Perceiving Major Skill Sets: A Study of Leaders and Employees in Select Small and Medium IT Companies of Northern India

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Abstract:

A leader plays an influential role in inspiring his employees to undergo changes and in expanding the organizational opportunities. Leaders get opportunity to lead ,not because of there designation,but because their subordinates acknowledge their role and anticipate them to lead.Extensive researches have projected that leaders & followers have always perceived the value of their relationships differently. At this point, the leader's awareness of the differences in their own perception and what their followers perceive is a critical matter.The objective of the research is to study perception of leaders and employees with regard to leadership styles, communication,emotional intelligence, organizational commitment and motivation. It has been calculated using independent t-test.The sample included 265 employees of select small and medium IT companies of northern India.The study has revealed the perception of leaders and employees vis-a-vis leadership styles,Communication,emotional intelligence, organizational commitment and motivation.The study has suggested that two way communication should be encouraged between leaders and the team mates in order to improve the perceptual difference between the leaders and employees with regard to leadership styles.It has also suggested to work on raising the organizational commitment level and improving on motivational practices in organizations and arranging workshops on improving emotional intelligence so as to reduce the difference between perception of leaders and employees with regard to skill sets -motivation,communication,emotional intelligence and organizational commitment.Lastly it has suggested the measures to improve perceptual skill sets of leaders.

Keywords: Perception, Employees and leaders

1.Introduction:

The role of leadership has changed significantly in today's competitive business environment because it is a leader's primary duty to inspire his employees to achieve growth, to capitalize on synergies, and to increase operational effectiveness while guiding them to make the best use of available resources.. Thus in the present business scenario the concept of leadership has emerged as the soul of subjects pertaining to productivity and efficiency. A leader identifies the gravity of technological revolution in the surviving competitive environment which is coupled with the persistent changes in the macro environment gears. He offers unparalleled practices to his followers across a broad spectrum of technical environments which help in equipping them with the values, skills and intellectual discipline that further enables them to make the best utilization of their capacity. The leader of a contemporary era is responsible for harmonization and consolidation of both the human and the material resources so that they are able to produce output or deliver services effectively and efficiently – thus facilitating to improve the performance of the individual as well as of the business as a whole.

In order to effectively sustain in this dynamic and competitive business environment, IT industry must indulge in providing different products and services including project management, software development and handling, customer relationship management, BPO, Knowledge Process Outsourcing etc. The employees working in IT industry must perform these tasks in teams under the supervision and direction of a team leader. In order to increase the overall performance of his employees, the leader must put efforts to develop supremacy in the employees to conceptualize, identify and communicate the   key issues in the speckled areas of competitive business world, so that they are able to form a standpoint that is replete with relevant information and integrative thinking and to draw and evaluate conclusions. He creates varied opportunities for them to augment their thoughtfulness with regard to micro and macro environment, to broaden their horizon and to make them become a catalysts for change. This implies that the role of a leader is not only

interpreted in the accomplishment of work assignments but also in facilitating the employees to meet the highest standards of capability and professionalism in the extant dynamic business milieu.

An effective leader plays an influential role in inspiring employees to undergo changes and in expanding the organizational opportunities by focusing on high-performing employees, but currently leaders are facing a major challenge of retaining talented employees in the organization. Leaders or managers get the opportunity to lead, not because of their designation, because it is expected by their subordinates that they would lead and the subordinates acknowledge their capacity to lead followers'. Extensive researches have projected that leaders & followers perceived differently about the value of their relationships. At this point, leaders awareness of the differences in the perception of their own leading style and what their followers perceive is a critical matter. A huge disagreement exposes the lack of leader's self-knowledge & poor style, which leads to an adverse organizational milieu. This case would enable leaders to nurture themselves, once they develop awareness about the style, they demonstrate to followers in the divergent work surroundings. The present study has conducted the survey on studying the perception of the employees and the perception of leaders.

