

Profiling Leadership Effectiveness among The Indian Army Personnel

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ABSTRACT

The present research aims to examine leadership effectiveness among Indian Army personnel posted in Gujarat, using a multidimensional framework. A descriptive research design was employed. A purposive sampling method was used here for sampling. The sample consisted of 240 personnel from the Indian Army posted in Gujarat. Leadership Effectiveness was assessed using the Leadership Effectiveness Scale (LES–DP) developed by Upinder Dhar and Sanjyot Pethe (2001), which measures eleven dimensions of leadership effectiveness. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation. The result revealed a high overall leadership effectiveness score along multiple dimensions, indicating that the personnel possessed strong leadership ability.

Keywords: *Indian Army personnel, Leadership Effectiveness*

The Indian Army stands as a pillar of our country. Its strength lies in the unwavering discipline, consistency, courage, and commitment demonstrated by its personnel. Leadership is one of the most significant elements of personnel as it guides and motivates soldiers in accomplishing common goals. Effective leadership helps Army personnel stay motivated, cohesive, and resilient, especially in tough operational conditions, making it one of the most significant factors in military operations.

Leadership effectiveness is an essential component of organizational success, particularly within institutions where discipline, commitment, and performance under pressure are required. Military leadership greatly differs from leadership in civilian organizations because of the distinct nature of responsibilities involved. Army leaders must make timely decisions, handle human feelings, promote teamwork, and encourage subordinates while adhering to a rigorous hierarchical system. Their effectiveness is demonstrated not only in operational achievement but also in the psychological resilience, discipline, and confidence of the soldiers under their command.

The current study adopts an exploratory approach to investigate leadership effectiveness among Indian Army personnel across a range of behavioral characteristics. The findings are likely to contribute to academic knowledge of military leadership while also providing

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practical insights for leadership development, training, and selection processes within the defense services.

What is Leadership?

A typical definition of leadership is the ability to influence, direct, or assist others in achieving a common goal. Leadership involves making thoughtful decisions, communicating effectively, solving problems, and motivating people to stay focused and committed. Everyone who encourages others, leads by example, or supports the development of a group can be regarded as a leader in everyday circumstances. This skill shows how an individual can influence a group of people.

According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, “leadership is a process in which influence is exercised among persons in a reciprocal, transactional, or transformational way; that is, leadership tends to be reciprocal (leaders influence followers, but followers also influence leaders), transactional (exchange-based) or transformational (involving change and development).”

“The activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives.”

- **George R. Terry**

“Leadership is the quality of behaviour of the individual whereby they guide people in their activities in organized work.”

- **Chester I. Bernard**

According to Psychology, leadership can be described as a social influence process in which an individual molds the attitudes, behaviors, and output of others. Psychology highlights how personality traits, including confidence, empathy, honesty, and emotional stability, influence leadership. Leadership also includes cognitive abilities such as making decisions, solving problems, and comprehending group dynamics.

Leadership encompasses a wide range of theories and styles. Trait theory, leadership is built on specific inherent or learned personal characteristics. This theory states that certain characteristics, such as intelligence, confidence, honesty, emotional stability, and social skills, are characteristics of effective leaders. Behavioral theory focuses on what leaders do rather than who they are. Behavioral theory gives three types of leadership:

1. Autocratic leadership
2. Democratic leadership
3. Laissez-faire leadership

Effective leadership is contingent upon the situations and the demands of followers, according to the situational theory of leadership. This notion holds that no one leadership style works in every situation. Depending on variables including work complexity, follower maturity, and environmental demands, leaders must modify their conduct. Another theory, the contingency theory of leadership, a leader's effectiveness is determined by how well their style matches the circumstances. This theory categorizes leaders as task-oriented or relationship-oriented, and it claims that each style is effective under certain situations. This type of leadership theory gives insight into a leader's work and leadership style.

Leadership among the Civilian and Army Personnel

Leadership among civilians typically emphasizes collaboration, connections with others, and flexibility. Civilian leaders frequently encourage open communication, teamwork, creativity,

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and engagement from all members. They aim to create a pleasant, inspiring atmosphere, foster trust, and support personal growth.

Military leadership is more regimented, disciplined, and mission-oriented. Military leadership involves making critical decisions, often in high-pressure situations with consequential risks. Effective military leaders ask the right questions and think strategically in making well-informed conclusions upon which they can act. Military leaders also build and motivate teams. This responsibility involves looking out for their welfare, developing individual talents, recognizing successes, to create a unified team confident to accomplish assigned missions.

What is Leadership Effectiveness?

