

Role of leaders for boosting morale of employees in IT sector with special reference to Technopark, Trivandrum

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ABSTRACT

Success of every business and industry depends on the effectiveness of leaders and their capability to influence and to be influenced by the followers for accomplishing their task. Now a day's business and industry have set managers as leaders to achieve the challenges as well as organization goals and objectives. Employees or workforce are the greatest resources of every sector, without them firm would not be able to realize their growth. Leadership behavior act as a soul and morale is the Strength of an organization. It will be change either positively or negatively among employees, group and entire department. It's very important for every employer to take care of their employees and also to foster high morale among them, so that they can keep their organization running smoothly. When employees have good morale they feel committed and loyal to their job and organization. The main motive of the research is to identify the leadership style or behavior adopted by the superior towards their subordinates and also to establish how that behavior has impact on employee morale.

For the methodology part, the samples have been selected through Stratified Random sampling method. Data has been collected from 76 Middle Level and 302 Low Level Employees through Simple Random Sampling. For analysis, tools such as ANOVA, Chi Square, Correlation and T test was used. Findings reveal that morale of employees in IT sector are low due to job stress, ergonomics, high deadlines so on, it will increase absenteeism and attrition rate among employees. In order to overcome from it organization and management should provide good working environment, new decors, open space concept and also conduct various social and cultural programmes to reduce stress among them. The outcome will be increase in employee morale as well as performance of employees which gives a positive impact on the efficiency level of the organization.

KEY WORDS: Leadership Behaviour, Ergonomics, Job Stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Success of every business and industry depends on the effectiveness of leaders and their capability to control and to be influenced by the followers for accomplishing their assignment. Behaviour of leaders towards their subordinates plays a key role for stimulating morale of employees. Leader should treat their followers as human and also respect them. If the subordinates are treated with dignity that leads to high employee morale which in turn leads to superior performance, by creating conducive work environment and culture also creates high morale among employees, job satisfaction etc. Quality of a leader is extremely based on how a leader is capable to influence the behavior of employees or follower to achieve organizational objectives and goals. Leader is about coping with change. A good leader can able to change their behavior according to the circumstances or situation. Employees or workforce are the greatest resources of every sector, without them firm would not be able to realize their growth. It's very important for every employer to take care of their employees and also to foster high morale among them, so that they can keep their organization running smoothly.

1.1. Statement of the Problem: In this global era, IT sectors are facing tight competition and challenges for rising profitability of an organisation, leader are adopting aggressive leader style towards their subordinate, which may affect employee's morale as well as increase attrition rate among employees. It is very difficult for organisations to keep up morale of employees. There are other factors which may influence morale of employees like working environment, ergonomics, and stress so on. In IT sector ergonomics is one the major problem faced by the employees it will have great impact on employee's health and also it affects employees performance as well as productivity of an organisation. Now a day's ergonomics is treated as one of the dreadful disease which is similar to smoking. It occurs due to improper physical work environment at work place.

IT industry is one of the fastest growing industry in all over the world and also they are facing high competitive pressure for tackling that superiors made changes in job and also set deadlines for each assignment in a short span of time for accomplishing assigned tasks employees were worked for long period of time, which act as a source of pressure for employee's due to heavy work load, it will make similar changes in morale and performance of employees. Many managers don't care about their employee's morale and spur them. They fail to realize that it all has an impact on companies run and have a major impact on productivity. Many of the job that the worker's performing is routine, it can turn out to be monotonous and boring for them. After some time employees may slack, slow down their pace and may even start to cutting corners. The main reason behind it is due to extended periods of time and due to heavy work load.

1.2. Need of the Study: Information Technology is one of the most important industries in Indian economy. A good human resource practice would encourage IT professionals to be more productive while enjoying their work. The

purpose of the study is to investigate the activities taken the superiors or leaders to increase morale of employees in the organization. The main intention of the study is to identify the effective leadership style that leaders can employ to improve employee morale in order to meet organization goals and objectives, thereafter to suggest recommendation that will act as prescriptive remedies for the enhancement of high employee morale for the purpose of achieving organizational effectiveness.