2.Review of Literature

Sharma and Nair (2020) have aimed to compare the leadership styles of managers from superior's perception through self-rating and their follower's perception through followers' rating in public and private banks. The identified leadership styles, were taken from behavioural MLQ taxonomy,of Bass (2000). The data of 102 immediate supervisors & 422 subordinates were detected from Banks branch managers & employees respectively. After measuring through statistical t-tests, the outcome showed the significant differences among the responses of leaders and subordinates working in private banks in comparison to public banks for transformational and transactional style in comparison to public banks. The outcome of this research study has suggested that greater efforts should be put in made on development of the leadership styles of the leaders of the companies from followers perception also.

Varsshini (2020) had conducted a study on the perception of employees of the leadership styles.For this,a sample of 100 respondents was selected.The research findings have showed that no style is absolutely the best, but the successful leader is the one who can access the situation and choose the most appropriate style, paying attention to the needs of the individuals concerned, the group and the organisation. Furthermore, the impact of leadership styles on employees' performance as well as the employees' output requires adequate efficient and effective type of leadership styles to be adopted in order to enhance profitability, accountability, employee performance and organisational productivity.

Bennett (2009) had examined the Leadership styles peception between the subordinates in predicting subordinate Extra Effort, managers effectiveness, and Satisfaction with management.For the study 150 IT professionals from AITP, Association of Information Technology Professionals, were administered the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X-Short form (MLQ 5X-Short). The survey measured all nine full range leadership variables and results were analyzed using multiple regression.It was found that Transformational Leadership and Passive/Avoidant Leadership, but not Transactional Leadership was able to predict Extra Effort. In the second place , Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Passive/Avoidant Leadership were able to predict management Effectiveness. In the end, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership (reversed and subscales), were able to predict subordinates' Satisfaction with their leaders.

Tan and Husin (2019) had examined the impact of the 3 types of communication i.e. upward, downward and horizontal communication on the employees' performance. The property development company of Malaysia was selected as a sample for the study. The sample of 120 employees was chosen for the purpose of carrying on the research. The data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the correlation analysis and the multiple regression analysis. They had concluded that the downward and the horizontal communication positively and significantly impacted the employees' performance.

Tewari, Gujarathi , & Maduletty (2019) had reviewed some of the current challenges in certain organizations which are faced by the managers and the employees working at the productivity levels. This research had statistically analyzed

the leadership style of 50 respondents through a survey questionnaire of 25 questions and the category to which they belonged depending upon their behavioral attributes to deal with people through a survey questionnaire of 25 questions. It further helped the researchers to conclude which leadership style was the most relevant for highest level of productivity in telecommuting employees and managers. It also gave an insight into managerial behaviors and relationship of employees and managers in a less formal organizational setup.

Memon (2014) had studied various viewpoints of leadership and its styles focusing mainly on the transactional and the transformational styles and their impact on the employees' performance. He had also considered the relationship between the leadership styles and the employee performance through the mediating role of the culture and the gender while communication played as a moderating role. The study was descriptive in nature. He had also investigated the rational relationship among the variables through the research findings of the various authors. The findings of the study had revealed that the effects of the leadership styles on the employee performance were found to be non similar due to the mediating variables of the culture and the gender while communication was found to be one of the major components for effective leadership style.

Mutuku and Mathooko (2014) had explored the effect of communication on the employees' motivation in Kenya. The study was descriptive in nature. The population for the purpose of research consisted of 287 employees working at the various levels in Nokia, Kenya. The sample was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The data was collected using semi structured questionnaire. The research was based on both the quantitative and the qualitative data. The data was analyzed using the multiple regression techniques and the mean percentages. The study had concluded that the communication had high impact on the employee motivation. It had further showed that there should be correctness, compatibility and clarity in the organization .

3.Research Methodology:
3.1Need and significance of the study
The Indian IT sector is now on the threshold of a major transformation, with expectations of policy initiatives being implemented. There are increasing evidences that effective project team performance and the skills of the project leader play a crucial role in the IT industry ensuring successful results **(Taylor. H and Woelfer.J.P, 2011).** A project-based team's performance depends not only on the individual team members' knowledge, skills, and abilities but on how effective and able the leader is managing the team members. In contrast, the role that the team leader plays in determining a team's performance and success has historically, received less attention in the literature.There are numerous studies on studying the perception of leaders and employees but none has discussed about the perception of employees and leaders specifically with regard to Indian IT sector.

