Leadership Skills: An Analytical Study of Armed Forces Personnel Vs Corporate Executives

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Abstract: Capital produced by investing in knowledge could be termed as Human capital ie the skill, talent, and productivity that employees bring to a company. Employee value can be increased by better skills which improve the value of the employee in the workplace, and the employer thus gains a significant competitive advantage via human capital by way of highly skilled employees. Innovation is mainly due to Human capital, which can also be a big competitive advantage for companies. Hence, company's interest in investing and acquiring human capital is very high. This is done by recruiting new employees, training existing employees, and by ensuring positive relationships between employees and their managers. Employment is mainly the purchase and sale of human capital: companies purchase skills of employees such as talents, skills, and time by paying money. This is the main philosophy that employees can be considered as consultants who are selling their time and expertise to clients, and the value of one's labor is based on the market value of his or her knowledge and skills and not on his or her amount of physical exertion. Leadership can also be seen as being situational. A good leader understands the needs and expectations of those involved by responding appropriately to the situation. Thus a leader, must develop a keen insight into the market, industry and business environment. Also leaders must realize the changing work force happening all around. They must also fundamentally change their own attitudes and approaches in order to enable them to lead employees effectively. Today's leader must not be an order giver but be a facilitator. The army life in the military where 'service before self' is not just a rule, but a philosophy and a regular white collar job in management consulting, investment banking, marketing or operations is very different. This study is aimed at comparing the Leadership skills of the Armed Forces personnel and Corporate executives.

Keywords: Leadership, Armed Forces, Corporate, Skills

1. INTRODUCTION

The high magnitude of Army officers work is exposed to logistical and operational challenges. Not only in war time but also in non combative situations such as projects management brings to the fore their leadership,

risk-taking, decision making, conflict management and time management skills in the most harsh conditions ultimate test. In comparison to the corporate world stakes can be very high.

There is a fair share of challenges in Corporate jobs. The relevance of Decision making pertains to processing large amount of data from disciplines such as finance, strategy, human resources etc. over a wider time frame. The overall culture is the biggest difference between army jobs and corporate civilian life where discipline could be just the tip of the iceberg. Then there's politics, bureaucracy, and a whole lot of inefficiencies in the system which need to be tackled.

The Indian Armed Forces is representative of a large group of well groomed and highly motivated people working in a system that expects them to set high individual standards and high achievement targets. The Officers are self-reliant, innovative, resourceful and highly adaptable and are endowed with courage, motivation, education, selflessness and honesty. The men are lead and inspired by Officers to perform extraordinary tasks in challenging circumstances.

The service officers are groomed in discipline and possess the requisite skills and a focused approach for leading a productive life. The career in the corporate world requires one to reorient their skills, attitudes and attributes so as to manage and capitalize on their inherent potential and experience for value creation. Leadership skill development is a continuous process which needs to be sharpened throughout a person's career. Each and every person has the ability to improve leadership qualities. The only thing needed is a conscious effort to do so.

People desiring in developing their leadership skills have to first take a stock of their existing leadership skills, strengths and weaknesses. While doing this they need to keep in mind the differences between leadership and management.

Management primarily deals with aspects like control, performance, problem solving, etc., whereas leadership is more concerned with emotional and strategic factors. Management primarily deals with aspects like control, performance, problem solving, etc., whereas leadership is more concerned with emotional and strategic factors. They would have to consider the following questions -

- How do I increase the value of my organization?
- How do I inspire and motivate my team members?
- Am I able to instil trust among the people in the organization?
- Are my dealings honest and open?
- Will I be able to communicate effectively?

After pondering over these questions, some people may arrive at the conclusion that they don't have the degree of leadership skills they would like. This may be because they have not taken any effort to develop their leadership skills. People often tend to overestimate their leadership skill and stop honing these skills. However, it is not innate talent alone that is behind the success of many leaders. Learning, through practice is crucial for improving the leadership skills that a person already has.

People should consider all the operations that they undertake in an organization as opportunities to improve their leadership skills. And they can create fresh opportunities for assessing and improving their leadership skills by asking for new projects or assignments. It is also essential that they obtain knowledge and proficiencies on issues that are of concern to the organization.

Leadership skills can be developed with the help of a leadership development plan. While developing this plan is easy, it takes a conscious and committed effort on the part of the people concerned to implement the plan. A mentor can help in developing leadership skills. For people it is important to identify such a person possessing the leadership skills that they would like to develop and who is ready to help them develop those skills.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature has been devoted to contemplate briefly the findings of earlier studies of topical interest conducted in India or abroad and also to explore the probable research gaps. It covers a broad spectrum of books, research papers, articles and studies that not only is relevant for the paper but also ensures qualitative scholarly work.

