

1.2 Observational Exercise



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Conceptualizing Leadership

Purpose

1. To develop an understanding of the complexity of leadership
2. To become aware of the different ways people define leadership

Directions

1. In this exercise, select five people you know and interview them about leadership.
2. Ask each person to give you his or her definition of leadership, and to describe his or her personal beliefs about effective leadership.
3. Record each person's response on a separate sheet of paper.

Person #1 (name) _____

Person #2 (name) _____

Person #3 (name) _____

Person #4 (name) _____

Person #5 (name) _____

Questions

1. What differences did you observe in how these people define leadership?
2. What seems to be the most common definition of leadership?
3. In what ways did people describe leadership differently from the definitions in Chapter 1, "Being a Leader"?
4. Of the people interviewed, whose definition comes closest to your own? Why?

2.2 Observational Exercise



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Leadership Traits

Purpose

- 1. To gain an understanding of the role of traits in the leadership process
- 2. To examine the traits of selected historical and everyday leaders

Directions

- 1. Based on the descriptions of the historical leaders provided in the chapter, identify the three major leadership traits for each of the leaders listed below.
- 2. Select and briefly describe two leaders in your own life (e.g., work supervisor, teacher, coach, music director, business owner, community leader). Identify the three major leadership traits of each of these leaders.

Historical leaders	The leader's three major traits
George Washington	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Harriet Tubman	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Eleanor Roosevelt	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Winston Churchill	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Mother Teresa	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Nelson Mandela	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Bill Gates	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Oprah Winfrey	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Everyday leaders

Leader #1 _____

Brief description _____

Traits 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Leader #2 _____

Brief description _____

Traits 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Questions

1. Based on the leaders you observed, which leadership traits appear to be most important?
2. What differences, if any, did you observe between the historical and everyday leaders' traits?
3. Based on your observations, what one trait would you identify as the definitive leadership trait?
4. Overall, what traits do you think should be used in selecting our society's leaders?

3.2 Observational Exercise



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Leadership Styles

Purpose

1. To become aware of authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire styles of leadership
2. To compare and contrast these three styles

Directions

1. From all of the coaches, teachers, music directors, or managers you have had in the past 10 years, select one who was authoritarian, one who was democratic, and one who was laissez-faire.

Authoritarian leader (name) _____

Democratic leader (name) _____

Laissez-faire leader (name) _____

2. On another sheet of paper, briefly describe the unique characteristics of each of these leaders.

Questions

1. What differences did you observe in how each leader tried to influence you?
2. How did the leaders differ in their use of rewards and punishment?
3. What did you observe about how others reacted to each leader?
4. Under which leader were you most productive? Why?

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Task and Relationship

Purpose

1. To understand how leadership includes both task and relationship behaviors
2. To contrast different leaders' task and relationship behaviors

Directions

1. Over the next couple of days, observe the leadership styles of two different leaders (e.g., teacher, athletic coach, choir director, restaurant manager, work supervisor).
2. Record your observations of the styles of each person.

Leader #1 (name) _____

Task behaviors

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Relationship behaviors

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Leader #2 (name) _____

Task behaviors

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Relationship behaviors

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Questions

1. What differences did you observe between the two leaders?
2. What did you observe about the leader who was most task oriented?
3. What did you observe about the leader who was most relationship oriented?
4. How effective do you think you would be in each of these leadership positions?

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Leadership Skills

Purpose

- 1. To develop an understanding of different types of leadership skills
- 2. To examine how leadership skills affect a leader’s performance

Directions

- 1. Your task in this exercise is to observe a leader and evaluate that person’s leadership skills. This leader can be a supervisor, a manager, a coach, a teacher, a fraternity or sorority officer, or anyone who has a position that involves leadership.
- 2. For each of the groups of skills listed below, write what you observed about this leader.

Name of leader: _____

Administrative skills	1	2	3	4	5
Managing people	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Managing resources	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Showing technical competence	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Comments:					

Interpersonal Skills	1	2	3	4	5
Being socially perceptive	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Showing emotional intelligence	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Managing conflict	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Comments:					

Conceptual skills	1	2	3	4	5
Problem solving	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Strategic planning	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Creating vision	Poor	Weak	Average	Good	Very good
Comments:					

Questions

1. Based on your observations, what were the leader’s strengths and weaknesses?
2. In what setting did this leadership example occur? Did the setting influence the kind of skills that the leader used? Discuss.
3. If you were coaching this leader, what specific things would you tell this leader about how he or she could improve leadership skills? Discuss.
4. In another situation, do you think this leader would exhibit the same strengths and weaknesses? Discuss.

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Leadership Vision

Purpose

1. To understand the way visions are constructed by leaders in ongoing groups and organizations
2. To identify strategies that leaders employ to articulate and implement their visions

Directions

1. For this exercise, select two people in leadership positions to interview. They can be leaders in formal or informal positions at work, at school, or in society. The only criterion is that the leader influences others toward a goal.
2. Conduct a 30-minute interview with each leader, by phone or in person. Ask the leaders to describe the visions they have for their organizations. In addition, ask, “How do you *articulate* and *implement* your visions?”

Leader #1 (name) _____

Vision content	Vision articulation	Vision implementation
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Leader #2 (name) _____

Vision content	Vision articulation	Vision implementation
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Questions

1. What differences and similarities did you observe between the two leaders’ visions?
2. Did the leaders advocate specific values? If yes, what values?
3. Did the leaders use any unique symbols to promote their visions? If yes, what symbols?
4. In what ways did the leaders’ behaviors model their visions to others?