3.2 Objective of the study
i.   To study the perception of employees and leaders with regard to leadership styles.
ii.   To study the perception of employees and leaders with regard to Motivation, communication, commitment and Emotional Intelligence.

3.3 Hypothesis of the study
H1: There exists a statistical significant difference in perception of employees and leaders with regard to leadership styles.
H2: There exists statistical significant difference in perception of employees' and leaders with regard to Motivation, communication, organizational commitment and Emotional Intelligence.

3.4 Sources of data
The data has been collected from the primary sources from the selected small and medium IT companies of the Northern India. Primary data has been collected from the selected employees and the leaders of the selected small and medium companies using 2 self-administered questionnaires,one from the leaders and other from the employees.

3.5 Sampling

The study used multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, Judgmental sampling has been used to select the sample population and sample districts on the basis of the number of the small and the medium IT companies in those districts. In the second stage, convenience sampling is used while administering the questionnaires to both for leaders and employee respondents. The final sample of 265 respondents for the achievement of research objectives were used .

3.6.Analysis of the data
Reliabilty of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the data was tested using Cronbach's alpha value. For each questionnaire , separate value was derived. The results of the reliability analysis have been shown separately for each questionnaire in Table 1 and 2

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha value for the questionnaire for the Employees

	Cronbach's alpha value
Leadership styles	**.977**
Emotional Intelligence,Organizational Commitment ,Communication and Motivation	**.960**

Table 1 shows values of Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire of the Employees. **Cronbach's Alpha value should be more than .60 in order to ascertain the consistency of the item scale**. The table shown that for all the items of Employee questionnaire , the alpha value exceeded the minimum requirement, it is thereby demonstrated that all the factors are internally consistent.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha value of questionnaire for Leaders

	Cronbach's alpha value
Leadership styles	**.853**
Emotional Intelligence,Organizational Commitment, Communication and Motivation	**.809**

Table 2 has shown the values of Cronbach's Alpha for the items of the questionnaire of leaders .The table has shown that for all the items, the alpha value exceeded the minimum requirement, it has thereby been demonstrated that all the factors are internally consistent.

Normality of the data

The normality of the data was checked using skewness and kurtosis measure . Skewness is a measure of the asymmetry and kurtosis is a measure of 'peakedness' of a distribution.The results of the test showed that the data is normally distributed. So, tests were performed on the data for the purpose of the achievement of the objectives of the study.

Table 3: Measure of Skewness and Kurtosis of questionnaire for employees

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
Transformational	90	4.07	0.78	-0.49	-0.80	2.00	5.00
Democratic	90	3.89	0.88	-0.61	-0.34	1.75	5.00
Laissez Faire Leadership	90	3.99	0.87	-0.73	0.17	1.50	5.00
Coaching Leadership	90	3.94	0.95	-0.88	0.27	1.00	5.00
Charismatic Leadership	90	3.85	0.97	-0.84	0.05	1.40	5.00
Ethical Leadership	90	3.98	0.90	-0.70	-0.46	1.75	5.00

Servant Leadership	90	3.89	0.94	-0.76	0.02	1.00	5.00
Visionary Leadership	90	4.00	0.91	-1.05	0.98	1.00	5.00
Benevolent Leadership	90	3.90	0.99	-0.86	0.09	1.00	5.00
Autocratic Leadership	90	3.01	1.10	0.37	-0.59	1.00	5.00
Affiliative Leadership	90	3.94	1.01	-0.81	0.09	1.00	5.00
Motivation	90	4.03	0.84	-0.57	-0.34	1.29	5.00
Communication	90	3.99	0.87	-0.74	-0.02	1.20	5.00
Commitment	90	3.63	0.97	-0.47	-0.20	1.00	5.00
Emotional Intelligence	90	4.00	0.75	-0.81	1.37	1.00	5.00

