

Situational Leadership Strategies to Improve Change Management and Team Performance

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 19 January 2022

Revised 16 February 2022

Accepted 14 April 2022

Key words:

Situational leadership,
Organizational change,
Employee engagement,
Team development,
Adaptation,
Communication,
Change management.

ABSTRACT

Situational leadership is a leadership model that can be adapted to the conditions and level of readiness of employees in the face of change. In organizations operating in dynamic environments, leaders need to adopt flexible and adaptive leadership styles to effectively manage change. This leadership style has great potential in reducing resistance to change, increasing employee engagement, and developing more productive and collaborative teams. Situational leadership facilitates better communication, supports individual development, and ensures that employees feel involved in the change process that is taking place. Organizations need to train leaders to understand the needs of their teams and adapt leadership styles to the situation at hand. Proper implementation of situational leadership styles can strengthen change management and create more adaptive and goal-oriented teams.

INTRODUCTION

Today's dynamic work environment demands rapid and efficient change in every aspect of the organization. Rapid changes often affect work structures and processes, requiring leadership that is adaptive and responsive to these changes. Situational leadership is important because it views that effective leadership styles must be adapted to the situation and needs faced by the organization (Brauns, 2015). This model allows leaders to change their style according to changing conditions in the workplace, helping organizations to adapt better to the changes that occur (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020).

Situational leadership has a flexible and adaptive approach in the face of change. In complex and dynamic organizations, situational leadership enables leaders to respond effectively to internal and external changes. Leaders who are able to adapt their leadership style to specific conditions can better manage uncertainty and challenges in the organization. The success of change management is often determined by the leader's ability to recognize various situations and motivate the team in a way that suits the characteristics and needs of the situation. In an environment of uncertainty, the ability to manage change through a dynamic and adaptive approach is critical to organizational success (Feitosa et al., 2019).

In many cases, organizations that cannot adapt their leadership style according to the changes taking place often face obstacles in the change process. Many organizations fail to change effectively because their leaders stick to rigid leadership styles that do not fit the new dynamics that emerge. The inability to align leadership styles with the needs of the new situation can cause tension between managers and employees, hinder productivity, and affect employee motivation and engagement (Duarte & Papa, 2011). The effectiveness of situational leadership in helping organizations adapt to change is critical to ensure sustainability and optimal performance (Zuka & Cekerevac, 2016).

Situational leadership is not only important for dealing with internal changes that occur within the organization, but also for responding to external changes that affect day-to-day operations. In many situations, organizations need to manage changes that involve technological changes, market shifts, or changes in government policies and regulations (Rahmawati, 2016). Success in dealing with these external changes relies heavily on the leader's ability to manage these changes in an effective and appropriate manner, which further emphasizes the importance of this leadership model in the dynamic world of work (Setiawan et al., 2019).

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One of the main problems faced in the application of situational leadership in change management is the lack of understanding and skills of leaders in recognizing situations that require certain approaches (Widyadharna et al, 2020). Many leaders do not have sufficient skills to analyze and recognize the characteristics of the situations they face, so they fail to adapt their approach to changing needs. In many cases, leaders rely too much on one leadership style that they consider to be the most effective, even though the situation at hand requires adjustments to different leadership styles. This often leads to delays in decision-making and decreased effectiveness in managing the changes that occur (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). When the leadership style does not match the needs of the employees or the complexity of the problem, the team's trust in the leader may decrease, ultimately affecting their engagement and productivity.

Managing teams in change situations can also be a major challenge, especially in organizations that have members with various backgrounds and different skill levels (Vinokurova et al, 2017). This diversity can be a strength, but without proper management, it risks leading to disagreements, conflicts, or unequal contributions to the change process. Situational leadership requires leaders to identify the characteristics of individuals in the team and adjust their approach to maximize the potential of each team member. In practice, many leaders struggle to make these adjustments due to a lack of skills in understanding team dynamics or a lack of time to give sufficient attention to overall team development (Northouse, 2018).

Not only leaders are faced with challenges, but also team members often feel confused or stressed by rapid changes (Aksu, 2014). When the leadership style applied is inconsistent or does not match the needs of the situation, it can lower the level of employee engagement and motivation. Lack of proper support from leaders can cause employees to feel uncertain about the direction of the organization and make them less motivated to support the expected changes (Goleman, 2000).

