

# **Leadership in the Mining Sector: A Functional Approach for Optimum Team Performance in the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

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## **Abstract**

Functional Leadership approach focuses on addressing specific leader behaviours expected to contribute to organizational team effectiveness. The approach argues that the leader's main job is to see that whatever is necessary to team needs is taken care of. A good leader must ensure they have contributed to team effectiveness and cohesion and these are key aspects in the current 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution in the mining sector. The application of Functional Leadership in successful operation of the mining sector is critical for the positive growth of this sector through optimum team performance.

**Keywords:** Fourth Industrial Revolution, leadership roles, Functional Leadership, mining sector, teamwork

## **1. Introduction**

Leadership is the process of social influence in which a person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task (Dinwood et al., 2014). Leadership is all about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen. Leadership is an important element of the directing

function of management and for the mining sector to grow there is need for people with good leadership skills especially in this 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Leadership is critical wherever there is an organized team of people working towards a common goal (Hughes et al., 2014). Leadership is the ability to build up confidence, integrating people and promoting zeal among people so that they contribute and want to be led. To be successful, a leader must possess the qualities of foresight, drive, initiative, confidence and integrity. Different situations require different types of leadership. It can therefore be said that leadership is the practice of influence that stimulates subordinates to do their best towards the achievement of set goals.

## **2. Characteristics of Leadership**

The various definitions for leadership reveals the following important characteristics of leadership which are applied to the type of leadership in the mining sector: Leadership is a personal quality; Leadership only exist with subordinates (Palus et al., 2014). If there are no subordinates, there is no leadership, the willingness of people to follow that makes person a leader, Leadership is a process of influence. A leader must be able to influence the behaviour, attitude and beliefs of his subordinates, Leadership exists only for the realization of common goals, Leadership involves readiness to accept complete responsibility in all situations, Leadership is the function of stimulating the subordinates to strive willingly to attain organizational objectives, Leadership styles do change under different circumstances (Amabile et al., 2004).

## **3. Leaders Classification**

Leaders can be classified either as formal or informal leaders. A formal leader is one who is formally appointed to direct and control the activities of the subordinates. He/she is a person created by the formal structure, enjoys organizational authority and is accountable to those who have elected him/her in a formal way (Chen et al., 2014). The formal leader has a two-fold responsibility. On the one hand, he/she has to fulfil the demands of the organization, while on the other he/she is also supposed to help, guide and direct his/her subordinates in satisfying their needs and aspirations. Informal leaders are not formally recognized, however, they derive authority from the people who are under their influence (Kaiser et al., 2008). These people command respect and are approached to help, guide and protect other subordinates. The informal leaders help their subordinates in achieving their individual and team goals. Informal leaders are created to satisfy the needs which are not satisfied by the formal leaders and organizations can make effective use of informal leaders to strengthen the formal leadership.

## **4. Leadership Roles**

The important functions of a leader include setting goals, organizing, initiating action, coordination, giving direction and motivation. When setting goals, a leader is expected to perform creative function of laying out clear goals and policies to persuade the subordinates to work with zeal and confidence. The organizing function of a leader is to create and shape the organization on scientific lines by assigning roles appropriate to individual abilities with the view to make its various components to operate thoughtfully towards the achievement of organisation goals (Abgor, 2008). The leader must also be able to take the initiative in all matters of interest to the team. The leader should not depend upon others for decision and judgment but must float new ideas and decisions made should reflect original thinking. A leader must be able to reconcile the interests of the individual members of the team with that of the organization. The leader must ensure voluntary co-operation from the team in realizing the common objectives. The other primary function of a leader to guide and direct the team and motivate people to do their best in the achievement of desired goals through building up confidence and zeal in the work team.

