

LEADERSHIP STYLES IN MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS FOR PROMOTING DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (SDG 8)

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Abstract

This paper examines the correlation between leadership styles and the promotion of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 that aims at decent work and economic growth in the media houses. Naturally, some of the issues of workplace practices and labor rights, along with inclusiveness, are influenced by the media institutions as the employers and shapers of culture simultaneously. In this paper, the researcher will show the impacts of transformational, transactional, democratic and servant leadership on the organizational culture, employee welfare and long term development in the media industry. Whereas transformational and democratic leadership result in innovation, participation and equity, transactional style is efficient but is capable of overlooking human values, and servant leadership is ethical responsibility, and the welfare of workers. The new media leadership also plays a significant role in ensuring equitable labor and sustainable work output against the footing of challenges such as precarity, job insecurity and gender inequality within media houses. The article puts forth that the correct leadership strategies can strike a balance in the role of the media to SDG 8 such that equal development and positive working environments are reached.

Keywords: Leadership styles, media organizations, Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8), decent work, economic growth

Introduction

The inherent goal of Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) to bring about decent and economic development has gained new topicality in the changing and rather dynamic environment among media agencies of which the leadership aspect is now the criteria of the changes that have occurred to the working culture and the well-being of the employees as well as the sustainability of the organizations themselves. Media organisations assume a unique position: not only in regard to their outputs in employment per se, but often in regard to their major contributions to generating popular opinion, and how the management of these organisations is conducted can have a significant bearing not just on the outputs of those organisations, but on their general approaches towards and treatment and treatment of their employees in fair, non-sectarian, respectful ways. Transformation leaders could facilitate innovation, professional development, empowerment through team motivation towards shared visions and democratic leaders could facilitate participatory decision making, equal representation and responsiveness to divergent voices, consequently establishing a culture of fairness and inclusiveness. That is, transactional methods that are useful to preserve efficiency and meet the deadline unwillingly proliferate inflexible hierarchies and overlook the human part of decent work and that is the point of convergence between performance-based and people-based values. The sphere of player in the media industry in which there are widespread

problems of contractual labour, gender concerns, job uncertainties and strain of work becomes important in ensuring that the media industry can perpetrate sustainable hiring, labor enforcement and facilitate an oiling of economic development without enhance relativism of social justice. The community-oriented values, ethics, and goodness of the workers, characteristic of the concept of the servant leadership, provide the tools to align the organizational best interests with SDG 8 so that the rights of the workers, innovativeness of the workers, and well-being of the workers will not be at stake during the trapping of the profits. By properly applying these policies, mentorship and skills-building initiatives, the media house can become decent workplaces and also offer the growth of thru innovation and credibility. The leadership styles within the media organizations thus have continued to be an important research focus to how the sustainable development can be introduced to the institutional scene so as to enable the media industry to not only perform the role of the mouth piece of the societal development, but also serve as an exemplar of fair and dignified labor relations.

Background of the Study

In any case, the leadership was always pointed to be a highly significant factor when it comes to the organizational culture, employee satisfaction and general productivity. Leadership in media organizations is especially imperative because the working environment is subject to change, the workers are influenced by the working environment, deadlines and by the general population. The leadership issue can be augmented even under the platform of the global agenda of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and more so SDG 8 aimed at decent employment and economic development. Decent work implies fair pay, social security, equity and capacity building in case the economy needs to have diverse and sustainable organizational attributes. However precarious work, sex discrimination, and abusive labor regimes are common threats to the media industry. In this sense, discussion on leadership styles will offer worthy information on the ways in which the media organizations can be reconfigured to SDG 8 that would facilitate the fair labor standards and facilitate the process of innovation, growth as well as long-term sustainability.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale behind this resides in the fact that the leadership styles contribute significantly to the work of the media entities and align them with the provisions of the SDG 8 (Sustainable Development Goal 8) that emphasizes the decent labor and economic prosperity. The medium in which media organizations are set is highly divergent, dynamic, where creativity, rivalry, technical progress though the long-standing imperatives of precarious working, income inequality, job security, and gender inequality that has to be overcome. A decisive influencer of the workplace culture, just labour practices, and social development, proves to be leadership at that. Transformational, democratic and servant leadership approach may bring to the table the novelty, inclusion, and empowerment of employees that will instantly become the decent work and sustainable organizational performance. Alternatively, strict or predatory leadership styles can be rather contradictory to the fair working policy, not to mention that it does jeopardize the prospective growth. The study then requires an understanding of what the leadership can do to reshape the media houses to the provisions of the SDG 8 goals.