Another challenge that often arises is resistance to change from within the organization itself (Mozammel et al., 2017). Although situational leadership can help in managing change, resistance coming from employees or certain parts of the organization remains a major obstacle. This often happens because employees feel that the changes implemented are not in accordance with their values or ways of working that they have adopted before. Managing this resistance requires leaders' skills to adapt their style to employees' sensitivity to the changes that are taking place.

It is important to learn how situational leadership can improve an organization's ability to adapt to change, given the rapidly changing world of work. In this dynamic and uncertain work environment, the ability to adapt to change is key for organizations to remain relevant and competitive. Effective situational leadership can not only increase the effectiveness of change management but also improve employee engagement and team productivity. Understanding how adaptive leadership styles can be applied in change management is essential for modern organizations.

Proper application of situational leadership can reduce the level of uncertainty often faced by employees during the change process. High uncertainty can cause anxiety among employees, which further reduces team effectiveness. By developing skills in situational leadership, leaders can provide clearer direction, build trust, and create an environment that supports employee engagement in every stage of change. This makes it a highly relevant topic for further attention and development.

The purpose of this discussion is to explore how situational leadership can be applied in managing change in organizations and the extent to which this approach can enhance employee engagement and team development. By understanding this relationship, organizations can improve managerial effectiveness in the face of change and create more productive and rapidly adapting teams.

RESEARCH METHOD

To explore the topic of situational leadership effectiveness in change management in a dynamic work environment, a literature study approach can be used to collect and analyze various relevant theories and concepts. This literature study aims to identify patterns that emerge in the existing literature related to the implementation of situational leadership in organizations undergoing change. One important step in this approach is to collect articles, books and journals that discuss the situational leadership model and how it is applied to manage change in organizations (Graeff, 1997). In this way, this approach prioritizes the compilation of various references relevant to the topic, which allows the researcher to build a better understanding of how situational leadership can influence employee engagement and team development in the face of change (Schweikle, 2014).

This approach can also identify gaps or weaknesses in the existing literature, as well as provide insight into the outcomes or impacts found from previous studies related to situational leadership and change management. The analysis process is conducted by assessing the findings presented by various authors and

looking for common patterns that can be applied in various organizational settings (Mujtaba & Sungkhawan, 2011). For example, studies conducted by Hersey and Blanchard (1988) suggest that leaders who can adapt their leadership style to the readiness level of their followers can manage change more effectively. This underscores the need to adapt situational leadership to the evolving needs of individuals and teams.

As a next step, this literature review will analyze how various organizations in different sectors have applied situational leadership principles in their change processes. For example, some previous studies (Yukl, 2010) have shown that situational leadership can increase employee engagement because leaders using this approach can provide support that matches the needs of individuals in the team. In this way, the literature collected can help to understand the extent to which this leadership model has proven effective in managing change in organizations facing dynamic challenges.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Situational leadership is an approach that emphasizes the flexibility of leaders in adjusting their leadership style based on the situation at hand. In rapid organizational change, situational leadership allows leaders to assess employee conditions and organizational needs, then adjust leadership styles to facilitate a more effective transition process (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). When the organization undergoes change, leaders should be able to identify the level of readiness and ability of employees to deal with the change and then adjust their style accordingly. These adjustments help smooth the transition process and increase the effectiveness of change implementation. This approach allows leadership to be more responsive to individual and team needs in the face of constantly evolving situations (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). Adaptive leadership not only improves organizational performance, but also strengthens employee engagement and trust during periods of uncertainty.

In organizations undergoing major change, situational leadership can encourage employee engagement in a more personalized and relevant way. Leadership that adapts their style to the employee's level of readiness will have a positive impact on employee trust and motivation levels. Research shows that when leaders adapt to the needs of individuals within a team, this can increase employee engagement (Bass, 1990). This engagement is important because employees who feel engaged tend to show higher commitment to the organization and the ongoing change process, which ultimately improves team and overall organizational performance (Todorović & Todorović, 2021).

