The Influence of Leadership Style in College Student Teamwork on Team Efficiency

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Abstract:

In modern college education, teamwork has become the core mode of students' learning and development. In the process of team operation, leadership style is a key factor, which not only affects the speed and quality of the team's tasks, but also affects the motivation, satisfaction and willingness of team members to cooperate in the future. This article discusses the role of different leadership styles in college student teams and analyzes their direct and indirect impact on team efficiency. The study found that authoritarian leaders can significantly improve efficiency in emergency situations, but it is easy to cause members' depression and dissatisfaction; democratic leaders can promote communication and recognition, which is suitable for long-term cooperation; coaching leaders improve the quality of results through ability cultivation and feedback; service-oriented leaders attach importance to support and coordination, which is conducive to enhancing trust. Ren and cohesion; shared leadership and real leadership have been proven to have obvious advantages over student teams in recent years, especially in large-scale and interdisciplinary cooperation. Finally, this article proposes that student leaders need to learn to flexibly adjust leadership according to the nature of the task, and colleges and universities should also offer leadership courses to help students master different leadership skills.

Keywords: College student team; leadership style; team efficiency.

1. Introduction

With the deepening of higher education reform and the development of university campus culture, cooperation has been widely carried out in universities. Students' coursework, project research papers, competitions and club activities all require teamwork to complete. Compared with individual learning, team learning can better utilize the talents and thinking of members. Therefore, it can improve the ability to

solve more complex problems that require the integration of knowledge from different fields. Therefore, cooperation is not only a way for college students to accumulate knowledge, but also an important form of education to cultivate communication skills and organizational abilities in order to cooperate with others and make contributions. It must lay a solid foundation for future leaders who can manage companies or organizations [1].

But the effectiveness of teams can vary widely. Some teams are able to achieve good results efficiently within time constraints, while others become mired in endless fighting or internal discord and ultimately accomplish little. There are many reasons for this variation, including task difficulty, team member quality, and communication style. However, among these reasons, leadership style is considered the most important [2].

Leadership style refers to the behavior of leaders when making decisions, assigning tasks, communicating, and motivating team members. Leadership style is not fixed, but is influenced by the leader's personality, the nature of the team's tasks, and the characteristics of team members. Early researchers such as Lewin proposed three basic leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. Later, scholars continued to expand this scope and proposed more dimensions, such as transformational, transactional, service-oriented, coaching, sharing, and authentic leadership styles [3].

Unlike corporate teams, university student teams typically have leaders without formal authority, often elected by members or appointed on an ad hoc basis. Therefore, the leadership style directly influences the team's internal atmosphere and, in turn, its effectiveness. If the leadership style is too dogmatic, members may lose motivation; if it is too permissive, the team may lack control. Therefore, studying leadership styles in university student teams and their impact on effectiveness not only contributes to organizational behavior theory but also provides valuable practical insights for university students in the future.

2. Literature Review

The earliest research on leadership styles was conducted by Lewin et al., who categorized leaders into three types: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. An autocratic leader is authoritative, so he/she makes decisions alone. This approach is effective but can easily lead to unrest among members if used improperly [3]. A democratic leader listens to everyone's opinions and allows other members to participate in the discussion. The atmosphere is good, but from a productivity perspective, the pace is slow. A laissez-faire leader gives less guidance to members and lets them decide what needs to be done. While

there is freedom, there may be a lack of direction.

Blake and Mouton subsequently developed the Management Grid Theory, which categorizes leadership styles based on two dimensions: "focus on the task" and "focus on people." This resulted in five main types of leadership styles: poor management (indifferent to both the task and members), country club management (high focus on everyone's feelings, with low expectations for the task), IFM (setting procedures/work systems for members to get the most results without considering people's feelings), the golden mean (moderate focus on both people and tasks, with average results), and team management (focus on the task and members, considered the best approach) [4-6].

The complex organizational environment has given rise to many new leadership theories. Transformative leadership means that leaders stimulate the trust of members by having a vision and stimulating the creativity of the team. To emphasize long-term development and innovation to enhance cohesion, so as to improve performance, which is suitable for innovative tasks