A successful leader secures desired behaviour from his/her subordinates. The success of a leader depends on the quality of leadership he/she is provides. For a leader to be effective they must possess certain basic qualities which include good personality, emotional stability, sound education, professional competence, initiativeness and creative thinking, sense of purpose and responsibility, ability to guide and teach, good understanding, sound judgment, good communication skills, objective and flexible approach, honesty and integrity of character, self-confidence, diligence and courage to accept responsibility (Javidan et al., 2006).

## **5. Management and Worker's Linkage**

A leader works as a necessary link between the management and the workers. The leader interprets the policies and programmes of the management to the subordinates and in return represents the subordinates' interests before the management. A leader can prove effective only when they can act as the true guardian of the interests of the subordinates.

## **6. Importance of Leadership in Management**

The importance of leadership in any team activity is critical in the mining sector. Leadership is essential wherever, there is an organized team of people working towards a common goal. A good dynamic leader is essential for activating the entire team in such a way that near miracles may be achieved. The success of an organisation depends to a great extent, upon effective leadership. Leadership is important for motivation, improving team morale, acts as an aid to authority and is needed at all stages in the organization. Through dynamic leadership leaders can improve motivation and morale of their subordinates. A good leader influences the behaviour of an individual in such a manner that he voluntarily works towards the achievement of organisation goals. Leadership serves as a motive power to team efforts (Kezar, 2004). It leads the team to a higher level of performance through its persistent efforts and impact on human relations. The use of authority alone cannot always bring the desired results. Leadership acts as an aid to authority by influencing, inspiring and initiating action.

Leadership plays a pivotal role at all levels of management because in the absence of effective leadership no management can achieve the desired results. No organizational structure can provide all types of relationships and people with common interest may work beyond the confines of formal relationships. Such informal relationships are more effective in controlling and regulating the behaviour of the subordinates. Effective leadership uses their informal relationships to accomplish the organisation goals. Effective leadership increases the understanding between the subordinates and the management and promotes cooperation among them.

## **7. Techniques of Effective Leadership**

The leader should consult the team in framing the policies and lines of action and in initiating any radical change therein (Northouse, 2004). The leader must attempt to develop voluntary co-operation from his/her subordinates in realizing common objectives, exercise authority whenever necessary to implement the policies and should give clear, complete and intelligible instructions to his/her subordinates. Leaders' build-up confidence and zeal in his subordinates, listen to his/her subordinates properly and appreciate their feelings, communicate effectively and follow the principle of motivation.

## **8. Functional Leadership Theory**

The Functional Leadership Theory is a useful theory for addressing specific leader behaviours expected to contribute to organizational effectiveness in the mining sector (Palus et al., 2014). This theory argues that the leader's main job is to see that whatever is necessary to team needs is taken care of; thus, a leader can be said to have done their job well when they have contributed to team effectiveness and cohesion. While Functional Leadership theory has mostly been applied to team leadership it has also been effectively applied to broader organizational leadership. There are five basic functions which a leader focuses on when leading an organization; these functions include: environmental monitoring, teaching and coaching subordinates, organizing subordinate activities, motivating others and intervening actively in the team's work (Hughes et al., 2014). A variety of leadership behaviours are expected to facilitate these functions. In initial work identifying leader behaviour subordinates perceived their supervisors' behaviour in terms of two broad categories referred to as consideration and initiating structure. Consideration includes fostering effective relationships which include showing concern for a subordinate including supportive manner towards others. Initiating structure involves the actions of the leader focused specifically on task accomplishment. This include setting performance standards, role clarification and holding subordinates accountable.

The Functional Leadership Theory model (Figure 1), concentrates on how leadership occurs and indicates that it is mainly centred on the task, the team and the individual. The Functional Leadership model is also known as the John Adair's Action-Centred Leadership Model (Adair, 1973). Functional Leadership defines the types of

behaviours that guide an organization and then looks at how those behaviours occur and these are based on the task, team and individual.