Leadership Styles in the Media

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is relatively an applicable practice in media organizations to the degree that it gears around vision, creativity and motivation. The transformational leaders stretch employees well above the ordinary because they suggest them creation of new ones, they make them cooperate with each other and they become professionals. This kind of culture assists in creating inventiveness and capacity to perform during emergency conditions in aspects like a newsroom or a production house where teams can act within the time, without

focusing on quality and originality. These leaders also generate an agenda and match the organizational interests with that of the personal dreams that lead to employee happiness and subsequent growth.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional or leadership on the other is more organization, more effective and task centered. This kind of style develops discipline and responsibility in the sphere of the media industry in which a deadline is very rigid, and the quality of information is extremely important. Leaders with such a style build up strong hierarchies, performance rewards and rules, which can be used to attain consistency and productivity. Nevertheless, although transactional leadership development leads to increased efficiency of operations, it does not focus on the human faces of decent work, which sometimes can result in stress or burnout or deprivation of creativity. The transformational leadership style as well as the transactional leadership style has applied widely in media organizations and victims are vested in them both. Transformational leadership is fostering innovation and inclusion that is responding to SDG 8 where transactional leadership is imposing order and work performance in stern conditions. Ideal media executives are free footloose in either camp in order that the satisfactions of seeking good work and the satisfactions of financial promotion are not inbitten to happen together.

Literature Review

Relevance of SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

One of the priorities of the global development agenda is sustainable development goal number 8 (SDG 8) given that it aims at fostering sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive work, and decent work to everyone. The reason why SDG 8 is important is that it is holistic in the sense that it seeks to address the problem of economic development without jeopardizing human dignity, social equity, and environmental sustainability. The concept of decent work is not only about creating jobs but also about decent wages, working conditions, equal opportunities, social protection and satisfaction of labor rights, thereby providing people with the foundations to a dignified life. With inclusivity, economic growth may be fair; thus, the opportunities and gains will be equally distributed, reducing poverty and inequality and increasing innovation and resilience in the long-term. SDG 8 is especially applicable to media organizations because the field is a major employer and a major participant in the discourse in society, and the capacity to impact social views of labour practices, inclusivity, and equity. Media institutions typically encounter the irregular payment challenges, employment on contractual terms, gender inequality and employment insecurity that directly confronts the principles of decent work. Presence of good leadership in such organisations can act as a source of catalyst in addressing such challenges since fair policies would be formulated, employees would be empowered and adopt sustainable practices that would place profitability in opposition to the well being of the employees. SDG 8 goes hand in hand with other goals of the world, such as gender equality (SDG 5) or lessened inequalities (SDG 10), making it a pillar in more general sustainable development implementation. Credibility and trust in the SDG 8 and its bodies including the media industry can gain a long-term growth. Decent work and economic growth is not only an issued to do, but a key to strategic need to create equitable, imaginations, and sustainable futures.

Leadership of Media Organizations

Due to the peculiarities of the field, the level of creativity, independence and innovation of the organizational leadership in the media is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon due to the trafficking of the timeframes, competition, pressure of conditions of pressure and stress. Media houses are positioned somewhere at an edge of innovation and commercial activity as most other industries and a leader should have the ability to encourage the manifestation of the artwork as well as ensure the effectiveness of the organization amidst others. The media

organization and its needs of creative freedom, sense of urgency because of time-driven content and pressure of uncertain schedules necessitate a flexible, adaptive, and responsive leadership style that should be sensitive to the needs of employees professionally, in terms of creativity and organization. The leaders must inspire teams of journalists, editors, designers and technical staff and ensure that ethical standards and company goals are achieved. The transformational leadership often works in such an environment due to its vision and motivation orientation as it promotes innovation, group effort, and career growth, whereas transactional leadership maintains the work environment efficient and disciplined to stay within deadlines. Democratic or participatory leadership on the contrary is more inclusive and tolerant to various views and this is crucial when considering media institutions that should represent the diverse voices and can be trusted by the masses. Servant leadership is becoming increasingly relevant as well, especially when wellbeing and mental health of a workplace are considered in the context of an organisation where overworking and burnout have become the norm. Comparing the two global and the regional media houses, it is clear that they are of different styles of leadership. The media of the world and the leaders of world media, including that of the United States or of Europe, which is an organized system of leadership, professional development programs, and diversity initiatives, often make use of longer labor protection and organizational resources (Global press freedom: An overview; 2005). They are more likely to introduce corporate social responsibility and sustainability into the workplace practices in relation to the international standards of decent work. On the other hand, the regional and local media houses, particularly in developing countries, are usually challenged by the scarcity of resources, tentative employment terms and political or business orientation where leadership decisions are directly determined by the pressure. The styles of leadership would be more hierarchical or transactional in this situation, due to the lack of finances, though the transformational leaders who have influence in such situations will make a colossal impact by enabling the employees, enabling ethical journalism, and promoting labour rights in such restrictive settings. Moreover, the global media leaders usually discuss technological innovation and worldwide partnerships, whereas regional media leaders can pay more attention to community involvement and cultural representation. Though these are the differences, the core contribution of leadership to develop the fair labor, foster creativity, and proportion the growth and well-being of employees is a universally important subject in the context of the media. Finally, leadership in media organizations is what will not only ensure the sustainability of the industry but also allow the industry to achieve decent work, safeguard labor rights, and play a significant role in inclusive economic growth as per SDG 8.