Investigation shows that transformative leadership helps organizations adapt to change and has a competitive advantage in responding to global changes [7]. Transactional leaders use reward and punishment systems to promote efficiency, focusing on setting clear goals and short-term delivery. Although this style can achieve good results in clear rules and systems, it may not meet the inherent needs or emotional connections of team members. Service-oriented leaders put service first and support to give priority to the growth and needs of members. This method reflects the formation of trust, improves team satisfaction and cooperation ability, and is more common in educational teams and public welfare undertakings [8]. Coaching leaders guide team members to develop skills from a long-term perspective. Leaders should not only assign tasks, but they also guide and create opportunities for growth; leaders who become members provide guidance, develop skills and grow from the bottom up. This has been increasingly emphasized in the study of university teams in recent years [9]. Shared leadership emphasizes that everything is done among team members in terms of responsibility and choice. It breaks the traditional single leadership center model, promotes team-based interaction and cooperation, and gradually becomes more frequent in the university environment. Research even shows that shared leadership can significantly improve team trust and cooperation [2]. Real leaders emphasize transparency, integrity and consistency. Leaders guide the team through self-reflection and honest communication.

Creating an atmosphere that is crucial to unity and task completion [10]. Some scholars found that shared leadership can improve students' teamwork efficiency, team

atmosphere plays an intermediary role in it [1]. Wu and others proved through empirical research that shared leaders can improve team trust, thus improving efficiency [2]. Liao pointed out that coaching leadership can promote creative thinking in student teams [5]. Kan's research shows that different leadership styles will bring different emotional reactions to the team, which will affect efficiency [9].

In addition to the above research, this article learns from previous empirical research that leadership is closely related to team efficiency. Especially in college teams, leadership style often directly affects the cooperative spirit and teamwork skills of each member. However, the research so far has been affected by some methodological limitations. Most studies only suggest one leadership style without horizontal comparison, so leaders are still unclear about the differences between different styles. Some research focuses too much on theoretical construction - limited to individual tasks and limited to individual teams. For example, it is valuable to determine whether certain leadership styles are more effective in research teams than in student clubs or business plan competitions, but this level of detail is difficult to obtain. The existing literature is mainly based on a few case studies, and the survey is more often used as a sampling method to summarize the research results before discussing its impact and policy relevance. Therefore, this article will classify the leadership style of the college student team or directly recommend the corresponding style according to their respective characteristics.

3. Analysis of the Impact Mechanism of Leadership Style on Team Efficiency

In the process of team operation, leadership style is not a single behavior pattern but acts on team efficiency through a variety of paths. It not only has a direct impact, but also indirectly through intermediate variables, and the effect varies significantly in different scenarios. Deeply disassembling these influencing mechanisms can provide key references for team managers to choose suitable leadership methods.

From the perspective of the direct impact path, the leadership style first affects the core operation of the team and directly changes the basic conditions of efficiency output. In terms of decision-making efficiency, different styles of leadership will bring completely different decision-making effects. Destantic leaders often rely on personal judgment to make quick decisions when making decisions. The advantages of this method are particularly obvious in emergency tasks. It can effectively shorten the deci-

sion-making time and avoid delays caused by multi-party discussions. For example, in the face of a sudden project crisis, authoritarian leaders can quickly determine the response plan and let the team act quickly. Democratic leaders, on the other hand, are more inclined to collect the opinions of team members and form decisions through collective discussion. Although this will prolong the decision-making cycle, members have a stronger sense of identity with the final plan because of their participation in the decision-making process, and the degree of cooperation in subsequent implementation will also be significantly improved, reducing resistance in implementation.

Resource allocation is also deeply influenced by leadership style. The core feature of service-oriented leadership is to pay attention to the needs of the team, take the initiative to sort out the resources in the team, and reduce resource waste and internal consumption by optimizing equipment scheduling and promoting information sharing. For example, when different groups of the team need to use the same batch of professional equipment, service-oriented leaders will coordinate the usage time in advance to avoid the situation that some groups are waiting for idle equipment, and some groups are urgently needed but cannot use them. At the same time, they will also build an information sharing platform so that members can obtain the required data and materials in time. Avoid duplication of work caused by information islands and directly improve the efficiency of the team's resource utilization.

In addition to direct influence, leadership style also affects team efficiency through indirect paths, which are often related to implicit factors such as team atmosphere and member status. Team communication is an important indirect influence variable. Democratic leaders pay attention to creating an open communication environment and encourage members to take the initiative to express their ideas and make suggestions. This atmosphere can effectively break down information barriers. Members can share work progress and expose problems in a timely manner in communication, so as to avoid loopholes in collaboration caused by information asymmetry. For example, in cross-departmental collaboration projects, democratic leaders will regularly organize communication meetings so that members of different departments can directly connect, reduce the loss of information in the process of transmission, and improve the overall efficiency of collaboration.

