

# **PATERNALISTIC LEADERSHIP IN A DISTINCTIVE MARITIME WORK ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY AMONG MARITIME STUDENTS**

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## **LEADERSHIP IN MARITIME WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Effective leadership is an important part of a distinct maritime work environment. An appropriate and effective leadership style will not only improve job satisfaction, commitment, dedication and motivation of seafarers; but will also have the impact of creating a positive safety culture onboard. Although traditionally leadership training had been offered in many maritime education institutions, after the introduction of the STCW 2010 amendments, leadership training has become a compulsory and essential part of Maritime Education and Training (MET). According to STCW Code, demonstration of “effective leadership behaviours” is required as criteria for evaluating competence. No specific leadership behaviours or style is imposed with the code. This approach is concordant with the situational leadership theory where leaders adapt his/her leadership style according to goal(s) that require followers commitment and performance under varying circumstances.

Today one of the primary traits that make a good effective leader is his/her ability to appraise and comprehend the constantly changing but distinct nature of a maritime work environment and to adapt their leadership style this diverse environment. Leaders should also have knowledge and intercultural competence as it concerns different types of leadership styles appropriate for the given environment.

### **Paternalistic Leadership**

Paternalistic leadership is a father-like leadership style [1] and combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence [2]. Although paternalistic leadership originated from traditional Chinese culture [3] and also it is a prevalent cultural characteristic of traditional eastern societies such as China, Japan, India, and Korea [4], recent results suggest paternalistic leadership may generalize across cultures [5].

Formal and structured roles and duties, high turn over rates among crew, high level of stress, demanding and high risk work, multinational and multicultural crew composition, limited social interaction and social isolation makes the maritime work environment distinctive. In this distinctive work environment positive paternalistic leadership may be an option for ship captains as an effective leadership style and help them to improve their intercultural competence and awareness.

Paternalistic leadership is one of several leadership styles that a leader can keep in their managerial tool box to be used when called for in the appropriate work environment. One of the many positive effects it shares with other managerial tools is that it can create a safety culture that is an important element

for developing an environment in which individuals are motivated to report errors and incidents that improve situational awareness to break error chains. It also gives consideration to cultural factors such as power distance that influence how people of different backgrounds interpret and respond to people according to a perceived hierarchy. It can be the right tool to getting the job of having diverse crews work together more effectively done.

A study has been performed in order to determine the perceptions of maritime students about paternalistic leadership determinants. This study was done by utilizing a survey tool developed by Aycan [6] that was applied to the cadets at the Maine Maritime Academy. The study group consisted of students majoring in studies of Marine Operations and Engineering and gave further consideration to, amongst other things, class year standing, and gender. This study will contribute to the leadership literature by analyzing levels of acceptance of the paternalistic leadership maritime education and training domain.

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