As per table 3 value of skewness and kurtosis of all the variables lies between the absolute range.Therefore data collected with the help of questionnaire filled by employees is considered to be normal as the absolute value of skewness should be between -2 and + 2   and   the absolute value for kurtosis should be between -7 and +7 **(west et.al., 1996)**

Table 4: Measure of Skewness and Kurtosis of questionnaire for leaders

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
Transformational	30	4.47	0.29	-1.67	5.50	3.40	5.00
Democratic	30	4.34	0.36	0.39	-1.00	3.75	5.00
Laissez Faire Leadership	30	4.38	0.28	0.29	-0.82	4.00	5.00
Coaching Leadership	30	4.38	0.38	0.23	-1.32	3.75	5.00
Charismatic Leadership	30	4.42	0.41	-0.22	-0.51	3.40	5.00
Ethical Leadership	30	4.42	0.36	-0.36	0.11	3.50	5.00
Servant Leadership	30	4.41	0.36	-0.29	0.04	3.50	5.00
Visionary Leadership	30	4.48	0.43	-0.48	0.06	3.33	5.00
Benevalent Leadership	30	4.43	0.40	-0.25	-0.46	3.67	5.00
Autocratic Leadership	30	2.33	0.71	2.42	5.20	1.75	4.50
Affiliative Leadership	30	4.54	0.37	-0.52	-0.70	3.75	5.00
Motivation	30	4.49	0.54	-1.50	2.04	3.00	5.00
Communication	30	4.40	0.54	-1.52	1.81	3.00	5.00
Commitment	30	2.95	0.40	1.67	6.01	2.33	4.44
Emotional Intelligence	30	4.45	0.21	0.17	-0.36	4.06	4.94

As per table 4,value of skewness and kurtosis of all the variables lies between the absolute range.Therefore data collected with the help of questionnaire filled by   leaders is considered to be normal as the absolute value of skewness should be between -2 and + 2   and   the absolute value for kurtosis should be between -7 and +7 **(west et.al., 1996)**

5.Statistical Analysis

Cronbach Alpha was used to check reliability of data and **Kurtosis and skewness** measure was used to check normality of the data for both the questionnaires.

T-test: The study used t-test for the purpose of explaining the perception of leaders and the perception of employees.
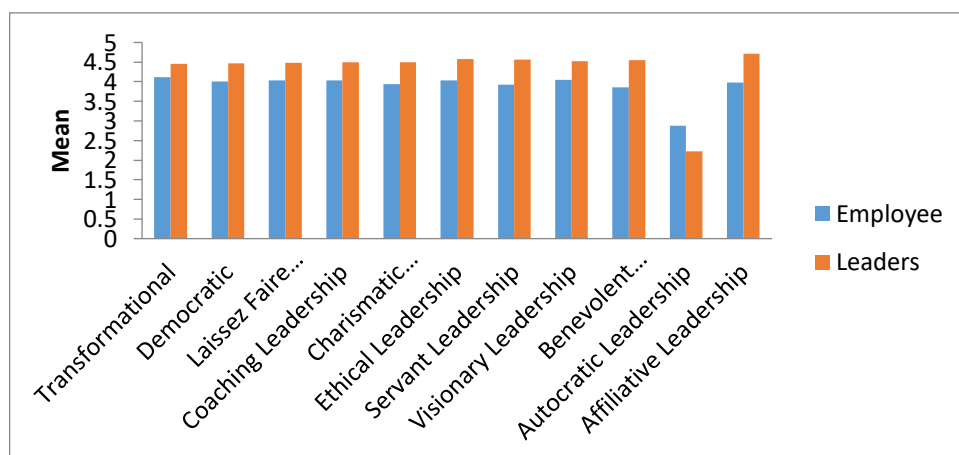
H1: There exists a statistical significant difference in perception of employees' and leaders with regard to leadership styles.

Table : 5 Perception of leaders and employees with regard to leadership styles.