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Setting the Tone

Purpose

1. To develop an understanding of how leaders set the tone for a group or an organization
2. To identify how specific factors contribute to effective group performance

Directions

1. For this exercise, you will observe a leader running a meeting, a practice, a class, or some other group-related activity.
2. Attend a full session of the group and record your observations below.

Name of leader: _____

Name of the group: _____

Observations about the structure (organization) of the group:

Observations about the group's norms:

Observations about the cohesiveness of the group:

Observations about the group's standards of excellence:

Questions

1. In what ways did the leader make the goals of the group clear to group members?
2. How did the leader utilize the unique talents of different group members?
3. What were some of the positive and negative norms of this group? How did the leader reinforce these norms?
4. How would you evaluate, on a scale from 1 (*low*) to 5 (*high*), the cohesiveness of this group? In what ways did the leader promote or fail to promote the esprit de corps in the group?
5. A key factor in promoting standards of excellence is rewarding results. How did the leader reward group members for achieving results?

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Out-Groups

Purpose

1. To learn to recognize out-groups and how they form
2. To understand the role of out-groups in the leadership process

Directions

1. Your task in this exercise is to identify, observe, and analyze an actual *out-group*. This can be an out-group at your place of employment, in an informal group, in a class group, in a community group, or on a sports team.
2. For each of the questions below, write down what you observed in your experiences with out-groups.

Name of group: _____

Identify and describe a group in which you observed an out-group.

Observations of out-group members' actions:

Observations of the leader's actions:

Questions

1. What is the identity of out-group members? How do they see themselves?
2. How were out-group members treated by the other members in the group?
3. What is the most challenging aspect of trying to deal with this out-group?
4. What does the leader need to do to integrate the out-group members into the larger group?

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Handling Conflict

Purpose

1. To become aware of the dimensions of interpersonal conflict
2. To explore how to use Fisher and Ury's (1981) method of principled negotiation to address actual conflict

Directions

1. For this exercise, you are being asked to observe an actual conflict. Attend a public meeting at which a conflict is being addressed. For example, you could attend a meeting of the campus planning board, which has on its agenda changes in student parking fees.
2. Take notes on the meeting, highlighting the positions and *interests* of all the people who participated in the meeting.

Questions

1. How did the participants at the meeting frame their arguments? What *positions* did individuals take at the meeting?
2. Identify and describe the interests of each of the participants at the meeting.
3. Discuss whether the participants were able to be objective in their approaches to the problem. Describe how the people involved were able to separate themselves from the problem.
4. In what ways did the participants seek to find mutually beneficial solutions to their conflict?

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Obstacles

Purpose

1. To develop an understanding of the practical value of path-goal leadership as a strategy for helping followers reach their goals
2. To identify *obstacles* that limit group effectiveness
3. To investigate how a *leader's style* helps followers overcome *obstacles* to goal achievement

Directions

1. Observe a meeting, practice, or session of one the following groups (or a similar group): a sports team practice, a class project group meeting, a weekly staff meeting at work, a fraternity or sorority council meeting, or a planning meeting for a nonprofit organization.
2. Record what you observe at the meeting. Be specific in your descriptions.
General observations of the meeting:
Observations of the leader's behavior:
Observations of group members' behaviors:

Questions

1. What are the *goals* of the individuals or group you observed? Are the goals clear?
2. What are the major obstacles confronting the individuals in the group?
3. What style of leadership did the leader exhibit? Was it appropriate for the group?
4. If you were leading the group, how would you lead to help group members?

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Ethical Leadership

Purpose

1. To become aware of the dimensions of ethical leadership
2. To assess how actual leaders exhibit ethical leadership

Directions

1. For this exercise, you must observe a public presentation of a leader in your community. This can be a pastor, a college president, a mayor, a city commissioner, the head of a social service agency, or some other community leader.
2. Record what you observe about the leader's ethics in the categories that follow. Try to be thorough in your descriptions of the leader's presentation.

Leader's name: _____ Leader's title: _____
Occasion: _____

The *character* of the leader: What was the leader like? What kind of person was the leader? What were the leader's strengths and weaknesses?

Comments:

The *actions* of the leader: How does this leader go about accomplishing goals? Where does the leader stand on (1) showing respect, (2) serving others, and (3) showing justice?

Comments:

The *goals* of the leader: What were the leader's main goals? Were the leader's goals clear to you and others in the audience? How would you assess the value and worth of those goals?

Comments:

The *honesty* of the leader: What did you observe about this leader's honesty? Was the leader open and forthright? How authentic did you find this leader to be?

Comments:

The *power* of the leader: Based on French and Raven's (1959) types of power, what kind of power did this leader exhibit? What did you observe about how this leader would use his or her power with others?

Comments:

The *values* of the leader: Based on the presentation, what do you think this leader values? What is important to this leader? What values did this leader promote in his or her presentation?

Comments:

Questions

1. What is your overall assessment of this leader's ethics?

2. What specific examples in the leader's presentation were particularly revealing of the leader's ethics?

3. Which factors of ethical leadership (character, actions, goals, honesty, power, and values) were most apparent in the leader's presentation? Discuss.

4. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you describe this speaker's ethical leadership? Defend your answer.