David Rosete and Joseph Ciarrochi, (2005). Leadership and Organization Development Journal, p. 388-399, Vol. 26, Issue 5. *"Emotional Intelligence and its relationship to workplace performance outcomes of leadership effectiveness",* This study investigates the relationship between personality, emotional intelligence (EI), cognitive intelligence and leadership effectiveness. Using an objective measure of performance and a 360° assessment involving each leader's subordinates and direct manager – the Leadership effectiveness was assessed.

Jean Brittain Leslie, Maxine Dalton, Chris Ernst, Jennifer Deal, (2002), Center for Creative Leadership investigated the topic *"Managerial effectiveness in a global context."* Their opinion was that, the rapid expansion of globalization and MNC's means more managers work across the borders of multiple countries at the same time.

Lefton, E. Robert and Buzzotta, R. Victor, (1996), *"Leadership Through People Skills",* Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company studied whether practitioners and educators agree that what are those management skills are required for success in the 21st century? In order that the companies are better prepared to meet the challenges of the new millennium, How can we improve communications between those who teach and those who practice business.

Major Peter H. Henson and Major Susan E. Hirst, (1996), presented to the directorate of research Air Command and Staff College a research paper – *"Ten Propositions regarding Leadership".* The research project contains ten proposition statements and a paper supporting each proposition. These propositions are, leaders with a vision, character of leadership, resiliency in leadership, leaders and relationship, accountability, learning and mentoring, thinking creatively, sound decision making, communicating values and shaping the culture

M., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates and Publishers, Mahwah, London, New Jersey (2002), *"Leadership Development",* this book finds out that in today's technologically complex, economically uncertain environment, How do leaders gain and use self-knowledge for career development and continuous improvement.

Maj Gen N.K. Dhir (Retd.), October- December, (2005), Indian Journal of Training and Development, p. 143-150, Vol. 35, No. 4. *"Developing Leadership Competencies through Emotional Intelligence",* The author in this article discusses that the most significant factor in the success of an organization is Leadership.

Nischal, Surendra, (2001), *"Effective Leadership",* Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi. This book is about leaders of white-collar workers unions. Author has attempted to identify the effective leadership behaviour and the factors, which significantly contribute to it. This book states that leadership is one of the essential functions that must be performed by all the managers. As it documents the findings of a Center for Creative Leadership research study, this report addresses these questions - "In global context, what factors might predict managerial effectiveness",

Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, (2000), - "*The gap-soldiers, civilians and their mutual understanding"* Sponsored by triangle institute for security studies this was a comprehensive study – a group of faculty from duke university. The project was undertaken to answer three questions- "what is the character of civil-military gap today?, what factors are shaping it? and lastly,what are the implications for military effectiveness and civil-military co-operation".

Shipper, Frank (2004), Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies in their paper – "*A cross-cultural, multi- dimensional, nonlinear examination of managerial skills and effectiveness*" investigated the effectiveness of specific managerial skills using non-linear analytic techniques. The study was conducted in large multinational corporation using managerial employees. The linear and non-liner United States model suggested that for increase in effectiveness, different degrees of managerial development are required

Srivastava, Mrityunjay Kumar, (2006), Macmillan India Limited. *"Transformational Leadership",* through compelling real – life stories of successful corporate leaders, this book sketches as to what it takes to become a transformational leader.

The Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of Management Research, (1999) – in the book "*Managerial Effectiveness*" – Managing Self and Others, emphasized that 'effective management is about doing the right things at the right time', Due to changing business dynamics, organization's are in need of managers who are efficient and also effective. Besides the basic managerial skills there are certain other skills that a manager should possess to be effective, ie creativity in management, emotional intelligence, stress management, time management, interpersonal skills, multi-cultural communication skills and leadership skills.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Selection and adoption of appropriate scientific methodological approach is the most important element of conducting a research investigation. It adds to the precision, reliability and validity of the research findings. The study was carried out on 120 officers of corporate and armed forces sector. The sample was chosen by Stratified Random Sampling. A well-constructed questionnaire was constructed and administrated on the sample to elicit their response. The questionnaire had both open ended as well as close-ended questions. It was designed in such a manner so as to elicit maximum information from the respondents. The questions were simple, clear, undisguised, well organised and to the point. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done and some questions were reframed after it. The data collected was statistically analysed using various tools. Data analysis was done in order to search out meaningfully the trend and establish relationships that exist among various data groups. The primary data collected through survey method with the help of the questionnaire has been analysed by using MS Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 19.0 version. Various tools and techniques were used to analyse the data gathered.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Every manager should be a leader! Everyone has a vision. An important role is played in accomplishing the mission. It is a fact that everyone directly impacts the effectiveness of his or her organization.