	Group						t-value	p-value
	Employee			Leaders				
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Transformational	465	4.11	0.76	150	4.45	0.25	5.384	0.001**
Democratic	465	4.00	0.84	150	4.47	0.33	6.574	0.001**
Laissez Faire Leadership	465	4.03	0.81	150	4.48	0.30	6.622	0.001**
Coaching Leadership	465	4.03	0.86	150	4.50	0.38	6.548	0.001**
Charismatic Leadership	465	3.94	0.85	150	4.50	0.36	7.816	0.001**
Ethical Leadership	465	4.03	0.86	150	4.58	0.32	7.734	0.001**
Servant Leadership	465	3.93	0.88	150	4.57	0.34	8.642	0.001**
Visionary Leadership	465	4.05	0.84	150	4.52	0.35	6.649	0.001**
Benevolent Leadership	465	3.86	0.89	150	4.55	0.34	9.253	0.001**
Autocratic Leadership	465	2.88	1.01	150	2.22	0.57	7.715	0.001**
Affiliative Leadership	465	3.98	0.88	150	4.71	0.30	9.883	0.001**

Table 5 has presented the output of the t-test, which is applied to test if there is a difference in the perception of the employees and the leaders, regarding the variables of leadership style such as transformational, democratic, laissez faire leadership, coaching leadership, charismatic leadership, ethical leadership, servant leadership, visionary leadership, benevolent leadership, autocratic leadership, affiliative leadership. As shown by the figures of the above table, the p-value for all the variables are came out to be highly significant, i.e. less than 0.05, hence the **hypothesis H1 stands accepted** and can conclude that there exist a statistical significant difference in the perception regarding the leadership style of the employees and the leaders.

Figure 1 has shown the perception of the employees and the perception of leaders with regard to the leadership styles used in the selected IT companies.

Above figure 1 has   shown that both the employees and the leaders have different perception towards various leadership styles used in the selected IT companies. In all the cases except autocratic leadership mean value of employees is more than leaders. This signifies that employees are ready to adopt any leadership style other than the autocratic leadership style.
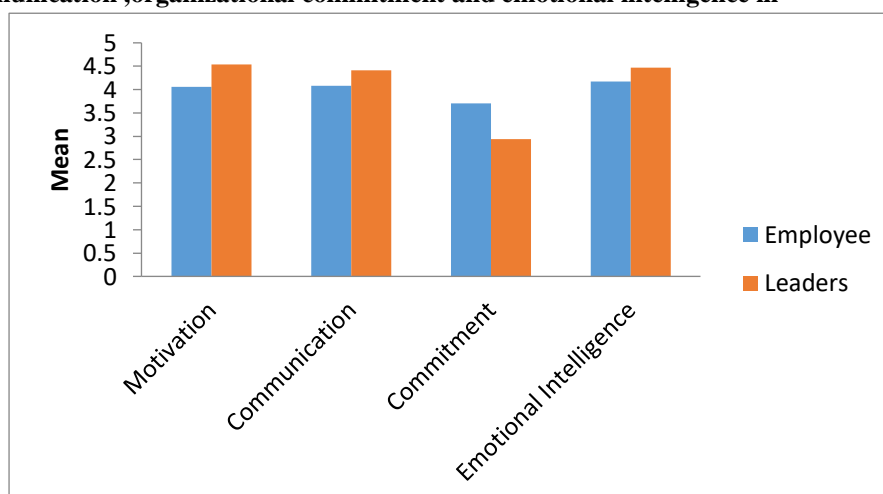
H2: There exists statistical significant difference in perception of employees' and leaders with regard to Motivation, communication, organizational commitment and Emotional Intelligence.