1.3. Objectives of the Study: To estimate the perception of employees regarding working environment and leadership behaviour of IT Industry, Technopark. To analyze employers awareness about ergonomics approach in the organization and its impact on employee performance. To identify stress level among Technopark employees and its impact on morale and absenteeism of employees.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher followed descriptive research, which describes characteristics of individuals or a group. The researcher used Simple Random Sampling for selecting 10 Software Companies in IT Industry Technopark out of 342 companies, Stratified Random Sampling for classifying employees into two strata's (Middle Level Employers and Low Level Employees). This study is carried out among Middle Level and Lower Level employees of Technopark, Trivandrum. The researcher used Simple Random Sampling for collecting data from both Middle Level and Lower Level employees of Technopark. From Middle level 76 employers are selected randomly and for low level 302 employees were selected randomly. In the present study the researcher used chi-square test, two-way anova, t test and weighted average method for analyzing and interpreting the data.

Data Collection: The data has been collected from Primary data and Secondary data. Primary Data - The primary data is collected through printed form of structured questionnaire. Primary data is collected from employees of IT Industry, Trivandrum. Secondary Data - For getting different views from other researchers and authors secondary data are collected for the study. Secondary data is collected through books, journals, articles, websites and previous thesis reports.

Hypothesis of the study:

- a) **H₀:** There is no significant difference among age group with respect to ego-defensive attitude of employers.
- b) **H₁:** There is significant difference among age group with respect to ego-defensive attitude of employers.
- c) **H₀:** There is no association between leadership styles with regard to factors affecting employee morale.
- d) **H₁:** There is association between leadership styles with regard to factors affecting employee morale.
- e) **H₀:** There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to ergonomics approach in the organisation.
- f) **H₁:** There is significant difference between male and female with respect to ergonomics approach in the organisation.
- g) **H₀:** There is no significant difference among Education Qualification with respect to performance of employees.
- h) **H₁:** There is significant difference among Education Qualification with respect to performance of employees.
- i) **H₀:** There is no significant relationship between leadership behaviour and employee attitudes on employee performance.
- j) **H₁:** There is significant relationship between leadership behaviour and employee attitudes on employee performance.

Analysis for middle level employers: In this section data analysis and interpretation are done through descriptive analysis and inferential statistics.

Mean and Standard Deviation of Leadership Behaviour and Employee Morale: Changes in leadership style can be achieved by either changing leader's assumption about subordinate or it may be a forcing behavioural change of the leader in order to accomplish goals. When changes requires, leader will change their style based on the situation. It depends upon authority, task or assumption about employees. Morale of an employee is purely emotional. It is based on employee's attitude towards job, superior and his organization.

Table.1.Leadership Behavior & Employee Morale

Leadership Behavior and Employee Morale	Mean	SD
Changes in Leadership Style	3.64	1.029
Relationship	3.32	.955
Ego Defensive Attitude	2.83	.870
Fear Arousal	2.57	1.063
Job Rotation	4.17	.700
Communication	3.96	.791
Ergonomics	3.96	.756
Developmental Progressing	3.62	.966
Cross Training	3.21	1.087
Working in Teams	3.61	1.034

Source: Primary data - Based on mean score, Job Rotation (4.17) is the most important factor on Leadership Behaviour and Employee Morale, followed by Communication among Employees (3.96), Ergonomics approach (3.96), Changes in Leadership Style(3.64) and so on. The least factor is Fear Arousal (2.57) followed by Ego defensive attitude (2.83), Cross training (3.21) and so on.

It is concluded that fear arousal, ego defensive attitude and cross training secured least scores because high degree of fear arousal make employees to become stubborn in their attitudes and refuses changes in their attitude. Ego defensive attitude aroused between co-workers because all the employees are well educated and professional they may feel threatened by the employment or due to minority in the organization. Organization is not providing cross-training to the employees to broaden their skills and experience because of lead time is required for both the employees and the organization to do their necessary work, it will distract or disrupt their normal work.

ANOVA: Difference between Age group & Ego Defensive Attitude of employees. Employers attitude towards their co-workers will get differ with age because ego defensive attitude arises due to internal and external threats. Employers' create and maintain certain type of attitude to protect their self-image.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference among age group with respect to ego-defensive attitude of employers.

H₁: There is significant difference among age group with respect to ego-defensive attitude of employers.