In Addition we see that all officers, enlisted personnel, and civilians, supervising people or not, are being watched, others will follow their words and deeds which set the standards , and they impact the organizational and individual effectiveness, good order, discipline and morale.

Leadership is a competency developed to accomplish a task effectively and is also viewed as a skill. Leaders who have skills are competent people knowing the means and methods for fulfilling their responsibilities. People can learn or develop or learn skills and competencies even without natural leadership ability, Individuals can improve their leadership with practice, instruction and feedback from others. Leadership which is a skill can be studied and learned.

With respect to the leadership skills of both category of executives, following hypothesis was formulated:

"There is a lack of certain leadership traits in Corporate executives which are more prominent in Defence personnel."

Opinions of Respondents Regarding Leadership Skills

On the 20 items a principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to reduce and classify the factors related to leadership skills, for both category of executives.

The suitability of data for factor analysis was also assessed before performing PCA. The sampling adequacy for the analysis was verified by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure. KMO = .74, was more than the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, $X2\,(190) = 639.540, p = .00 \leq .001$, which supported the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Factor Extraction using Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

The next process was to decide about, number of factors to be derived. Often, among the many variables that the researcher analyses, a few variables are more related to each other than they are to others. Factor analysis allow the researcher to look at these groups of variables that tend to relate to each other and estimate what underlying reason might cause these variables to be highly correlated with each other.

The Scree Plot was slightly ambigious and showed certain inflexions that justify retaining both components 4 and 6. Since sample size is large, and the convergence of the Scree plot and Kaiser's criterion is on six components, In the final analysis this is the number of components that were retained.

The Scree Plot for the analysis shows that 6 factors have Eigen value greater than 1, hence this suggested to derive six factors for the items in hand (Figure 1).
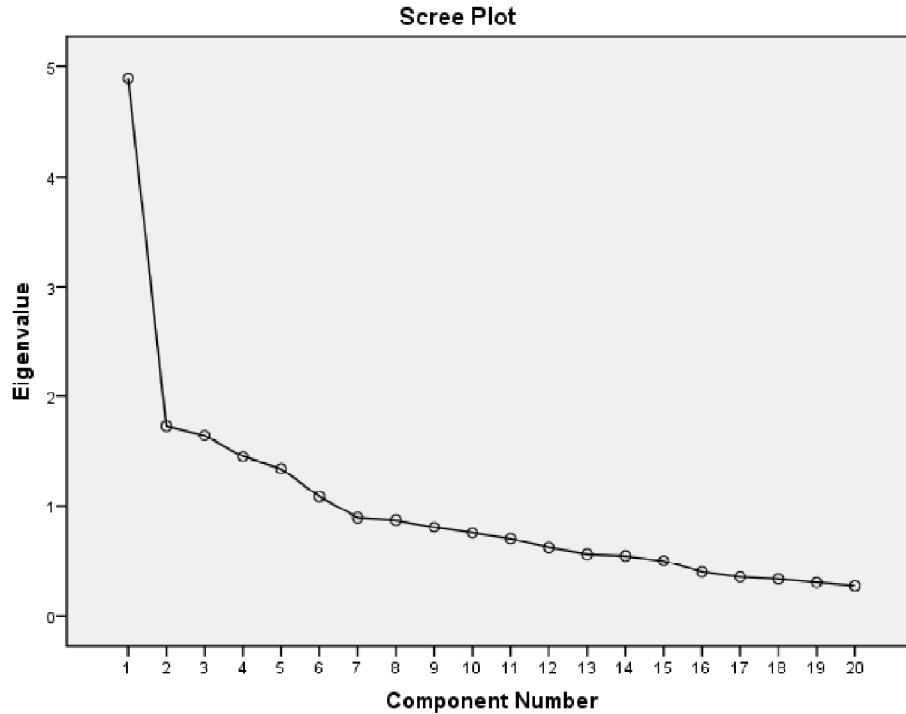
Figure 1: Scree plot

SPSS 19.0 was used to classify 20 variables into smaller number of factors. To determine whether there were any common construct that represents respondents conduct, Factor analysis was used. The most commonly used method ie Varimax Algorithm of Orthogonal Rotation was used to analyse the problems. Naming of factors after evaluation of resulting constructs is largely subjective. Therefore, to find out the key Leadership skills that executives posses and so as to group them into specific factors, factor analysis was done by using Principal Component Analysis.

PCA revealed (Table 1), the presence of 6 components with eigen values exceeding 1, explaining 24.44%, 8.62%, 8.20%, 7.25%, 6.68%, and 5.42% of the variance respectively. All the six factors in combination explained 60.64% of the variance.