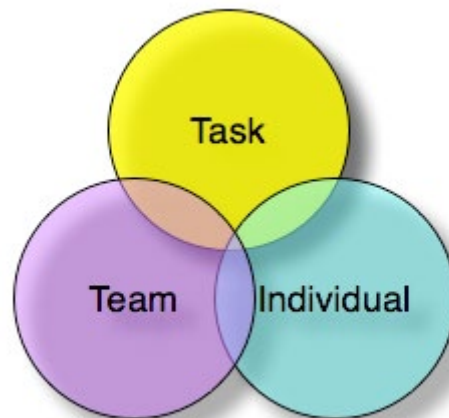


Figure 1: John Adair's Action-Centred Leadership Model (Adair, 1973)

Under the John Adair's Action Centred Leadership model, leadership is a distributed function. People at all levels participate in guiding the organization. One of the cornerstones of this leadership model is its focus on how instead of who is doing it. The model focus on who leads tends to look at the person with formal authority in an organization. Even an organization that appears to be floundering with no leadership is being led. Functional Leadership is used to describe job positions where an individual is expected to take leadership responsibility without any delegated authority. Leaders are asked to take on functions of leadership by helping to guide a team without being put into a formal leadership position. This type of arrangement keeps the individual's focus on how to influence their team's behaviour instead of how to exert their authority.

The growth of the mining sector is relying increasingly on teams to improve quality, efficiency and bring positive change (Northouse, 2004).

The potential advantages of teams include greater employee satisfaction and commitment, better quality of products and services, and greater efficiency and productivity. These benefits do not occur automatically, and successful implementation depends on a variety of conditions mainly the quality of leadership (Kezar, 2004). Essential leadership processes in teams include building consensus around shared objectives, identifying effective performance strategies, organizing team activities, enhancing member skills and role clarity, building mutual trust and cooperation, procuring needed resources, and facilitating external coordination. To be effective the team must clearly establish and understand the task, delegate responsibilities, identify resources and establish accountabilities and evaluate progress. The maintenance of the team requires all participants to work together in a coordinated approach and in the same direction with opportunities and recognition of all participant efforts.

The Functional Theory of Leadership puts the leader into position to assign tasks to his subordinates with clear instructions and also to participate in the daily activities of the team to achieve the desired goals (Javidan et al., 2006). A leader can use his power as a leader to control rewards to team members, the powerful leader may be able to influence the team even if the leader-follower relationship is poor. However, the most favourable situation is one whereby the effective leader –member relationship is good; the task is highly structured the leader power position is strong. An unfavourable situation is when the leader-member relationship is weak, the task is unstructured and leader power position is poor. The leader must make sure that subordinates have task orientation if the mining sector is to achieve set goals in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution

## 9. Leadership and Emotions Linkage

Leadership is an emotion-laden process with emotions entwined with the social influence process (Abgor, 2008). In an organization, the leaders' mood has some effects on his/her team. These effects can be described in three levels. *Level 1-The mood of individual team members.* Team members with leaders in a positive mood experience more positive mood than team members with leaders in a negative mood. The leaders transmit their moods to other team members. *Level 2-The affective tone of the team.* Team affective tone represents the

consistent affective reactions within a team. Team affective tone is an aggregate of the moods of the individual members of the team and refers to mood at the team level of analysis. Teams with leaders in a positive mood have a more positive affective tone than do teams with leaders in a negative mood. *Level 3-Team processes like coordination, effort and strategy*. Public expressions of mood impact how team members think and act. Leaders signal their goals, intentions, and attitudes through their expressions of moods. Expressions of positive moods by leaders signal that leaders' progress toward goals to be good. The team members respond to those signals positively in ways that are reflected in the team processes.

## 10. Conclusion

Good leadership skills are essential for the growth of the mining sector during the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and it is important to take cognisance of Functional Leadership. Functional Leadership maximises the benefits of good leadership with main emphasis on the team and individual needs as well as the task at hand. Adoption of Functional Leadership in the mining sector is critical for its growth.

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