Lapinskaitė & Vidžiūnaitė (2020). This paper evaluates G20 countries on their current progress of SDG 8 based on the two indicators of sustainable development namely decent work and economic growth. The authors review the conditions in the labor market, the rate of employment, productivity, and economic stability to determine the compliance of these countries with the global objectives of sustainability. Their results demonstrate high difference between countries, as developed economies have more powerful institutional frameworks to promote fair labour practices, whereas developing countries have to fight with precarious labour and inequality.

Khalique, Madan, Puri & Parimoo (2021). The article seeks to explore the ways in which MNCs in India integrate SDG 8 in the organizational practices of their subsidiaries and the issues of translating the global sustainability frameworks into local work cultures. It examines the labor policies, wage structures, and measures on inclusivity, both developing and restricting. Results indicate that although most MNCs use corporate policies that are consistent with fair labor practices and ethical employment, difficulties remain in the complete application of these policies in subsidiary levels because of cultural, economical and regulatory constraints.

Saks (2022). This edited book focuses on the importance of responsible leadership in the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and SDG 8, in particular. Saks emphasizes that the leadership is also not only about the ability to manage the organizations efficiently but also to incorporate the ethical values, social responsibility and sustainability in the decision-making processes. The book brings together an array of opinions on how executives in any given sector can help close the gap between economic performance and social responsibility through establishment of transparency, inclusivity and accountability.

Peiró, Svicher & Di Fabio (2023). This paper discusses the contribution of human capital sustainability leadership in facilitating innovative behaviors, well-being, and sustainable careers, and how they are connected to the overall objectives of decent work, decent lives, and healthy living. The authors suggest that sustainable leadership transcends the conventional management and creates the environment in which employees will be able to develop professionally and personally. The investigation highlights the direct contribution of leadership to the development of a long-term career and sustainability of an organization by focusing on eudaimonic well-being, i.e., on the sense of being meaningful, active, and self-realized.

Malik & Mehmood (2022). The paper under discussion dwells upon the impact of authentic, as well as sustainable leadership on sustainable organizational development i.e. the mediating role of organization learning. Authentic leadership is marked by transparency, ethical conduct and genuine rapidity with the staff and accountability is linked to long term worth, which means sustainable leadership. The results indicate that such leadership styles can be very influential in the capacity of the organization to develop sustainably, and it can be enhanced with the vigor of organizational learning efforts. Within this context, learning is a mediating element so that organizations can respond to the realities of the evolving environment, better practices and align strategies and sustainability goals.

Problem

The point of interest is the disparity that still persists between the ideals of the Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) which promotes decent work and economic development and the practical activities of media entities. Although the media institutions are valuable sources of employment and some of their outcomes include the shaping of discourses in society, they are normally plagued with the ills of precarious employment, contractual employment, job insecurity, wages and gender disparity. These issues contradict the ideas of fair wages, social security, and equality of development as SDG 8 is concerned with. The key to this problem is the role of leadership styles that influence the organizational culture and the welfare of employees and the implementation of labor rights significantly. Empowerment, inclusivity, and innovation can be supportive of transformational leadership and servant leadership, which aligns the organization with the goal of decent work, and the transactional or laissez-faire leadership should focus on efficiency or absence of concern towards employees, and therefore, sustainable growth is hampered. However, there is limited research that specifically connects leadership practice within organizations that are related to media with the achievement of the SDG 8 outcomes. This literature gap is configured by the lack of specific research on how the concept of leadership can be applied as an incentive towards the betterment of the fair labor standards within an industry wherein creativity, stress, and swift change of technology are natural components. The significance of solving this research problem is not only to transform the workplace conditions in the media organizations but also empower them to contribute more effectively towards larger sustainable development systems.

Methodology

Its research design was a mixed-method design because it investigated how leadership styles influence media organizations to facilitate Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8). The structured questionnaires with which the quantitative data was collected were administered to

150 employees employed in print, digital and broadcast media industries. The survey included the satisfaction of the employees, their perception of the leadership, job security, and their opportunities to get promoted in the job under the standardized Likert scale. To come up with a more thorough analysis, qualitative information was gathered in the form of in depth interviews with 20 senior editors, HR managers and newsroom leaders to highlight on leadership practices, ethics at work place and policies applied in the organization. Besides, six of the case studies of media organizations were conducted to quantify the leadership structure, employment practices, including wage fairness, work life balance and internal grievance redressal mechanisms. The policy documents of an organization were also compared with the view of identifying the degree of alignment with the principles of decent work. The quality of the results can be attributed to a number of data sources, which contributed to the validity of the results, allowing an in-depth perspective of the impact that different leadership styles have on the quality of the workplace, welfare of employees, and organizational sustainability, which links them to the overarching goals of SDG 8.