Table 1
Component Matrix

	Component/Factor					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
Addressing problem immediately	.692					
Open dispute resolving	.651					
People management	.600					
Strategic plan making	.576					.408
Understanding social fabric	.557					
Praising team members	.528					

contd. table 1

	Component/Factor					
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
Communicating plans and achievements	.519					
Developing contingency plans	.518					
Sensing emotional undercurrents	.515		-.409			
Assessing peoples response	.503		-.501			
Ownership of teams failure	.487					
Pride in spreading organizational values	.455		-.415			
Consensus in conflict situations	.443			-.429		
Working in group		.544				.488
EI to Motivate others	.498	.509				
Respecting opponents viewpoint		.462				
New relations at workplace	.428		.432			
Flexibility in making changes	.464			-.543		
Use of Offensive language					.618	
Responding to requests	.461				.588	

a. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

b. 6 components extracted

Under Varimax rotation, 7 out of 20 skills have factor loading > 0.4 in case of factor 1. This reveals that 35% of the problems clubbed into one factor. On the basis of Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization, 6 factors have emerged out. Those variables that have factor loading > 0.4 constitute each factor. Therefore, the six factors were identified as shown in Table No. 2. The items that cluster on same components suggest the following constitutions –

Table 2
Grouping of key variables based on Factor Loadings

Components and its Description	*Constituents*
1. Visioning Skills	Sensing emotional undercurrents, Pride in spreading organizational values, Assessing peoples response, Addressing problem immediately, Understanding social fabric.
2. Team Building Skills	Communicating plans and achievements, Ownership of team's failure, Developing contingency plans, Praising team members, and People management.
3. Conflict Resolution Skills	Consensus in conflict situations, Flexibility in making changes, Strategic plan making, Open dispute resolving.
4. Inter Personal Skills	New relations at workplace, Respecting opponent's viewpoint.
5. Administrative Skills	Use of Offensive language, Responding to requests.
6. Emotional Intelligence Skills	EI to Motivate others, Working in group.

Factor analysis reflects that these 6 skills are the leadership skills which are significant for effective managerial performance.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Null Hypothesis

"The leadership traits in Corporate executives are similar to those of Defence personnel."

Alternative Hypothesis

"There is a lack of certain leadership traits in Corporate executives which are more prominent in Defence personnel."

For further analysis and hypothesis testing, the data was checked for normality and homogeneity. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed that both the distributions were normal and Levene's test depicted homogeneity of variance of the two groups.

To explore the prominence of leadership skills in Armed Forces Personnel and Corporate executives (Table 3), a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted, as measured by the Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaire (MEQ).

Table 3
Prominence of Leadership skills between both category of Executives

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Corporate	60	.1496	2.57608	.33257
Armed Forces	60	-.1496	2.32809	.30056
Total	120	.0000	2.44949	.22361

ANOVA (Leadership Skills * Executives)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.686	1	2.686	.446	.506
Within Groups	711.314	118	6.028		
Total	714.000	119			

There was a non-significant difference at the $p > 0.05$ level in leadership scores for the two categories [$F(1, 118) = .44$, $p = .50$]

The analysis (Table 3), reflects that the result is not significant means acceptance of null hypothesis, which can be interpreted as –

"The leadership traits in Corporate executives are similar to those of Defence personnel."

5. CONCLUSION

The observations and analysis done, help us to find if there is a significant difference in the leadership skills of executives of Armed Forces and Corporate executives. Leaders are a key human resource in any organisation and good leadership is essential for making any venture successful. Leadership is basically a personal ability, skill and process of influencing and guiding people so that they work effectively to attain the goals.

Irrespective of different developmental environment and nature of service, there was no variance in the leadership skills of both categories of executives. One advantage of looking at leaders in terms of behaviour is that behaviour is often easier to measure and many people feel in more control of specific behaviours and are less defensive about them, than actually they are about their personalities or intelligence.

An exclusive analysis of team building skills showed a majority towards the Armed Forces personnel. This is obvious as in military services, working in a group is significant if one has to win battles. Individual thinking is given least value. Even the selection process of the Armed Forces executives focuses on possession of team building abilities.

Another surprising implication was the prominence of interpersonal skills in the Armed Forces executives. This could be attributed to the recruitment of diverse cultural manpower in the forces. Being away from their native place brings in unity and closeness in the closed environment of the services. In the armed forces one society is formed and in spite of differences and variety of background all are willing to sacrifice a lot for each other for achieving common goals.

The respondents from both sectors have similar views regarding the visioning, administrative, team building, interpersonal, motivational skills and emotional intelligence dimensions of leadership.

Leadership behaviours including the skills and competencies are a function of emotional intelligence, personality traits, interests, values, knowledge, attitudes, and experience. The factors like values, intelligence, skills and attitudes, predispose a leader to act in distinctive ways and are relatively difficult to change.

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