

Leadership and its Influence in Organizations – A Review of Intellections

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Abstract

The objective of writing this paper is to understand theories and concept that how should a leadership be working, and influence the personnel to reach out a common cause. Northouse (2004) delivered four very common themes i.e. leadership is a process, it involves influence, it occurs in group context and involves goal attainment. Similarly wisdom from many eminent scholars has been explored to comprehend that how a leader should perform in the organization to achieve the goals efficiently and effectively. One very important and innovative responsibility has been extended towards the leaders in organizations i.e. he has to convert himself from Boss to COGAL which stands for “Creators of Growth and Learning” through adopting a mechanism of learning of skills, competencies and good behaviors, leaders can be developed in the organizations who subsequently can really make the difference. This responsibility towards getting high degree of performance lies not only with the overall administration but as well on each of the manager in the unit.

Key Words: Influence, Wisdom, Competencies, COGAL, Performance and Mechanism.

1. Introduction

Dran (2004) have defined Leadership in the words “The ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals”. He further elaborated that a leader is an earned title who:

- a. Has professional conviction
- b. Motivates
- c. Sets own goals
- d. Has personal commitment and enthusiasm
- e. Accepts goals
- f. Gives impetus
- g. Measures and controls
- h. Maintains momentum

White (2005) explained that our instinctive definition of Leadership can be summarized by one word that is common to all culture languages. The word is BOSS! According to the concise Oxford Dictionary, Boss means ‘to be domineering towards others. He further elaborates that leader is a person who rules or guides others. He is in opinion that concept of Boss or Leader can be changed to COGAL, as it is a primary function of leaders which stands for “Creators of Growth and Learning” in them and in those for whom they are responsible. Most of the managers and organizations collapse because they are backward in understanding this beautiful concept of growth and learning environment.

Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (1999), recommended leadership rightly in the words of Napoleon as “Men are nothing; it is the man who is everything. It was not the Roman army that conquered Gaul, but Caesar; It was not the Carthaginian army that made Rome tremble in her gates, but Hannibal; it was not the Macedonian army that reached the Indus, but Alexander.” Here it is well clear that strength of army is nothing but the abilities of the commander matter. So leadership is paramount for every moment, action and adventure.

Hersey and Blanchard (1988) recorded while defining leadership in the words of George R. Terry “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives”. So here means to use full potential by mobilizing the men in order to achieve common goal.

Tannenbaum, Weschler and Mussarik (1961) through conceptualization of the ‘leadership’ in very beautiful and well articulated fashion said that “Interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of the specialized goal or goals can be called as leadership”.

According to House (1976), leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members. No matter how someone defines leadership, it typically involves an element of vision. A vision provides right direction to the influence process. A leader (or group of leaders) may have one or more visions towards future to help them to fetch a group towards this goal successfully.

Beach (1985) elaborated that the effective leadership gets others (followers) to act. He or she may impel them to action by any numerous devices like Precaution, influence, power, threat of force and appeal. Here leadership is such a flexible instrument that can utilize any of available wisdom tools.

Jaques and Clement (1997) has narrated upon that Leadership is that process in which one person sets the purpose or direction for one or more other persons. Then he gets them to move along, together with him or her and with right direction with full commitment and competence.

Truman (1950) says that his definition of a leader . . . is a man who can persuade people to do what they don't want to do, or do what they're too lazy to do, and like it.

Tse Lao and Te Ching Tao explained that the superior leader gets things done with very little motion. He imparts instruction not through many words but through a few deeds. He keeps informed about everything but interferes hardly at all. He is only a catalyst, and though things would not get done well if he weren't there, when they succeed he takes no credit. And because he takes no credit, credit never leaves him.

Chester said that leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behavior of a subordinate/group and persuade them to follow a particular course of action.

Bennis (1988) narrates for leadership that the first job of a leader is to define a vision for the organization.... And Leadership should be of the capacity to translate vision into reality. So a leader or manager sets the target (vision) and then explores the means and ways (leadership) to reach that target.

Johannson defined leadership as: “managers have subordinates—leaders have followers.” Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (1999) also say that leadership is the process of influencing an organized group towards accomplishing its goals.

Sethi (1997) says that the leadership is the application of techniques and principles which result in discipline, motivation, increased productivity and achievement of corporate objectives.

2. Concept of Leadership

Rashid (1989) has written that Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher of 4th century B.C. who tutored one of the greatest military leaders of the world, Alexander the Great, says a good leader must have: **ETHOS, PATHOS** and **LOGOS**.

