with friendship, work well together and treats each other.

The employees were inquired about the leadership styles of their superiors. According to the employees opinion the leaders of the public sector institutions having both directive and supportive leadership features. The most sited directive leadership characters of their superiors are motivates employees by letting them know what will happen to them if their work is unsatisfactory, expect to follow his or her instructions and requires employees to submit detailed reports to their activities. The most sited supportive leadership characters of the superiors of the public sector are leaders work hard to ease tensions whenever they arise in work groups, encourages employees to talk to them (leaders) about personal problems and frequently demonstrates concern for employees.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

Leadership styles and team cohesiveness are two important elements in organizational behavior. In theory or in literature there are no commonly accepted leadership styles. Further the available literature shows mixed conclusion for the fact of the relationship between leadership styles and team cohesiveness.

The present study found that there are various job titles being used to by the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka for their managerial positions. Therefore there is a limitation to use all these position for a common study like the present one.

This study reveals that the team cohesiveness among the non managerial employees in public sector in Sri Lanka is high. The tested nine cohesiveness instruments recorded more than average mean value of liter scale, which prove the above conclusion.

It was found that there is no perfect leadership style among the leaders or the managerial level employees of the public sector in Sri Lanka. The managers have characteristics of both supportive leadership style and directive leadership style.

According to the results of the correlation analysis it could be concluded that both supportive leadership style and directive leadership styles have positive relationship with team cohesiveness. But supportive leadership style has a strong relationship with team cohesiveness. Therefore supportive leadership is more important, to develop team cohesiveness.

According to Robert House there are four leadership styles. The present study tested only two leadership styles with cohesiveness. Therefore the other two styles i.e. participative leadership style and

achievement oriented leadership style are still remaining for further studies.

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