The construction of member trust is also a key link of indirect influence. Service-oriented leaders will continue to provide support in their daily work. For example, when members encounter technical problems, they will take the initiative to coordinate resources to help; when members make mistakes in their work, they will first analyze the

cause of the problem instead of blindly blaming. These supportive behaviors can gradually enhance members' trust in the leader, thereby improving the level of trust within the team. In a team with a high degree of trust, the frequency of conflicts between members will be significantly reduced. Everyone is more willing to think from different perspectives and cooperate with each other to reduce the internal consumption caused by suspicion or contradictions, so that the team can focus more on work tasks.

The differences in conflict management further reflect the indirect influence of leadership style. When facing team conflicts, authoritarian leaders often rely on authority to directly suppress them. Although this method can quickly calm down conflicts in the short term and maintain superficial stability, unresolved conflicts will gradually accumulate, and members' dissatisfaction will slowly ferment. In the long run, it will destroy the team atmosphere and reduce overall efficiency. Democratic leaders, on the other hand, will guide the two sides of the conflict to communicate rationally, sort out the focus of contradictions, and jointly find solutions. Although this method takes longer to deal with conflicts, it can fundamentally resolve contradictions, enhance the understanding between members in the process, improve team cohesion in the long run, and lay the foundation for efficiency improvement.

It is worth noting that the impact of leadership style on team efficiency is not fixed, and there will be obvious differentiated effects in different scenarios. For short-term competition teams, such as participating in short-term project competitions, emergency attack groups, etc., authoritarian leaders may be more conducive to improving "speed and efficiency". The core requirement of this kind of team is to produce results in a short time. The rapid decision-making of authoritarian leaders can make the team concentrate on sprinting the goal. However, in the long run, this style will reduce the satisfaction of members by ignoring the opinions of members, which is not conducive to the long-term stability of the team.

In long-term scientific research projects, the team needs to take into account the quality of results and the growth of members, and the leadership style that combines democracy and coaching is more suitable. The open communication of democratic leaders can promote the collision of knowledge among members, which is conducive to scientific research and innovation; the goal disassembly and ability feedback of coaching leaders can help members continue to grow in long-term projects, while ensuring that the project is carried out as planned, balancing the dual needs of "quality efficiency" and "member growth".

4. Suggestions

Student leaders should flexibly adjust their methods and leadership styles according to the tasks at hand. Feedback and skill development dominate. Taking advantage of tutoring, they can try to share leadership to reduce dependence on a single leader. Communication and listening are important skills needed to succeed in a democratic environment. In order to extend the life cycle of the team, maintaining integrity and transparency is often a useful tool to create a positive working atmosphere. Higher education institutions can offer leadership courses according to the size and available space of the school, such as arranging case study simulations to train students' team leadership. At the same time, interdisciplinary teams can provide students with practical experience. In addition, a guidance and consultation mechanism should be established so that students can eventually improve their leadership practice standards. In team management, people can try to rotate leaders so that more people can experience the role of leaders. Leaders should balance task completion and member growth, and ensure that they do not focus on one aspect. According to the nature of each team, competitive teams should focus on efficiency, while research teams should mainly focus on long-term cooperation and communication. Regularly check the work that has been completed and the work that still needs to be completed in order to quickly solve problems and adjust leadership methods [11].

5. Conclusion

Through research and case studies at home and abroad, this article explores how different leadership styles affect the effectiveness of the team of middle school students in higher education. The results show that various styles are different in direct (decision-making efficiency, resource allocation, goal focus) and indirect influence (communication, trust, conflict management, motivation). The former authoritarian leadership is more efficient in performing short-term tasks and urgent matters; democratic and coaching leadership is suitable for long-term projects and team development; service leadership may contribute to team unity and satisfaction; shared and real leadership shows their own characteristics in modern university teams.

The results of the study show that "there is no optimal leadership style and team performance model" - depending on the type of task or environment in which the team is located. Young leaders must learn to be flexible, focus on achieving goals rather than processes, and build trust between teams and colleagues. Universities should invest

more energy in leadership teaching and train new courses by providing courses. Starting from existing courses, students should constantly improve their value as team leaders by practicing in real teams.

The research contribution of this article is not only to provide practical commitments and help for university team management, but also to ask the team to recommend ways to move forward and use these results to improve performance in learning, research and competition. In addition, this study provides a template for further work. Follow-up research should combine big data analysis with long-term observation and tracking (for example, cross-cultural comparison) to reveal the impact of different leadership styles on team effectiveness in different environments. Its comprehensive impact on mental health, innovation and broader forward-looking remains to be studied, which will broaden the scope and substance of leadership research.

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