

PARTICULARITIES OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

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Abstract: *The evolutions in the theaters of operations have highlighted in the last decades a profound change of the realities in the sense of the increasingly obvious contouring of an enemy whose characteristics are specific to the social networking. Since the classic ways of action are inefficient under these circumstances, it became necessary to investigate and explain the new realities. In this context, military leadership acquires certain particularities that concern, on the one hand its essential foundations and, on the other hand, the actual ways they display at all hierarchical levels.*

Keywords: leadership, military leadership, social networking, network leadership, adaptability, flexibility

1. Introduction

Leadership in the 21st century means leading into a new era of leadership. Since it is dynamic, insecure, globalized and interconnected, the environment has profound implications not only on organizations, but also on their leaders. The information and knowledge currently available requires a new type of management to take advantage of key resources of knowledge and human capital. The new form of organization, namely the network organization, has produced many positive results within the structures that have resorted to this type of leadership. The evolutions in the theaters of operations have highlighted in the last decades a profound change of the realities in the sense of the more and more obvious presence of an enemy which is characterized by the specific forms of social networking. Since the classical ways of action are inefficient in these conditions, it became necessary to investigate and explain the new realities.

The objective of the study is the degree to which, through the structured set of competencies acquired during the training period, military students are able to exercise a leadership style appropriate to the network structure. The initial premise adopted states that the professional and social competencies that the officer must possess are satisfactorily formed if they are supported by a truly correct and beneficial socialization for both the individual and social organization. Its realization required a laborious, extensive investigation that included: identifying the need for socialization so that people become able to take on roles in networked organizations to guide the processes within; identifying predictable difficulties in promoting socializing processes that capitalize on people's potential; identifying and evaluating the leadership skills needed to lead the network; identifying the possibilities for implementing the outlined solutions.

2. Network leadership

Effective leadership is required in all spheres of human activity, and thus it becomes an essential element in the military context. Without strong leadership, it is unlikely that military organizations will be able to provide the required efforts that would characterize them in carrying out their missions. Strong leadership is associated, at the level of military structures, with high levels of functional cohesion and the development of a common goal, which is of paramount importance for the success of any military operation. The leader is responsible for the integration of other soldiers in the organization and for the implementation of military values, knowledge and skills specific to the military environment. He must manage the stress which is so present in all the action hypostases of military structures.

In current research on leadership, management is studied as an interactive process and as relational practices. The leader is no longer described as a heroic aspiration, but rather as a member of a group, although with specific characteristics to influence that group.

Discussions in the literature suggest that organizations and management are moving toward a network perspective. Leadership practice becomes a central network, as organizational leaders focus on capitalizing on key social relationships within networks. New organizational forms, such as network organization, give additional importance to relationships. More than ever, in network environments, leaders are very much needed, and they need to place greater emphasis on promoting social media and seamless collaboration within organizations [1]. Network leadership is defined as the ability to direct and coordinate the activities of other team members, to evaluate team performance, to assign tasks, to develop team knowledge, skills and abilities, to motivate team members, to plan and organize and create a positive atmosphere [2]. Through the implementation and

continuous use of this leadership style, members are given equal influence over the team. The new leadership model offers a promising solution to many organizational challenges arising from the management of team-based work structures.

The change in leadership from its classical form to the network form requires new concepts and methods, because the vision of leadership in terms of processes of mutual and recursive influence between several parties in a system context is very different from studying the unidirectional effects of a single leader over subordinates and new research methods may be needed to describe and analyze the complex nature of social systems leadership processes. Network analysis can prove to be one of the newest and most useful methods that has been widely used to examine the influence of networks outside of management. Network leadership is about building relationships and making alliances in the service of others and the work and goals of the organization [3]. Moving beyond functional specialties requires leaders to address strategic issues, which involve relational tasks, not analytical and functional tasks. Thus, with the access of the leader to a higher level, other qualities are needed. As leaders move toward network leadership, their existing roles change and new ones are added, so many of the roles and skills expected and required by today's leaders are related to networking, inventiveness, building and repairing relationships, or team work. Networked organizations are characterized by differentiation and diversity, which is access to diverse knowledge. Network organizations are also decentralized, so collective action must be stimulated and not controlled. Decentralization weakens top-down leadership control and stimulates interactions, but in networked organizations there is a structural duality as they may also contain hierarchical elements [4]. But the significant difference from bureaucratic organization is that all members are able to