Table 6 :Perception of leaders and employees' with regard to motivation, commitment, communication and emotional intelligence

	Group						t-value	p-value
	Employee			Leaders				
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Motivation	465	4.06	0.79	150	4.54	0.58	6.792	0.001**
Communication	465	4.08	0.76	150	4.41	0.50	4.936	0.001**
Commitment	465	3.70	0.91	150	2.94	0.37	10.075	0.001**
Emotional Intelligence	465	4.17	0.59	150	4.47	0.22	6.214	0.001**

The   table 6 has presented   the output of the t-test, which is applied to test if there is a difference in the perception of the employees and the leaders, regarding motivation, communication, commitment and emotional intelligence. As shown by the figures of the above Table, the p-value for all the variables, are came out to be less than 0.05. i.e. significant, hence the **hypothesis H2 stands accepted**, and can conclude that there is a highly significant difference in the perception of the employees and the leaders, regarding motivation, communication, commitment and emotional intelligence.

Figure 2: Perception of employees and the perception of leaders with regard to motivation ,communication ,organizational commitment and emotional intelligence in

Above figure 2 has shown that in all the four skill sets i.e. Motivation ,Communication ,Organizational Commitment and Emotional Intelligence there is a significant difference in the perception of both employees and leaders.The   employees are more favourable towards   commitment while leaders are favorable towards motivation, communication and emotional intelligence

Findings and Suggestions

Independent t-test was applied to find out the difference between the mean scores of perception of leaders and employees regarding the leadership styles.The mean value of employees was higher in case of all leadership styles except autocratic style ,p- value came out to be significant in case of all leadership styles so hypothesis **H1 got accepted which depicted that there exists difference between perception of employees and leader with regard to leadership styles**.Generally managers /leaders considered their style to be more transforming, affiliative, charismatic , democratic ,laissez faire , visionary ,ethical than those of their employees whereas employees perceived the style used by the leaders as more of autocratic one than the rest of the styles . It was because of the disconnection between the two. The solution invariably starts with the communication .

It is suggested that the leaders should lay emphasis on the two way communication within the teams and the employees should be given an opportunity to speak. They should be encouraged to be hands on and engaged with brainstorming to provide solution for the various problems faced by teams. Secondly, the leaders should build a culture of collaboration so that they could consider every employee as team member and be treated on an individual basis. It is the duty of a leader to keep communication open and work transparently for this leader has to take feedback from the employees so that he can improve upon his own practices and thus the differences between the leaders and employees can be minimized.A leader should use five-and-dime-rule which says everyone within 5 feet of work surface deserves greetings and everyone within 10 feet deserves recognition,it is possible that just by application of this simple rule will certainly make the results non significant in future surveys.

Independent t-test has been applied to find out difference between the mean scores of perception of leaders and employees regarding the four mediators (communication,emotional intelligence, organizational commitment and motivation). Employees are more favourable towards commitment while leaders are favorable towards motivation, communication and emotional intelligence but the p- value came out to be significant in case of mediators so hypothesis H2 got accepted which depicted that there exists difference between perception of employees and leader with regard to all four variables motivation,communication ,emotional intelligence and organizational commitment.

It is suggested that positive culture would help to build loyalty towards the company as majority of the employees report that their happiness level affected commitment level which further affects their performance in organization. Highly committed employees will have high productivity levels.Secondly,In addition to the monetary benefits employees get motivated by various other tactics such as wellness programs that could improve their physical and mental health , mentoring initiatives and most important the word 'flexibility' to be included in HR policies of companies.It would give immense satisfaction to employees and they work high heartedly in organization to achieve the goals.

To curb down the difference in the perception of leaders and employees it is suggested that leaders should develop their own perceptual skills like high level self-awareness ,empathetic listening skills,becoming aware about stereotypes.Further, leaders must understand how their actions and decisions impact employee perception in the organization.Effective leaders are transparent,open to feedback and committed in creating positive work culture.

For improving the performance levels of employees a leader should provide them with the best leadership.Direction should be provided to them from start to last, it would set the tone for employees' and their attitude towards work.Secondly, working on employee development.Employees feel their jobs to be stagnant and they would have little opportunity for advancement and improvement.This would certainly make them feel that they have ample opportunities for future within the same organization.They should be provided with training sessions so as to bring in more focus and enthusiasm towards work.

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