Table.2.Difference between Age Group and Ego Defensive Attitude

Ego-Defensive Attitude	Age in Years				F Value	P Value
	Below 25	25-35	35-45	45-55		
	2.50 (.798)	2.70 (.853)	3.15 (.745)	3.50 (1.291)	2.744	0.049*

Source: Primary Data - Since P value is 0.049, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regard to the ego-defensive attitude of employers. Hence there is significance difference among age with respect to ego-defensive attitude of employers, because all the employers are well educated and professional they may feel threatened by the employment or due to minority in the organization.

ANOVA

Variation between Leadership Style & Employee Morale: Leadership style can be either positive or negative. Most of the leaders are following a positive relationship with their followers in order to create conducive work environment, where in subordinates are treated with dignity and compassion that leads to high employee morale it provides job satisfaction and superior performance among employees. In some case, there are leaders who treat their employees brutally that results in toxic relationship and also affect employee morale and performance.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no association between leadership styles with regard to factors affecting employee morale.

H₁: There is association between leadership styles with regard to factors affecting employee morale.

Table.3.Difference between Leadership Style and Employee Morale

Leadership Styles	Employee Morale				Total	Chi-square Value	P value
	Satisfaction	Consideration	Work Load	Communication			
Autocratic	2(100) [11.8]	0(0.0) [0.0]	0(0.0)[0.0]	0(0.0)[0.0]	2	83.379 ^a	.000**
Democratic	15(62.5)[88.2]	9(37.5)[47.4]	0(0.0)[0.0]	0(0.0)[0.0]	24		
Participative	0(0.0)[0.0]	10(50.0)[52.6]	10(50.0)[38.5]	0 (0.0)[0.0]	20		
Supportive	0 (0.0)[0.0]	0 (0.0)[0.0]	16(53.3)[61.5]	14(46.7)[100.0]	30		
Total	17	19	26	14	76		

Source: Primary data; the value within () refers to Row Percentage; the value within [] refers to Column Percentage; ** Denotes significant at 1% level

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is association between leadership styles with regard to the factors affecting employee morale. Based on the row percentage, leaders who adopt democratic leadership style (62.5%), reveal that morale of employees are highly affected due to employees level of satisfaction with their job, leaders who are adopting participative leadership style 50.0% reveal that level consideration from superior influences on morale of employees and leaders who adopt supportive leadership style, 53.3% reveal that work load and work pressure highly influences on employee morale. It is concluded that there is association between leadership style and employee morale. Effective leadership style is a critical driver of employee morale. It's very important for every leader's to take care of their employees and also to foster high morale among them, so that they can their leadership style based on the situations. When employees have good morale they feel committed and loyal to their job and organization.

Analysis for low level Employees:

T Test:

Difference between Gender & Ergonomics: Gender or Sex has greater impact on ergonomics approach in the organization. Employees are working for long hours without any adequate break which will causes health related problems such as aches, pain, and stress. It also affects their performance regarding their job.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to ergonomics approach in the organization.

H₁: There is significant difference between male and female with respect to ergonomics approach in the organisation.

Table.4.Difference between Gender and Ergonomics

Ergonomics Approach	Gender				t Value	P Value
	Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
	3.81	.847	3.49	.987	2.902	0.004**

Source: Primary data; ** denotes significant at 1% level

Since P value is 0.04, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level. Hence there is significance difference between male and female of employees with regard to Ergonomics Approach in the organisation. Based on mean score, the male have higher ergonomics than female in all dimensions because there is high tendency for changing jobs and abstain from work among female employees than the male employees and also they take time off from work to attend their needs.

ANOVA: Difference between Educational Qualification & Employee Performance. Education has an effect on employee's behavior as well as in their performance. Increased level of education will increases individual's expectations and performance on their job. The outcomes of these are job satisfaction, higher income level so on.

Hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant difference among Education Qualification with respect to performance of employees.

H₁: There is no significant difference among Education Qualification with respect to performance of employees.

Table.5.Difference between Educational Qualification and Employee Performance

Employee performance	Educational Qualifications					F Value	P Value
	B.Sc	B.E	MCA	M.E	Other		
	4.63 (.489)	3.05 (.827)	2.00 (.000)	1.35 (.482)	1.00 (.000)	188.95	0.000**

Source: Primary data; denotes significant at 1% level**

Since P value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to the performance of employees. Hence there is significance difference among education qualification with respect to performance of employees. Employee's performance towards their job will get differs with their educational qualification. Highly qualified individuals have broad range of knowledge and ideas about their work which makes them to understand the overall concepts and issues about their job.