“Ethos” is his moral character, the source of his ability to persuade, to inspire. “Pathos” is his ability to touch feelings, to move people emotionally. “Logos” is his ability to give solid reasons for his actions to move people intellectually.

Despite recognition of the importance of leadership, however, there remains a certain mystery as to what leadership actually is or how to define and consume it. In a review of leadership research, Stogdill (1974) concluded that there are “almost as many definitions of leaderships as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” – and that was 30 years ago.

At the heart of the problem of defining and understanding leadership lie two fundamental difficulties. Firstly, like nations such as ‘love’, ‘freedom’ and ‘happiness’, leadership is a complex construct open to subjective interpretation. What leadership is everyone has their own intuitive understanding of it, based on a mixture of experience and learning, which is difficult to capture in a succinct definition Secondly, the way in which leadership is defined and understood is strongly influenced by one’s theoretical stance. There are some who

perceive leadership as the consequence of a set of characteristics or traits possessed by 'leaders' whilst other view leadership as a social process which emerges from group interactions and relationships. Such divergent views will always result in a difference of opinion about the nature and perception of leadership.

"Leadership appears to be like power," an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie, 1955 cited in Grint, 2004).

Grint (2004) identifies four problems that make consensus on a common concept and definition of leadership highly unlikely. (I) Firstly, there is the 'process' problem – a lack of agreement on whether leadership is derived from the personal qualities (i.e. traits) of the leader or whether a leader induces followership through what she does (i.e. a social process). (II). Secondly, there is the 'position' problem – is the leader in charge (i.e. with formally allocated authority) or in front (i.e. with informal influence)? (III). A third problem is one of 'philosophy' – does the leader exert an intentional, causal influence on the behavior of followers or are their apparent actions determined by context and situation or even attributed retrospectively? (IV). A fourth difficulty is one of 'purity' – is leadership embodied in individuals or groups and it a purely human phenomenon?

"Scholars should understand that leadership is not a moral concept. Leaders are like the rest of us; trustworthy and deceitful, cowardly and brave, greedy and generous. To assume that all leaders are good people is to be willfully blind to the reality of the human condition, and it severely limits our scope for becoming more effective at leadership." (Kellerman, 2004).

In a recent review of leadership theory, Northouse (2004) highlighted four common themes to be conceived: (1) leadership is a process; (2) leadership involves influence; (3) leadership occurs in a group context; and (4) leadership involves goal attainment. He thus defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal". A more collective concept of leadership arises out of a review by Yuki (2002): "Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over other people (or groups) to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization".

In short, leadership is a complex phenomenon that touches on many other important personal, social and organizational processes. It depends on a process of influence, whereby people are inspired to work towards group goals, not through coercion, but through personal motivation.

"Leadership is like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but he is nowhere to be seen." (Bennis and Nanus, 1985).

Burns (1978) explained that a study of the definition of the word leadership revealed 130 definitions. However, several generally-accepted variations on the definition appear in the management and leadership, namely:

a. Leadership is causative. True Burnsian leadership affects the motives of individuals and groups of peoples and alters the course of the organizational history.

b. *Leadership is collective.* James Burns regards the notion of one-person leadership as “a contradiction in terms”, because both leaders and followers must exist.

c. *Transforming leadership is elevating.* Engagement between leaders and followers takes place on a moral – but not a moralistic – plane, as both leaders and followers rise to live more principled lives.

d. *Leadership is morally purposeful.* Burns sees leadership as goal-oriented with leaders and followers pointing the way to some future state of the organization with plans about how these goals might be met.

e. *Leadership is dissention.* Burns claims that leadership co-exists with dissent. Indeed, much of the growth of any organization centers on the management/leadership of dissent-except in terms of war.

Heifetz (1994) described the difference between a descriptive view and a prescriptive view of leadership. A descriptive view describes leadership and how it occurs, and a prescriptive view suggests how it should occur. He pointed out that people fail to adapt to new and unsettling situations through six avoidance mechanisms:

- a. Denying that a problem exists
- b. Blaming others.
- c. Finding a distracting issue.
- d. Finding scapegoats (to the extent that this differs from blaming)
- e. Jumping to conclusions
- f. Externalizing the enemy

In a prescriptive view, the leader would squarely face the problem and avoid the six realities and deal with the issues searching solutions where none previously existed. Using the 1950’s television character, the Lone Ranger as an example, we see the Ranger in a weekly episode moving from frontier town to frontier town, discovering problems wherever he goes, fixing the problems and riding off into the sunset. In this metaphor, the Ranger fixes the symptom, but not the problem. A Lone ranger non-leader would catch fish to feed the poor while a true leader would teach the poor how to catch fish and would motivate them to do so. The true leader finds a way to help the community engage the problem and collectively find a solution.