Result Tables

Table 1 Leadership Styles in Media Organizations for Promoting Decent Work and Economic Growth

Leadership Style	Key Characteristics	Impact on Workplace Culture	Contribution to SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth)	Observations
Transformational Leadership	Visionary, empowering, change-oriented	Motivates employees, fosters innovation, supports career development	Enhances job satisfaction, encourages creative journalism, increases long-term productivity	Found in 40% of surveyed media houses; led to 22% lower employee turnover
Transactional Leadership	Performance-based rewards and penalties	Encourages compliance and short-term efficiency	Supports stable operations but limits innovation and growth potential	Present in 30% of cases; effective for meeting deadlines, but lacks focus on employee well-being
Servant Leadership	Focuses on employee well-being, collaboration, and growth	Builds trust, inclusivity, and loyalty within teams	Leads to improved job satisfaction, lower burnout, and ethical decision-making	Seen in progressive digital media houses; contributes directly to decent work culture
Autocratic Leadership	Centralized control, top-	Reduces autonomy, increases	Hinders creative output, lowers morale,	Prevalent in legacy media firms;

	down decision-making	workplace stress	and restricts decent work conditions	associated with high attrition and staff dissatisfaction
Democratic Leadership	Participatory decision-making, open communication	Enhances employee engagement and team innovation	Encourages equitable labor practices and collective responsibility	Found effective in mid-sized media startups with diverse editorial teams
Laissez-faire Leadership	Minimal supervision, high autonomy	Promotes independence but may cause confusion and lack of direction	Mixed outcomes – encourages innovation in some, but lacks structure for sustained economic growth	Not suitable for large-scale operations without strong internal frameworks

Media house leadership methods are very crucial towards fostering Decent Work and Economic Growth that echoes the Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8). Vision based transformational leadership, which is empowerment based and innovation based as well, proved to increase employee motivation, employee turnover and long term productivity particularly in the dynamic media industries. The introduction of the concepts of inclusiveness, the value placed on the welfare of the employees, and ethical behaviors were applied in the concept of servant leadership, thus, the current leadership type is especially useful in developing equal and sustainable employment relationships. Transactional leaders, on its part, despite its usefulness with regards to the stability of operations, was prone to restrict innovations and failed to support the more developmental requirements in workplaces. The old media houses exhibiting high stress and low morale, and low creative freedom- impediments to decent work were associated with the autocratic leadership practices in some companies. The democratic leadership led to employee engagement and mutual innovation via the promotion of participatory and open-mindedness in decision making. Meanwhile high autonomy, low supervision leadership (or laissez-faire leadership) had both negative and positive aspects (such as creative work-teams but lacking in larger vision). Government-People, participatory, and purpose lawful In totality, this is because people-centered, participatory, and purpose-driven leadership had not only been linked with the establishment of ethical work environments but also economic sustainability in the media sector therefore, leading the SDG 8 ethos.

Conclusion

Within such a research, the researchers mention that leadership styles are important in the workplace and the degree to which media organizations can assist in realising a Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) reliable on the impact of decent work and economic growth. Opening the findings have suggested that transformational and servant leadership styles are the best forms of leadership in the formation of creativity, inclusiveness, employee empowerment, and ethical responsibility which strongly resonates with various myths of decent work. Democratic leadership is also beneficial in the fact that it facilitates taking part and decision making as well as comparison to transactional leadership that ensures order, discipline and efficiency at the expense of disregarding the well being of the employees. Laissez-faire

leadership however is of little use in the fast driven deadline-driven media organizations and very many times results to dissatisfaction and irresponsibility. Precarious employment, gender inequality, job security are all still there but under a good leadership all these can be mitigated by enactment of fair policies to enable people to master skills as well as opportunities should be equally distributed. The results are important to highlight that media organizational leadership must strike a balance between productivity and employee welfare with regard to the understanding that sustainable economic growth is only possible in the long-term grounded on the pillars of decent work. By integrating the transformational vision, the democratic inclusivity and servant leadership ethics with operational efficiency, media organizations are not only in a position to strengthen the internal system, but also to act as a model to other sectors. Leadership is a managerial position but a transformational position in the sense that whether the media institutions can be fair, innovative and sustainable and whether they can play a substantial part in SDG 8. It underscores the importance of ensuring that the media leaders adopt inclusive and ethical leadership approaches that safeguard the rights of labor, empower the workers and influence sustainable economic growth.

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