Correlation analysis:

Relation between Leadership Behaviour & Employee Attitude on Employee Performance: Leadership behaviour has a great role on attitude and performance of employees. Employee's performance and attitude is based on the behaviour or style adopted by the leader. If leaders were using empowering style or participate style employees have a positive attitude towards their job and organisation. In case of autocratic leadership style which will change employee's attitude to negative one and also it has a great impact on employee performance.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between leadership behaviour and employee attitudes on employee performance.

H₁: There is significant relationship between leadership behaviour and employee attitudes on employee performance.

Table.6.Relation between Leadership Behaviour and Employee Attitude on Employee Performance

Factors of Leadership Behaviour, Employee Attitude on Employee Performance	Leadership Behaviour	Employee Attitude	Employee Performance
Leadership Behaviour	1.000	0.744**	0.704**
Employee Attitude	-	1.000	0.930**
Employee Performance	-	-	1.000

**** Denotes significant at 1% level, the correlation coefficient between Leadership**

Behavior and Employee Attitude is 0.744, which indicate 74.4 percentage positive relationships between Leadership Behavior and Employee Attitude and is significant at 1% level. The correlation coefficient between Leadership Behavior and Employee Performance is 0.704, which indicate 70.4 percentage positive relationships between Leadership Behavior and Employee Performance and is significant at 1% level and the correlation

coefficient between Employee Attitude and Employee Performance is 0.930, which indicate 93 percentage positive relationships between Employee Attitude and Employee Performance and is significant at 1% level.

It is inferred that there is positive relationship between employee attitude and performance. Employees with positive attitude will perform their job on own without being entrusted. They take risk for better performance and also they identify strengths and weakness in each project. In case of employees with negative attitude will not be committed and loyal to their job. It is concluded that attitude plays a vital role on employee performance.

Findings of the study:

Findings for Middle Level Employees: There is ego defensive attitude aroused between co-workers because all the employees are well educated and professional they may feel threatened by the employment or due to minority in the organization. Most of the superiors reveal that job rotation and enrichment relieve boredom and monotony from employees and also increases skills of employees regarding various jobs. Superiors reveal that they are identifying employee's performance gap, by comparing employee performance with organization requirements and provides developmental programs for employees to acquire other skills. Most of the leaders reveal that organization is not providing cross-training to the employees to broaden their skills and experience because of lead time is required for both the employees and the organization to do their necessary work, it will distract or disrupt their normal work.

Majority of superiors feels that team work is an important factor for employees to increase performance and productivity because team work will enhance employee's performance and also increase productivity of an organisation. Working in teams reduces errors, avoid wastage of time and also avoid work related problems. Based on chi-square test it is inferred that there is association between leadership style and employee morale. Effective leadership style is a critical driver of employee morale. It's very important for every leader's to take care of their employees and also to foster high morale among them, so that they can their leadership style based on the situations. When employees have good morale they feel committed and loyal to their job and organization.

Findings for Low Level Employees: Employees are satisfied with leader's behavior because leaders are assigning task, setting benchmark and supervising each activities of employees with respect and trust in order to gain organization goals and objectives. Superior are not providing preventive and remedial measures for maintaining and improving employee morale for controlling employee cost, to save time and for higher productivity. Need a proper training facility so superiors try to avoid giving remedial measures for employees. Ego defensive attitude aroused between co-workers because all the employees are well educated and professional they may feel threatened by the employment or due to minority in the organization. Some of the employees feel that fresher's are less qualified or have less experience than them so it makes them to mistreat those workers.

Most of the employees reveal that fear arousal will not changes negative attitude of employees because high degree of fear arousal make them to become stubborn in their attitudes and refuses changes in their attitude. Most of the employees reveal that organisation strategies is not aiming to eliminate job stress among employees and also management are not providing training, motivational programs and refreshment activities to reduce stress among employees due to high target, deadlines, competition, cost and time. Most of the employees reveal that management is not providing counseling for employees to avoid uncertainties which occur in both the work and the family. Due to globalization, technological innovation and tight competition content of job or work may change according to the requirement of job in different companies and employees may work for more hours to complete their task.