In organizational change management, situational leadership can be used to address the uncertainty that may arise among employees. Uncertainty often leads to decreased motivation and feelings of anxiety, which can hinder the change process. By using a leadership style that matches the readiness level of employees, leaders can reduce this anxiety and provide clear direction. This will create a sense of security among employees and encourage them to be more actively involved in the change process (Kotter, 1996). Leaders who can adapt to the needs of employees at a certain stage will increase employee confidence and desire to participate in the changes that occur (Harsono et al., 2021).

The application of situational leadership can also accelerate team development in the face of change. Effective team development requires an approach that considers the capabilities of each team member as well as the circumstances. Leaders who know each team member and adapt their leadership style will improve team performance by capitalizing on each individual's strengths. A leadership style that focuses on support and development will help team members feel valued and support each other through the change process (Yukl, 2010). Situational leadership is not just about directing change, but also about strengthening relationships within the team and enhancing collaboration to achieve organizational goals.

When organizational change occurs, there is often a tendency for employees to feel isolated or disconnected from the purpose of the change. Flexible situational leadership can help overcome this by adjusting the communication and support provided to employees. Leaders who are able to adapt their approach to each stage of change will facilitate a sense of ownership among employees towards the change goals (Goleman, 2000). By identifying and responding to employee needs, leaders can create a more inclusive environment, where each individual feels part of the larger change process.

It is important to note that the effectiveness of situational leadership in managing change depends not only on the leader himself, but also on employees' understanding of the changes that are taking place. Effective communication between leaders and employees is essential. Leaders must be able to clearly convey the purpose of the change and provide adequate explanation regarding how the change will directly affect employees (Kotter, 1996). By improving employees' understanding of the change, leaders can reduce resistance to change and speed up the transition process.

Along with that, the important role that leaders have in managing change is also related to their ability to provide constructive feedback to employees. Feedback given in a positive form can increase employee motivation to continue to adapt and develop (Yukl, 2010). Leaders who can provide feedback in a supportive way will create a climate that allows employees to feel valued and motivated to try harder to support ongoing changes.

Situational leadership also plays a key role in maintaining a balance between organizational needs and employee well-being. When organizations change, there are often high demands on employees to adapt quickly. Leaders who apply a leadership style that is responsive to individual needs can help employees feel more comfortable in adapting to these changes (Bass, 1990). Leaders who pay attention to employee well-being will encourage higher levels of job satisfaction, which ultimately has a positive impact on employee engagement and productivity.

In managing dynamic organizational change, it is important for leaders to develop strong communication skills. Leaders who have good communication skills will be more effective in conveying the vision of change and guiding employees through the transition. Clear and open communication about the purpose of the change and the steps taken to achieve it will minimize confusion and increase ownership of the common goal. Strong communication skills in situational leadership are a very important element to create successful change in organizations (Graeff, 1997).

Situational leadership is a model that emphasizes the importance of the leader's flexibility in adapting the leadership style according to the conditions and needs of his followers at any given time. In a dynamic work environment, rapid and often unexpected changes require leaders who are able to adjust quickly. Situational leadership allows leaders to choose the appropriate style—whether it is directive, supportive, or delegating—according to the developmental stage of the individual or group in the face of change (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). This model, if applied appropriately, can make a significant contribution to the management of change in organizations operating in uncertain environments.

In organizations adapting to a dynamic work environment, change requires not only adjusting strategies, but also approaches to human resource management. Situational leadership, which involves the ability to assess an employee's level of readiness, provides guidance on how to lead according to an individual or team's abilities and readiness. Leaders who adopt this approach will be better able to keep employees engaged during challenging transitions,

and motivate them to remain productive even in uncertain situations (Graeff, 1997). This adaptation of leadership style is critical to creating a positive and adaptive work climate, which is essential for successful change management.

In situations of rapid change, situational leadership can also help reduce resistance to change. One of the main challenges that organizations often face is the inability of some organizational members to accept change. In these circumstances, a more directive leadership style, as well as clear communication of the purpose and benefits of change, can be key to motivating employees to be more receptive to the changes being made. Leaders who are able to apply this style well can overcome the fears that arise in employees and encourage them to adopt changes in a more positive and open way (Kotter, 1996).

