

## Role of Leadership in Modern International Organizations

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### Abstract

*Defining the importance of leadership is directly related to the way leaders manage to act as agents of change. The importance of leadership also is related to the state of society, the structure of organizations and the type of reform adopted. Leadership development is more important in a diversified society than in a homogeneous one, because leaders are required to pass on new values, mediate conflicts, and form coalitions to support reform. International organizations play their part into shaping leadership development, and thus leaders play their part into changing societies. The purpose of this article is to identify which are the indicators that characterize a modern leader, but also to identify the environment of an international organization that influences the context in which the organization is being lead.*

**Key words:** leaders, leadership, international organizations, context

**J.E.L. classification:** F53; O15; O19; H10

### 1. Introduction

The emergence and development of leadership in an organization depends on many variables. One of the key aspects of leadership is managing both the organizational context, but also being able to create one in which leaders and their followers can perform. After several definitions and a series of ideas drawn from several authors or specialists, the current article aims to underline that leadership is an important part in the development of a business because it is an activity that encourages individuals to cooperate in achieving their goals. When the manager of a company is a good leader, work is not only an obligation but also a pleasure.

Even if there are several leadership styles, it has been shown that, as a rule, a leader does not practice exclusively one leadership style and that no style is suitable for all the situations that a leader faces.

### 2. Literature review

Organizations must be aware that individuals feel a real need to have power and to influence the existence of those around them. The goal theory (one of the motivational theories) suggests that leaders are more effective when they are able to clarify the routes of the various goals of their subordinates, or of people that are of interest to the company. Initial leadership studies have focused on identifying the physical, psychological, and intellectual traits that can predict a leader's effectiveness.

While some authors referenced in the current paper (Allen W.E, Brookes S., Grint K., Hart P.) focus on presenting the importance of leadership in the modern context, they also focus on presenting the importance on modern day leadership especially in what they find as being "the public sector". It is essential to understand that their views, shared through out this article underline the fact that international organizations are being management just as public organizations are, in a sense that their leadership needs. Other authors (Barkin J.S., Carpinshi, Collins R. etc.) focus on the particularities of international organizations.

### 3. Research methodology

The current article tries to answer the following research question: *What are the variables that might influence the leadership in an international organization?*

In order to do so, we must first see what is the role of a modern leader, but also to understand the challenges international organizations face today. Last (but not least), there needs to be an understanding of the environment and its influence over the leadership in an international organization. Finally, the analysis will consist in to scenario-matrixes, two scenario-analysis which will try to identify the variables depending on the actions an international organization can take.

The first research hypothesis is: there are at least four stages that affect the evolution of leadership at an organizational level: respecting its mission and values, implementing organizational practices, developing the internal and external environment.

The second research hypothesis is: There are certain variables that influence the leadership process in the case of international organizations.

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1. The role of a leader

Understanding how leadership works, means understanding the roles of a leader.

A leader must know how to gather people around realizing the organizational goal, to give them hope for what they do together, otherwise managing people will be counterproductive and they will feel that their aspirations are lost.

A leader must never forget that he is a human being like everyone else around him. What best reveals how human a leader is, is the way he treats people from whom he has nothing to gain.

A leader must know and admit that no success is his only merit.

Modern leaders are transformational leaders. They change the beliefs and attitudes of people to fit a new vision. They provide intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

The leader is the one who leads: people, communities, parties, an organization, a team and who has certain human traits, such as: the talent to bring people together, to make them act for a common goal, to feel fulfilled as part of a group, organization or nation, and help contribute to the achievement of favorable performance. (Allen, 2018)

Leadership is important because those who lead organizations make things happen. Those who lead efficiently achieve high performance, and true leaders and dedicated members of the organization and are committed to customer satisfaction/achieving goals.

Leadership is the process by which a person sets a goal or directive for one or more people and causes them to act together with competence and full dedication to achieve them. In short, leadership is the process of influencing a group to achieve its goals. The leader always takes into consideration interpersonal relationships. The leader inspires the desire of people to think, to feel, to behave harmoniously, to be fulfilled and devoted to the organization, by sharing a common vision and purpose. (Brookes & Grint, 2010)

Are all modern-day managers leaders? Ideally, yes, all managers should be leaders. Even if we examine leaders from a managerial perspective, we are aware that groups often have unofficial leaders who come out, and are able to influence others without using the power of their position.

Leaders are the ones who design policies, strategies, management system and organizational culture and make them operational by generating effectiveness, sustainability, competitiveness and efficiency. On the other hand, the manager is the one who coordinates and oversees the resources of the organization and the activity of subordinates, so that the organizational objectives are met. (Hart & Tummers, 2019)

The diagnosis of the organization's leadership is the first step, indispensable in the elaboration of any management strategy and policy. The diagnosis must assess the state of the organization, the causes and factors that determine the performance or counter-performance of the company. All of this makes sense and purpose in a strategy, if the diagnostic analysis measures and evaluates the possibilities, ways and directions of actions of the leader, in order to strengthen his relationship with employees and other stakeholders of the organization.

Diagnosing the leadership of the organization, by evaluating the leadership variables, is a necessary operation, but not sufficient for effective leadership. It is also necessary to quickly intervene on issues that need to be improved in the leadership style of the leader and to follow the effective leadership model.

