Management Skills and Leadership Styles:

A Reflection with a Global Focus

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Abstract

Economic globalization has incorporated new demands on leadership issues. Nowadays, it is very important that the manager or administrator has the necessary mechanisms to provide his collaborators with the necessary synergy and thus achieve the corporate results that have been devised. In order to analyze how the process of evolution of management skills is progressing, the results of a descriptive/quantitative research that investigated this important component in small and medium enterprises in the city of Barranquilla are presented. The results achieved allow us to visualize three main focuses of attention: training for management, promotion of positive leadership and training in monitoring and organizational control.
Keywords: Management Skills, Leadership, Globalization, Competitiveness

1 Introduction

Senior managers make decisions that have a positive or negative impact on the overall functioning of the organizations they manage, which is why they must have skills and competencies that enable them to know and understand the conditions that characterize today's markets[1]; the new demands of the environment in relation to the labor market, production, technological innovation and government policies force entrepreneurs to readjust their strategies in order to take advantage of these variables in their favor and obtain positive results in the short, medium and long term[2].

The dynamics of globalization that determine the characteristics of today's environment require a new ability on the part of managers to develop in this context, so that, through interaction with different knowledge, they can carry out negotiation activities in contexts where cultures and ways of thinking are associated [3].

In this sense, companies that inhibit creativity and initiative to the detriment of innovation, through the excessive measurement and control of their members, are not viable since with these measures they lose the flexibility to adapt to dynamic environments. Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy [4], have established that when the task is highly structured and the leader has a good relationship with his or her team, effectiveness will be high on the part of the employees, as long as there is a participatory work environment, where the leaders involve all team members in making decisions and building a motivated team.

Successful innovative processes depend to a large extent on the organization's overall effort, so that those in which a work environment characterized by initiative and psychological security prevails will be where the most effective innovations are generated; this leads to the establishment of a direct relationship between the climate of innovation and commitment, innovation and collaboration [5].

Leadership is one of the factors that most influences the perception of workers as the source of the organizational climate, which is why it has been a subject of great interest over the years. Some authors define leadership as the ability to influence a group of people to achieve their goals through teamwork and behaviors that the leader uses to influence the actions of other individuals [6].

Other authors have highlighted the importance of leadership in facilitating staff growth and participation, encouraging creativity and developing skills [6]; in general, according to scholars, leaders should be able to move people towards a common goal by establishing a favorable and favorable work environment for the development of new knowledge.
Some of the essential leadership skills that world leaders should possess [7]: developing self-awareness, understanding cultural stereotypes, increasing self-confidence, looking beyond, creating a vision and getting others to accept it, developing a global mindset, gaining and offering support, developing effective communication skills, seeking and using available resources, creating and using motivational techniques appropriately and taking social responsibility seriously.

As noted, the way a manager leads his or her team is key to motivation; employees’ reactions to their leaders generally depend on the characteristics of the workers, as well as those of their leaders [8]. In addition, negotiation and dispute resolution are among the central tasks of management and are fundamental to strategic decision-making and the functioning of organizations.

While tensions and conflicts occur naturally in organisations, some people may act in ways that resolve these conflicts and stimulate co-operative behaviour, while others may act in ways that leave conflicts unresolved and stimulate antagonistic behaviour [9]; hence, the more common leadership styles defined by Bernard Bass [10] are highlighted:

• Transformational leadership:

Transformational leaders provide a vision and a sense of mission, inspire pride and gain respect and confidence through charism; they are characterized by the following attributes [11]:

➢ Idealized influence: the leader is trusted and respected, maintains a high moral standard, and is seen as a role model by followers. Employees admire and want to identify with leaders and their mission; charismatic leaders attract subordinates with their high standards of moral and ethical conduct, thus developing their ability to persuade others, connect with their peers, and provide a clear vision and sense of purpose, so as to arouse emotions, and share successes and risks with team members [12].

➢ Inspirational motivation: the leader articulates and emphasizes in the subordinates the need for superior performance in order to contribute to the fulfillment of organizational objectives. Inspirational motivation relates to the leader's ability to create and articulate the vision in a way that inspires followers and builds their loyalty and commitment; an inspirational leader sets high expectations for followers, inspires and motivates followers by communicating a clear vision, aligning organizational goals and personal goals, and treating problems as opportunities to learn.

➢ Intellectual stimulation: the leader stimulates the subordinate's understanding of problems, as well as an identification of his or her own beliefs and standards; he or she awakens the subordinates to challenge their
own thoughts and beliefs and to be creative in problem solving; the leader intellectually challenges his or her followers to be more innovative and creative in problem solving and to become active participants in group decision-making.

