

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The last chapter contains a summary of the research. It provides a brief outline of the study, discussion of significant findings and recommendations for further study.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Purpose of the study

The study was conducted in an attempt to determine the leadership styles of the managers in the subject organization as well as to find out the leadership style that male and female managers use in administering their business affairs.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

Thirty-two subjects were asked to voluntarily participate in this study. The subject's gender, age, education, job position, and number of working years were used as independent variables. The questionnaire used to study the variables consists of two parts: the first part was designed to collect the respondents' general information and the second was composed of 30 self-assessment questions adapted from "Lewin's Leadership Style Theory" by Donald Clark, Instructional System Design. The trends in frequency and percentage were then analyzed. The highest of the total score among three groups indicated the leadership style of each respondent.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

5.2.1 General Information of the Respondents

Of all 32 respondents, 16 (50%) were male and 16 (50%) were female. The majority of them were above 30 years of age and 37.50% falling at the age range of above 40. It was 50% of them who obtained a bachelor's degree and 44% who had obtained a master's degree. The majority of respondents have been working with the organization for more than 15 years.

5.2.2 Leadership Style of Managers

The results from the study showed that the majority of managers in the organization used a democratic style in administering their business affairs. This result was consistent with the findings of Kurt Lewin in 1939, Noppawan

Kanchanawan in 1997 (นพวรรณ กาญจนวารณ, 2540), and Kittipong Sophonthummapharn in 2005.

5.2.3 Leadership Style of Male and Female Managers

The result from the study revealed that the majority of male and female managers in the subject organization primarily used a democratic leadership style in administering their business affairs. This result was consistent with the findings of Alice H. Eagly in 2003.

5.2.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: The majority of managers use democratic style in administering business affairs.

This hypothesis is verified because the results show a significant difference in frequency with which the democratic leadership style is used by the majority of managers in the subject organization compared to the other two leadership styles. The findings indicate that the majority of managers are democratic.

Hypothesis 2: Female managers use democratic leadership style more than male managers.

This hypothesis is rejected because the results show that the frequency with which the democratic leadership style is used by female managers is lower than that of male managers. The findings indicate that male managers tend to use a democratic leadership style in administering their business affairs more than female managers.

5.3 DISCUSSION

The findings of leadership styles of the managers in the subject organization showed that the majority of managers commonly used the democratic style, whereas the laissez-faire style was used to a lesser degree and the autocratic style was used the least. Both male and female managers primarily selected the democratic style in administering their business affairs.

The managers in the subject organization tend to keep their subordinates informed of all changes and decisions which affect their work. They involve and trust the team decision-making and build a sense of team ownership for team goals. They select the democratic leadership style, the most suitable type for this working

environment in administering their business affair as well as managing their subordinates. With this leadership style, managers share decision-making with their subordinates and work with them side by side. Managers accept suggestions for managing the operation from group members who are closer to market and customers than them. Managers realize that to keep pace with competitors, accessibility of marketing information through their subordinates is extremely important.

The findings were well supported by what can be seen in the working environment of today. Being an employee working for the subject organization, a multinational company, the researcher realizes that to achieve business performance, teamwork is crucial. Every year, employees are required to set their corporate performance goals which are used to aim and guide their performance throughout the year. These corporate performance goals are mainly focused on the desired sales performance the team must strive to achieve. By its meaning, the goals are shared and driven by a whole team ranging from frontline managers to an entire organization not just by a single member. A high degree of participation and teamwork is therefore essential. In addition, to ensure long-term success as the best team in the industry that counts on the strength of every single team member, the company conducts “Employee Dialogue” as a forum where managers and subordinates can fine-tune their attitudes and behaviors. It is regarded as a key element to promote cooperation among management and employees. Both parties can openly discuss in depth and identify potential matters involved in making improvements in the workplace.