Terry (1960) have defined leadership as: “the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives”. If we define leadership simply as “influenced by others to accept (willingly or unwillingly) some purpose”, then leadership and followership emerge as two sides of the same coin. In this scenario, leadership whether successful or not – has not occurred until at least one follower joins in. likewise, no followership exists without someone of something (not necessarily a leader) to follow. However in this latter case a “leader need not exercise deliberate or even conscious leadership that is followers can follow someone who is not trying to lead. Some see “unconscious leadership” as a dubious concept, however, many, using a deterrent detention of leadership, would claim that it does not classify as leadership at all simply because no deliberate intention to lead exists. Unconscious “leading by example” (as the phrase has it) may nevertheless exemplify such “leadership”.

3. How Leadership Affects an Organization's Effectiveness?

This assumption is well perceived that it is the leadership of leaders that affects organizational performance. Leaders, through their actions and personal influence bring about change. People who control organizations are the highest level executives – make the same assumption. A frequent antidote to major organizational problems is to replace the leader, in the hope that the newly appointed leader will reverse performance problems, for example; ‘the Leader in Action.’ Paul Anderson was brought in at a time when BHP was not doing well and with a range of will-thought-out strategies brought about effective change.

3.1 Organizational Effectiveness

Considering the determinants of organizational effectiveness; Perhaps the best known treatment of the subject is provided by Katz and Kahan (1978). After examining that how complicated the subject is Katz and Kahn while defining organizational effectiveness ideographically said: that efficiency of organization is that how it converts its resource inputs into outputs. This concept is internally consistent, but ignores the fact that organizations are in competition with one another. However, organizational effectiveness is outcome of leadership when leadership is seen as a collective phenomenon, a resource for the performance and survival of a collectivity. Organizational effectiveness can be further conceptualized in terms of five components:

a. Talented personnel, Other things being equal, a more talented team will outperform a less talented team; talented personnel are identified by good selection methods, and recruited by good leadership.

b. Motivated personnel, people who are willing to perform to their limits of their ability. Other things being equal, a motivated team will outperform a demoralized team. The level of motivation in a team or organization is directly related to the performance of management (Harter et. al. 2002).

c. A talented management team, where talent is defined in terms of the domain model and incompetence is defined in terms of the taxonomy.

d. An effective strategy for outperforming the competition, Here is where many organizations have problems. An effective trend is that the business managers do not enjoy research, otherwise they would be in the research business and people who enjoy research don't talk frequently with business managers. As a result, business strategy is often developed on an adhoc basis by top management team.

e. A set of monitoring systems, that will allow senior leadership to keep track of the talent level of the staff, the motivational level of the staff, the performance of the management group, and the effectiveness of the business strategy.

3.2. Leadership Does Make a Difference

The perception, that leaders actually influence organizational morale and performance, is so plausible, that there is very little research or opinion that even deals with this issue. Let us look at a sampling of the research and opinion that exists (Bass and Avolio 1990; 1995).

a. Twenty one years ago Psychoanalyst Michael Maccoby conducted in-depth interviews with business leaders. He concluded that organizations required a higher level of leadership than ever before to prosper and survive. Among these challenges Maccoby saw confronting organizations were increasing competition in technological advances under changing government regulations and changing worker attitudes. These observations are relevant because they are valid till today.

b. Two researchers examined the evolution of a retail time over a sixty years period. They found that a senior executive could successfully reorient the firm by changing organizational structures and strategies. Likewise under the leadership of Roger Corbett retailer Woolworths has reorganized its marketing and buying functions. It has upgraded its supply chain and sold off non core assets in order to focus on its food outlets. This strategy has revitalized the company and increased its share value.

c. A study of executive succession corroborated these results from studies of retailing firms. A change in executive personnel can account for up to 45 percent of an organization's performance. For example within a year after a new CEO is appointed. Profits might increase 45 per cent. In another firm profit might plunge by the same amount in the year following an executive succession.

d. Another study compared selected factors relating to senior managers in better-performing minicomputer firms and those in poorer-performing firms. The senior management in the more successful firms had previous experience in the electronics industry. In fact, the founder of the firm was likely to be the chief executive officer. The study implies that knowledge of the business does make a difference in leadership effectiveness.