A leader does not constantly use the same leadership style. The situational approach of leadership tells us that this is not even desirable, because the specific aspects of each case are very important when the leader has to choose a certain leadership style. However, the leadership style characteristic of people in leadership positions can be classified as predominantly (largely) authoritarian or democratic.

#### 4.2. Understanding international organizations

International organizations are a structured set of participants, formed on the basis of an agreement, with a continuous operation in order to achieve common objectives, by coordinating resources and actions. (Barkin, 2006)

From this definition the main characteristics of an international organization can be understood:

- first, the organization has a framework that brings together several participants, which can be either states (in the case of governmental organizations), or private or associations (in the case of non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International)
- secondly, the organization results from an act of will of the participants, manifested in an agreement which takes the form of a constitutive act, bearing different names: statute, pact, charter, convention, etc.
- thirdly, the organization is a mechanism for coordinating resources and actions in order to achieve certain objectives;
- fourthly, the organization has a materiality distinct from that of its members: a permanent establishment, an organizational structure and its own functional autonomy.

With regards to international organizations and the public system in general, referring to the notions set out above, Warren Bennis spoke since 1985 of his book "Leaders" about the desperate need to have "*new leaders in public organizations*" foreshadowing the failure the public sector would have to deal with in crises such as the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan or Syria, corporate scandals culminating with the Great Recession, the devastation caused by natural disasters and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because trust in public organizations (whether national or international) decreases when faced with many challenges. Therefore, modern leaders can no longer afford to take too many risks, which erodes the distinction between modern leaders and managers.

The leader of a modern international organization has to be a strategic thinker, with no prejudice whatsoever, capable of being inclusive and manage complexity, but also capable of planning long term and being conscient about the global environment he operates in.

The roles of international organizations usually are:

Figure no.1. The role of modern international organizations



Source: self-processing

International organizations are usually under the constraint of 3 different forces (Carpinschi, Mărgit, 2011):

- bureaucratic forces – the top management of the international organizations
- political forces – such as the members of the governments of member states
- socio-economic forces – such as external stakeholders (NGO's or other international organizations)

#### **4.3. Understanding the environment and its influence over the leadership in an international organization**

The first problem that leaders face is to determine which specific factors influence the organization and determine its success, because it is impossible to take into account all the factors. For this reason, external factors are classified into two groups:

- a) Environment of direct action.
- b) Environment of indirect action.

According to Elbing, the environment of direct action includes the factors that directly influence the activity of the organization. (Collins & White, 2013) These are: suppliers, labor resources, laws, state regulatory organizations, consumers and competitors.

Indirect action means factors that may not act directly on the organization, but still have some influence. These are the following factors:

- the state of the economy;
- technical-scientific progress;
- socio-cultural and political changes;
- the influence of group interests;
- events in other countries, etc.

The interconnection of external environmental factors is the force with which the modification of a factor influences other factors. According to researchers F. Emery and E. Trist, the interconnection of external environmental factors should have changed the internal environment of organizations currently operating in a rapidly changing environment. Leaders can no longer look at external factors in isolation. They need to understand that these factors are constantly interacting and changing. (Chumakov, 2016)

The complexity of the external environment implies the number of factors to which the organization is obliged to react. If it is pressured by state decisions, the frequent renewal of contracts with trade unions, a lot of competitors and rapid technological changes, it can be said that this organization is in a much more complicated environment than, say, the organization concerned with the activity of some suppliers, some competitors, in the absence of unions and with a slow change of technology.

The uncertainty of the external environment is the function of the amount of information available to the organization regarding a certain factor, as well as the function of trusting this information. If we have little information or we are not convinced of its veracity, then the environment becomes more vague, more uncertain than when we have adequate and secure information. The more uncertain the external environment, the more difficult it is to make an efficient decision.

We must also not forget the importance of respecting the mission and objectives on which the international organization was created, but also its organizational practice (Ionescu et al, 2011):

- On one hand, respecting its mission and objectives can help develop procedures on which the international organization is being governed.
- On the other hand, the organizational practice means that those procedures are being put into action.

## 5. Scenario analysis regarding the future of leadership in international organizations. Findings

Figure no. 2. Positive scenario-matrix regarding the future of leadership in international organizations



Source: self-processing

Figure no. 3. Negative scenario-matrix regarding the future of leadership in international organizations



Source: self-processing

**The findings** regarding *the variables* that influence the leadership process in this case are:

- a) the duration of a crisis (economic, sanitary etc.)
- b) the organizational capacity of developing an independent body that can analyze and award independent sanctions to member states that do not comply with the agenda of the international organization;
- c) the availability to renegotiate with member states the compliance with the sustainable development of the international organization, and the measures that are taken towards this goal.

## 6. Conclusions

Leadership is important because those who lead organizations make things happen. Those who lead efficiently achieve high performance, and true leaders and dedicated members of the organization and are committed to customer satisfaction/achieving goals.

Leadership is the process by which a person sets a goal or directive for one or more people and causes them to act together with competence and full dedication to achieve them. In short, leadership is the process of influencing a group to achieve its goals. The leader always takes into consideration interpersonal relationships. The leader inspires the desire of people to think, to feel, to behave harmoniously, to be fulfilled and devoted to the organization, by sharing a common vision and purpose.

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