Though the democratic style is believed to build and sustain a strong cooperative culture, there are some managers who use other leadership styles. The study revealed that there were eight managers, two male managers and six female managers from this study who used the laissez-faire leadership style in administering their business affairs. Referring to its definition, the laissez-faire leadership tends to result in a low level of group productivity and poor member satisfaction. From the researcher’s point of view, this statement might not be true to this organization. Judging from the dynamic working environment as well as the employees’ ambition to achieve their desired target, nobody could possibly work with such an approach. The researcher however concludes that the laissez-faire manager under these circumstances is a manager who allows his or her subordinates to do what they

desired without the manager's interference as the subordinates of the laissez-faire managers might be well-trained and perform effectively. They are competent in their work without supervision. This statement is well supported by the fact that the performance of those managers constantly and fully meet their set goals.

The results also revealed that, though it is commonly ineffective, the autocratic style is still found existing in the subject organization. The study showed that there were only two persons who scored high in the autocratic style which is the style with which the leader makes decisions without consulting others. Judging from the respondents' general information, it was found that the two persons are supervisors with only a few employees who are temporary staff. It can be understood that the supervisors had no need for their subordinates' input on the decision. Moreover, the motivation of their subordinates to carry out subsequent action would not be affected whether they were or were not involved in the decision-making.

Regarding the leadership styles of male and female managers in the organization, the results of this study indicated that both male and female managers used the democratic style in administering their business affairs. However, the frequency of the democratic style used by male managers was higher than that used by female managers. The results differed from other earlier studies which stated that female managers were likely to use the democratic style more than male managers.

A survey conducted by a famous magazine revealed that women had a more modern outlook on their profession and were more open-minded and considerate. After successfully having to adopt a masculine identity in order to hide their emotions and natural behaviors in the workplace, females have become role models for executive positions. The study also found that many male managers were evaluated by their staff of both gender to be self-obsessed and autocratic (Cotton, Falvey and Kent, 2003).

With reference to this study, after considering the total score of female managers from the subject organization, it was found that female managers who were categorized as having a laissez-faire style were only slightly different from the democratic style. From the researcher's point of view, today's managers appear to be more aware of using the democratic leadership style to achieve results; therefore the finding could be illustrating that these female managers might not apply a real laissez-

faire style to its fullest extent. They instead might have no clear perception of the leadership style they use or alternatively might be going through a transition phase from a laissez-faire style to a democratic style.

The educational levels of managers are considered to reflect their leadership style. Dubrin (2004, p. 468) urged that managers' education and knowledge leads to his or her success in business leadership. From this study, the majority of all respondents in this study obtained a bachelor's and master's degree. They are perceived as highly educated and are expected to be intelligent and well-informed people. It then could be justified that the leadership style they use is appropriate for a particular situation.

From the study, it was also found that the democratic leadership style is popularly used among older managers who possess longer years of working experience in the subject organization rather than younger managers with fewer years of working experience. Judging from the success stories of the subject organization in continuing profits and growth, it could lead to an assumption that those older managers with longer years of service have been well aware that the way they lead the team (with a democratic style) contributes to the organization's great performance and fosters continuous improvements in teamwork. For them, change might not lead to the desired outcome; instead it is commonly perceived as risky. Consequently, they tend to maintain the use of a democratic style in administering their business affairs. This finding was consistent with Noppawan's study in 1997 (นพวรรณ กาญจนวรรณ, 2540) which revealed that managers with the longer service years would be able to identify and understand their own organization. They can predict how the situations would affect individuals and groups within the organization.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The majority of respondents from different positions, genders, ages, educational backgrounds and working years perceived that their leadership style used in administering business affairs as well as in managing their employees was democratic. The majority of both male and female managers also used a democratic style in administering their business affairs.

Though the democratic style was widely used by the majority of managers in the organization, there is no evidence that any other leadership style has been ineffective in this organization. From the researcher's point of view, many different leadership styles may be effective, with different tasks, different groups and in different contexts. For the managers of this organization, the style of leading that they use is not really a concern, but what matters most is how they could manage their teams to achieve the company's goals.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. In this study, only managers were asked to assess their leadership style so there may be some bias from the respondents. Therefore, the assessment made by employees should be included in further research.

2. In addition, a variety of other personality characteristics of managers were not included in the survey questions, so further research may consider other characteristics and apply different theories of leadership.