Leadership effectiveness is defined as a leader's ability to successfully influence, guide, and motivate people to achieve desired outcomes while sustaining group trust, commitment, and performance. If you look at it from a psychological point of view, a leader's effectiveness is shown by how well they understand how people behave, deal with stress, communicate expectations, and find a balance between job demands and caring about people. An effective leader establishes clarity of purpose, inspires dedication, resolves problems, and maintains performance even under difficult circumstances.

Psychological research often defines “leadership effectiveness in terms of the leader’s ability to successfully exercise personal influence to achieve set goals and outcomes, including how well the leader influences followers’ behaviour and performance, fosters commitment, and helps the group reach its objectives.” Effectiveness is thus reflected in the impact a leader has on followers’ performance and the attainment of shared goals.

In the context of the Indian Army, leadership is crucial, as leaders are accountable not only for mission accomplishment but also for the lives, morale, and mental well-being of their personnel. Effective leadership in the Indian Army requires discipline, courage, integrity, and a strong sense of duty. Army officers must make quick and correct decisions in high-pressure, life-threatening situations, frequently with very little information. Their effectiveness is measured by their capacity to build trust, maintain unit cohesiveness, enforce discipline, and lead by personal example. Thus, leadership effectiveness in the Indian Army is closely tied to operational performance, soldier well-being, national security, and the preservation of core military values such as honor, loyalty, and selfless service.

Significance of the study

The present research is significant because it conducts an empirical investigation of leadership effectiveness among Indian Army personnel, an area where leadership is critical to operational success, troop morale, and organizational stability. In military circumstances typified by unpredictability, high stress, and life-threatening events, leadership effectiveness has a direct impact on decision-making quality, discipline, emotional resilience, and mission success. Understanding leadership effectiveness in such a setting, therefore, becomes important not only for academic research but also for national defense preparation.

This study contributes to military psychology by taking a holistic approach to leadership effectiveness, which includes interpersonal skills, analytical ability, emotional balance, motivation, and adaptability. Unlike studies that focus on certain leadership traits or styles, the current study incorporates several leadership skills, providing a comprehensive picture of

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leadership behavior in the Indian Army. This approach is especially important in India, where empirical research on leadership effectiveness in defense forces is sparse.

The findings of this study also relate to and expand on studies conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which has continuously emphasised the relevance of human factors, leadership competency, and psychological resilience in military effectiveness. DRDO research in combat psychology, stress management, and human performance optimization shows that effective leadership is critical for preserving operational efficiency and soldier well-being in severe settings (DRDO, 2016; 2020). By identifying critical leadership qualities linked with effectiveness, the current study contributes to DRDO's goal of improving human resource capabilities through scientifically based leadership development.

Additionally, the result is corroborated by previous research that found that emotional intelligence and personality traits have a major impact on leadership performance in military situations. Sahu and Ramanujam (2019) found that emotionally intelligent officers lead more effectively, whereas Ammineedu (2009) emphasized the importance of emotional stability and conscientiousness in successful military leadership. The current data support these conclusions by indicating excellent leadership effectiveness in emotional, behavioral, and cognitive domains among Indian Army personnel.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine leadership effectiveness among Indian Army personnel. Descriptive statistics have been used as the primary approach of data analysis to systematically summarize and analyze the acquired information. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to describe the overall trends, patterns, and distribution of leadership effectiveness ratings among participants.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 240 Indian Army personnel posted in Gujarat.

Research Tool:

- **Leadership Effectiveness Scale:** The Leadership Effectiveness Scale (LES–DP), developed by Upinder Dhar and Sanjyot Pethe (2001), is a psychometric instrument designed to assess leadership effectiveness across eleven dimensions. The scale comprises 41 items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale, measuring aspects such as interpersonal skills, decision-making, and adaptability. Standardized on a sample of 395 executives, the LES–DP has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, making it a valuable tool for evaluating leadership competencies in organizational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Summary of Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) for Leadership Effectiveness and its components

Leadership Effectiveness and its components	Mean	SD
Interpersonal Skills	33.26	4.167
Analytical Skills	25.15	3.307
Ability to Monitor	20.65	2.966
Ability to Organize	16.48	2.387
Ability to Tactful	12.25	2.039
Ability to Luspire	20.53	3.153
Ability to Motivate	13.06	1.608
Positive Approach	12.53	1.877
Ability to Solve Problems	8.39	1.205
Knowledgeable	3.98	.841
Accommodative	4.10	.820
Leadership Total	170.38	20.854