Employees are not satisfied with the shift system in the organization. IT companies are doing business with many foreign countries so employees want to work in night shift, so that employees cannot concentrate on their responsibilities like family so on. Female employees are get much affected by this irregular shift. Based on correlation analysis it is inferred that there is positive relationship between employee attitude and performance. Employees with positive attitude will perform their job on own without being entrusted. They take risk for better performance and also they identify strengths and weakness in each project. In case of employees with negative attitude will not be committed and loyal to their job. It is concluded that attitude plays a vital role on employee performance. From t test it is inferred that there is significance difference between male and female of employees with regard to Ergonomics Approach in the organisation. Based on mean score, the male have higher ergonomics than female in all dimensions because there is high tendency for changing jobs and abstain from work among female employees than the male employees and also they take time off from work to attend their needs. Based on ANOVA it is inferred that there is significance difference among education qualification with respect to performance of employees. Employee's performance towards their job will get differs with their educational qualification. Highly qualified individuals have broad range of knowledge and ideas about their work which makes them to understand the overall concepts and issues about their job.

Suggestions of the study: Organization should include eye breaks for employees from computer, micro breaks to move away from fixed postures and also provide exercise breaks which will keeps workers healthy. By implementing these changes the outcome will be in high job satisfaction and increased productivity. Management should conduct stress management programs for employees to reduce occupational stress among employees, which leads to

behavioral modification, team building among employees and also increases performance and productivity. Organisation should conduct morale building program for reduces low morale among employees. For maintaining and improving employee morale management should come up with certain preventive measures such as: a) Modifying work environment, b) Flexible working hours, c) Job rotation. Reward and Recognition lead to positive morale among workers. Provide the scope for extensive participation of the employees in decision making and create the environment of participative management enables both the management and workers to share and exchange their ideas and viewpoints in the process of joint decision making. It creates a platform for mutual learning and understanding. Leaders should provide constant feedback about employee's attitude, behaviour and performance. The feedback should be objective, immediate and it should be based on employee's actual behaviour. For effective supervision both the positive and negative feedback should be given to the subordinates.

Counselling of employee's should be done periodically. It will help the organization to understand the problem of employees and to solve them and will increase the efficiency of workers and the productivity. Superiors should adapt how-shall we do it attitude among employees for reducing workload, which makes them to do their job easily and quickly without any difficulties. Conducive work environment will reduces boredom, monotony etc. Job rotation and enrichment reduces boredom among employees and also it increases employee's skills, knowledge and performance. Management should conduct cross-training programs to employees to broaden their experience and potential. Encourage them to participate in it, this will improve trust and confidence level among employees and also helps to meet both the organization as well as individual needs. Management should introduce open-space concept which will provides satisfaction among employees and also it increases communication and social interaction among employees. By this concept employees can solve their work related problems by discussing with one another and also it reduces ego defensive attitude among co-workers. For providing pleasant working environment organization should come up with new decors and new kind of office furniture to reduce health related problems, monotony and fatigue among employees.

3. CONCLUSION

Conclusion was provided based on the objectives. It is emerged from the study that subordinates were satisfied with leader's behavior and they act as models for their subordinates. Leaders were clear about their leadership guiding principles. It is discovered that changes in leadership behavior have effect on employee morale. Secondly, employee attitude is an important aspect for any organization; it can change or affect employee performance and productivity. It has been observed from the study that both internal and external factors which affect attitude of employees in Technopark. Thirdly, the study revealed that work environment and ergonomics approach has severe impact on employee's health, it will increase level of absenteeism and turnover among employees. From the study it is found that working environment and ergonomics is an important aspect for organization it has effect on employee morale and performance of employees. For improving employee morale and performance, management should understand the needs and wants of employees and also fulfills their needs, by providing various beneficial schemes, such as assigning job, introduce new decors, providing training, motivation etc. It will increase the level of contribution and commitment of employees towards its firm. It is found out from the study stress is the major issue among the employees in IT industry, which make changes in employee morale. The development of the business strategies and the involvement of technology make a huge stress among the employees. The various factors which cause stress among employees are due to heavy work load, long working hours, unexpected target etc.

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