One important element in situational leadership that contributes to successful change management is the ability to provide support to employees who are experiencing difficulties. In the face of change, it is not uncommon for employees to feel trapped or confused, especially if the changes being implemented are quite large and touch many aspects of the organization. Leaders who use a supportive style, which pays more attention to the emotional and motivational needs of employees, will help them feel more accepted and supported in dealing with these changes (Goleman, 2000). This increases employee engagement, which is crucial for maintaining organizational performance and productivity in unstable situations.

A leadership style that involves employees in the change process can increase their sense of responsibility and commitment to the changes being implemented. Situational leadership that provides space for employees to be involved in decision-making or designing the change strategy will provide a greater sense of ownership of the change. This not only increases their engagement, but also creates a collaborative atmosphere that leads to better team development. Employees who feel involved are more likely to work together to achieve organizational goals (Bass, 1990).

In complex organizations, leaders need to conduct a constant evaluation of employees' needs and readiness for change (Roth, 2015). This means that leaders must have excellent communication skills, as well as the ability to objectively evaluate how changes are being received and adapted by employees. These skills are important so that leaders can adjust their leadership style in a timely manner, preventing feelings of uncertainty that can arise from rapid and protracted change.

Timely and communicative evaluation will also help employees understand the direction of change and its impact on them (Yukl, 2010).

Change management involving situational leadership also has a significant impact on team development (Florea, 2016). Leaders who recognize the needs of individuals in the team and adjust their style based on those needs can improve overall team performance. When teams sense that their leaders understand individual needs, they are more likely to collaborate and contribute more towards organizational goals. This more effective team development leads to better achievement in the change process, as the team feels more organized and connected (Yukl, 2010).

The success of change management depends largely on the clarity of vision and direction provided by the leader (Gökmen, 2019). In organizations facing major change, situational leadership plays an important role in ensuring that the vision of change is conveyed in a way that is easily understood by employees. When leaders are able to articulate the change vision in a way that is relevant to employees, they will be more motivated to undergo the change and be more engaged in the ongoing transformation process. Leaders who are able to communicate clearly will facilitate a smoother and more effective transition (Kotter, 1996).

In change management, highly dynamic situations also require leaders who can manage conflict well (Fragouli, 2018). Conflict can arise when the changes implemented collide with the old values or habits held by employees. The right situational leadership can help resolve these conflicts in a constructive way, ensuring that the goals of change are still achieved without compromising the relationships between individuals in the organization. Leaders who are skilled at managing conflict and adjusting their leadership style according to the conflict situation will be able to maintain team cohesion and reduce the potential for divisions that can hinder the success of change (Graeff, 1997).

Overall, situational leadership can contribute greatly to the successful management of change in organizations facing dynamic work environments. With the right adjustment of leadership style, leaders can reduce resistance to change, increase employee engagement, and develop more productive and adaptive teams. In a changing world, the ability to adapt leadership styles to the needs of employees and the challenges of change is key to maintaining a balance between organizational goals and individual needs, which will ultimately lead to the success of the organization in undergoing such changes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, situational leadership has enormous potential to manage change in organizations facing dynamic work environments. With its ability to adjust leadership styles according to the situation and the level of readiness of employees, situational leadership can create a climate that supports employee engagement and team development effectively. Leaders who adopt this leadership style will be able to reduce resistance to change, increase employee engagement, and create better communication between leaders and teams. Successful change management is also highly dependent on leaders' understanding of individual and group needs in the face of evolving challenges.

As a strategic move, organizations need to pay more attention to leadership training and development that emphasizes the importance of flexibility and adaptability of leadership styles. This will enhance their ability to lead teams through challenging times of change. Training programs specifically designed to equip leaders with an understanding of situational leadership, interpersonal communication skills, as well as the ability to read team dynamics, are key in building resilient leadership. Organizations also need to continuously monitor employees' readiness for change so that leaders can adjust their style accordingly. Through periodic assessments, such as engagement surveys, competency assessments, or team feedback, leaders can obtain accurate data on the psychological and technical state of their team. It is hoped that organizations can create a more productive, adaptive and collaborative environment in the face of rapid and continuous change.

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