The above results depicted in the table no. 1 on the measure of overall Leadership Effectiveness denote a higher mean value of 170.38 and SD=20.854. These values indicate that the respondents (N=240) have higher leadership effectiveness, as the obtained overall score falls above the midrange value. The Leadership Effectiveness Scale (LES) encompasses eleven subscales, namely, Interpersonal skills (M=33.26, SD=4.167), Analytical skills (M=25.15, SD=3.307), Ability to monitor (M=20.65, SD=2.966), Ability to organize (M=16.48, SD=2.387), Ability to Tactful (M=12.25, SD=2.039), Ability to Luspire (M=20.53, SD=3.153), Ability to Motivate (M=13.06, SD=1.608), Positive Approach (M=12.53, SD=1.877), Ability to Solve Problems (M=8.39, SD=1.205), Knowledgeable (M=3.98, SD=0.841), Accommodative (M=4.10, SD=0.820). While analysing the individual sub-scales of Leadership Effectiveness, it was observed that each sub-scale has an above midrange value for the sample. This indicates that high leadership effectiveness is prevalent among the sample. The SD values for the overall Leadership Effectiveness score reveal that the scores are tightly clustered around the mean. Additionally, the low standard deviation values for the sub-scales indicate that the sample exhibits limited variability in their responses to the respective items within the sub-scales.

The present study examined leadership effectiveness among Indian Army personnel using a multidimensional Leadership Effectiveness Scale. Leadership Effectiveness is understood as the ability of a leader to achieve their goals, influence a group of people, and earn their trust. The result shows strong analytical skills, problem-solving skills, and Interpersonal skills in personnel. These skills are essential for military leaders who must evaluate complex situations, make quick decisions, and adjust strategies in dynamic environments. Ability to monitor and organise also revealed a high score; these indicate that Army leaders have expertise in resource management, training, planning, and supervision—all of which are critical for successful operations.

Motivational abilities were found to be significantly high, demonstrating that leaders can encourage and motivate their followers to accomplish organizational goals. The ability to motivate also play crucial role in maintaining performance, dedication, and resilience, particularly on challenging duties. Emotional balance, adaptability, and openness are essential competencies for effectively managing diverse personnel and coping with stressful

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situations. These qualities are reflected in a positive approach and an accommodative nature, which enable leaders to respond constructively to challenges and maintain harmonious working relationships.

As per observation, Army personnel have a good level of discipline, consistency, quick decision-making, passion, and courage. All these factors reflect in the personnel's personality, and these personality traits reflect good leadership. Research by Ammineedu (2009) provides additional empirical support for the present results by emphasizing the importance of personality factors on leadership effectiveness among Indian Army officers. Ammineedu's observation that conscientiousness and emotional stability significantly contribute to effective leadership is consistent with the present study's elevated mean scores in analytical skills, problem-solving ability, organization, and monitoring. Lower effectiveness is associated with neuroticism.

Findings indicate a higher overall leadership effectiveness score, along with elevated mean values across interpersonal skills, motivation, problem-solving ability, positive approach, and emotional regulation dimensions, which are strongly related to Emotional Intelligence. These dimensions are strongly supported by earlier research conducted in military contexts by Sahu and Ramanujam. Sahu and Ramanujam (2019) demonstrated that senior officers possessing higher levels of emotional intelligence (EI) exhibited greater effectiveness in leading troops and attaining organizational goals. Overall, the results demonstrate that Indian Army personnel have strong leadership effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The present study aim examined leadership effectiveness among Indian Army personnel. Finding demonstrates that Army personnel have a high level of leadership effectiveness across multiple dimensions. Interpersonal skills, analytical skills, ability to monitor, ability to organize, motivation, and emotional balance are identified as important contributors to effective leadership. These findings emphasize the necessity of developing leadership skills that encourage decision-making, adaptability, and team cohesion in demanding military contexts. Overall, the study underlines that effective leadership remains an important factor in establishing organizational excellence within the Indian Army.

Limitations of Research

1. There have been geographical limitations in this research. The sample was collected only from Army personnel posted in Gujarat, which may not reflect the experiences and psychological states of personnel posted in other regions.
2. This study only applies to male personnel; the study's application to the entire armed services is restricted, because the number of women personnel is also increasing in the Indian Army.
3. A descriptive research design was employed, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between leadership effectiveness and other psychological or organizational variables.

Implementation of Research:

1. The findings of this research can be used to improve leadership training programs in the Indian Army.
2. The results can help trainers understand which leadership skills need more focus, such as communication, motivation, and emotional control.

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3. The study can help in designing workshops and training sessions to develop effective leadership behavior.
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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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