exercise control over their own activity, reporting the results obtained to both individual and organizational objectives. They also have a high decision-making capacity, frequently acting as managers or as businessmen. Another responsibility of each member is to communicate to colleagues in all areas of the organization his or her goals, priorities, and the contributions he or she intends to make. In this way, a coherent system of organizational objectives is articulated, compatible and complementary both vertically and horizontally. Leadership is identified as a mechanism that makes things happen, by modeling and emphasizing the collaboration process. Three types of leadership such as: structure, processes and participants, which are closely linked and are defined as contextual leadership, contribute to the promotion of collaborative goals. Therefore, the central categories of leadership activity were identified, which are subsequently specified as improvement-based leadership, mobilization-based leadership, and empowerment-based leadership.

Networked organizations provide adaptive and flexible learning capabilities that are especially useful in environments that change so frequently that these capabilities enable the organization to respond effectively to change. Although the advantages of networking are very well studied, the risks associated with it are not. Understanding the critical points in an organization leads to improved performance and protection against risks that can cause losses.

In the context of networking, the main directions for effective leadership are: [5] networking requires effective direction and coordination (building consensus and gaining the support of the organization's members), and leadership based on skills and collaboration is needed, combined with flexible administration and management, it must also be possible to count on people who are well-prepared to cooperate and

who encourage the members of the organization to become better, especially from the outset; there is a need for sufficient leaders for activities; and formed a small group with devoted members; this group should give direction to the rest of the network; power is defined by the ability of structures to organize and model quickly, coping with rapid changes in the external environment. In this way, the modeling of some social networks allows some actors to conquer without using military aspects and control other actors (governments, parties, social groups, etc.).

3. Methodological approach

In order for the military organization to reach the state that generates maximum functionality, it is necessary that the form of organization in which it is designed to function be of the network type, and the human resource be able to function in teams, if it is conceptualized according to competitive theoretical benchmarks and maintain its state of functionality.

In order to solve the specified objective, we formulated the hypothesis according to which the military students perceive correctly the competencies necessary to exercise leadership in the network, the difficulties occurring, on the background of socializing processes, in terms of actually implementing them. After solving the edifying aspects from the point of view of socialization criteria, in order to identify the leadership skills necessary for the new leadership style, we designed a questionnaire in which the formulated items illustrate the skills and abilities needed by people to integrate functionally in a network organization, highlighting the skills needed to lead a network or to create emerging conditions for networking. The questionnaire was applied to a representative sample of the population made of military students from the third year of study.

4. Interpretation of Data

In order to achieve the objective of identifying the connections between socializing processes, the possibilities that people have to manifest in organizations and to relate explicitly to organizations, we resorted to applying the questionnaire and obtaining the necessary data for interpretations.

Following the interpretation of the questionnaire's data on "*students' opinions of the ways in which cooperation is carried out in the training institution*" suggests that students have developed skills and competencies specific to people working in a network organization, although the explicit objectives of the curriculum do not. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire regarding the leadership competencies specific to leading a network reveals that their results were above expectations, with a proportion of over 80% of the answers related to leaders in networks demonstrating that: individualized consideration is an important component of the leader; the leader's level of emotion can be a vulnerability which is difficult to be corrected; adaptability is the top feature of network leaders; influence and trust imply high moral and ethical standards, inspire admiration; leader's vision generates awareness, acceptance and motivation; intellectual stimulation helps to increase organizational efficiency and easily achieve goals and turns disciples into leaders; the structure and content of emotional intelligence require reconsideration of the development philosophy.

5. Conclusions

Networking involves not only designing the organization so that it takes the form of the network, but rather training people in such a way that they are able to maintain through their manifestations the functionality of the network organization.

That is why in the formative activity it is necessary to work in teams as they are assumed by the organization in the network. This aims at a distribution of roles in which the connections between the participants force them to function in such a way as not to generate dysfunctions. It is assumed that teams have the ability to perceive the consequences of their dysfunctional manifestations and to strive not to be dysfunctional in the network. Control no longer has to be exercised by various traditional methods, but is achieved by the network structure itself mainly through cooperation, sometimes through negotiation and less often through direct coercion. Within networks, power is not reduced to hierarchical relationships, but is enriched by the skills of participants, regardless of their role and status.

The teams thus formed may have a wide margin of freedom that implies their responsibility, but within the network they never accept to be treated as tools put at the service of the objectives set by the "*training centers*" of the network, the teams also promoting specific interests, which are not always compatible with the objectives of the network.

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