- Individualized consideration: the leader treats followers as individuals, but they are all treated equally; they build a strong relationship with each follower, taking the relationship beyond the mere relationship of exchange, genuinely caring about the follower's needs, perspective and personal development. Leaders act as coaches or mentors of the followers and give them constructive feedback.

Transformational leaders are those who appeal to the highest ideals and moral values and empower followers to bring about profound and fundamental change, go beyond the relationship of direct exchange between leaders and followers, providing deeper levels of connection and higher levels of commitment, performance and morality for both the leader and the follower; make subordinates aware of the importance and value of task objectives; go beyond their own interest in the good of the organization; increase their need for high level work [12].

- Transactional Leadership:

Los líderes transaccionales se comunican con sus subordinados para explicar cómo debe hacerse una tarea y hacerles saber que habrá recompensas por un trabajo bien hecho. Este liderazgo ocurre cuando una persona se conecta con otras con la intención de intercambiar elementos valiosos de tipo económico, político o psicológico; ambas partes tienen propósitos relacionados, pero la relación no va más allá del intercambio de beneficios valiosos, de tal manera que no es probable que la relación desencadene el comportamiento extra en roles de los seguidores [12]. Sus principales características son [11]:

- Contingent reward: subordinates receive rewards for good performance.
- Exception Management (Active) - Actively monitors employee jobs for errors and deviations, corrects errors, and enforces rules and procedures.

- Laissez-Faire Leadership:

It is known as a passive type of leadership style, for which there is a consideration that these leaders do not care about the problems of others; it represents a leadership style in which necessary decisions are not made, actions are delayed, leadership responsibilities are ignored and authority is not used [11]. Likewise, these kinds of leaders are undecided and avoid taking responsibility for leadership, play a passive role in group affairs, and have no initiative to interact with their members [12].
2 Methodology

The study was applied and descriptive, taking into account that the managerial skills of the business leaders were evaluated to review the characteristics of their daily lives [13]. A survey with dichotomous questions was applied to address the phenomenon described to facilitate the capture, organization and tabulation of the compiled data. SPSS version 23 will be used to process the data, and the most representative findings will be presented in the results section of this document using graphs and tables.

The population was made up of 1175 service sector companies registered at the Barranquilla Chamber of Commerce at the close of the first half of 2017. After applying the simple probabilistic sampling technique, 290 SMEs were selected, defining inclusion criteria as follows: companies with more than 10 employees, with more than 2 years in operation and with one or more points of service to the public. The instrument consisted of 4 questions; the survey was validated by the Cronbach Alpha which gave a result of 0.950 which methodologically answers the requirements for this type of research. Table 1 below shows the result of the above validation.

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3 Results

Once the data had been processed, the responses to the survey were consolidated and included the following questions:

Question 1: Does the organisation's management take into account current administrative theories and the economic context?
Question 2: Do you generate strategies related to technologies and partnerships between stakeholders?
Question 3: Do you frequently inform the team of collaborators about the strategies to be developed?
Question 4: Do you establish control and monitoring processes to evaluate the strategies implemented?

The questions focused precisely on the four postulates proposed by the various administrative theories that align with management skills and make special mention of aspects such as: Management, Strategic Planning, Stakeholder Participation and Controls and Follow-up. The overall results obtained by the interviewees are shown in Figure 1. The reflections are based on the percentage results of each of the questions and are analyzed by contrasting the responses observed with the previously revised theories, which are fed by similar research that has been carried out in similar scenarios to that of the city of Barranquilla.

Fig. 1: Leading SME survey results

As can be seen, the levels of skills assessed do not exceed 50%, having the best performance in the generation of strategies with 36.2%, then observing the control processes with 31.03%, participation of employees with 29.31% and finally the management of the organization is located at 22.40%.

Thus, it can be said that at the time of the study, the leaders focus their efforts and the development of their skills on the planning of strategies, because according to
their experience or expectations in the market, they seek to generate business alternatives in the medium term to encourage growth in sales.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that aspects such as participation and integration of the work team, the management and control process take second place, leaving aside enormous opportunities for growth, as has been explained in similar research, by authors such as Gopal & Chowdhury [11], who have demonstrated the importance of incorporating work teams into the planning and execution of business activities.

4 Conclusion

When summarizing the most outstanding impressions of the research, it is pertinent to point out that the entrepreneurs who participated in the process do not currently have the necessary training to develop management skills with the estimated solvency. Their most significant efforts are focused only on strategies, so promoting training in skills such as management, leadership and control processes can be a vital factor in enabling both business sustainability and results in the short and medium term.

To the extent that managers, coordinators, managers or other persons in charge of forging business management have skills of this nature, they will be able to take on the challenges of the global economy with greater dynamism and opportunity, thus opening up growth opportunities for SMEs.

References


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