In addition to tangible evidence that leadership makes a difference the perception of these differences is also meaningful. An understanding of these perceptions derives from attribution theory, the process of attributing causality to events. Yukl (1994) explains that organizations are complex social systems of patterned interactions among people. In their efforts to understand (and simplify) organizational events, people interpret these events in simple human terms.

One especially strong and prevalent explanation of organizational events is to attribute causality to leaders. They are viewed as heroes and heroines who determine the facts of their organizations. The extraordinary successes of Virgin Blue is thus attributed to Richard Brason, its flamboyant chief executive Brason Initiated no-frills, low-cost air service and build Virgin Blue into a highly successful airline. If we accept the logic of attribution theory in a positive way, most organizational successes are attributed to heroic leaders.

3.3. Determining what makes “Effective Leadership”?

While comparing various leadership styles in many cultures, academic studies have examined the patterns in which leadership emerges and then fades, other ways in which it maintains its effectiveness, sometimes by natural succession as per defined rules and sometimes imposing brute force (Covey, 2003).

The simplest way to measure the effectiveness of leadership involves evaluating the size of the subordinate that the leader can muster. By this standard Adolph Hitler became a very effective leader for a period - even if through coercive techniques and delusional promises. However, this approach may measure power rather than leadership. To measure leadership more specifically one may assess the extent of influence on the followers that is the amount of leading. Within an organizational context this means financially valuing productivity. Effective leaders generate greater productivity, lesser costs, and more opportunities than ineffective manager. Effective leaders create results, attain goal, realize vision and other objectives more swiftly and with better quality than ineffective leaders.

Burns (1996) introduced a normative element an effective Burnsian leader will unite followers in a shared vision that will improve an organization and society at large. Burns calls leadership that delivers “true” trust, integrity and value transformational leadership. He distinguishes such leadership from “more” transactional leadership that builds power by doing whatever will get more followers. But problems arise in quantifying the transformational quality of leadership – evaluation of the quality seems more difficult to quantify than merely counting the followers that the straw man of transactional leadership James Mac Gregor Burns has set as a primary standard for effectiveness. Thus transformational leadership requires an evaluation of quality, independent of the market demand that exhibits in the number of followers.

Current assessments of transactional and transformational leadership commonly make use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Bass and Avolio (1990; and revised in 1995). It assesses five dimensions of transformational leadership:

1. intellectual stimulation
2. inspirational motivation
3. individualized consideration
4. idealized influence behaviors
5. idealized influence attributions

The three dimensions of transactional leadership measured by the MLQ cover:

1. management by exception (passive)
2. management by exception (active)
3. contingent reward

The functional leadership model conceives leadership as a set of behaviors that helps a group reach their goal, perform a task or perform their function. In this model, effective leaders encourage functional behaviors and discourage dysfunctional ones.

In the path goal model of leadership developed jointly by Martin Evans and Robert House and based on the “Expectancy theory of Motivation” a leader has the function of clearing the path toward the goal(s) of the group by meeting the needs of followers.

Some commentators use the metaphor of an orchestral conductor to describe the quality of the leadership process. An effective leader resembles an orchestra conductor in some ways. He/she has to somehow get a group of potentially talented and diverse people many of whom have strong personalities – to work together toward a common output will the conductor harness and blend all the gifts his or her players possess? Will the players accept the degree of creative expression they have? Will the audience enjoy the sound they make? The conductor may have a clear determining influence on all of these questions.

Bennis (1989) have explained the Characteristics of Leaders of Effective Groups in following lines:

- a. They provide direction and meaning to the people they are leading
- b. They generate trust
- c. They favor action and risk taking
- d. They are purveyors of hope

He further elaborated Traits Associated with Leadership Effectiveness as follows:

- a. Ability to enlist cooperation
- b. Cooperativeness
- c. Popularity and prestige
- d. Sociability (interpersonal skills)
- e. Social participation
- f. Tact, diplomacy
- g. Adaptability
- h. Alertness
- j. Creativity
- k. Personal integrity
- l. Self-confidence
- m. Emotional balance and control
- n. Independence (nonconformity)
- p. Judgment
- q. Decisiveness
- r. Knowledge
- s. Fluency of speech
- t. Abilities
- u. Personality
- v. Intelligence

Pitcher (1994) has challenged the bifurcation into leaders and managers. She used a factor analysis technique on data collected over 8 years, and concluded that three types of leaders exist, each with very different psychological profiles. She characterized one group as imaginative, inspiring, visionary, entrepreneurial, intuitive, daring, and emotional, and calls them “artists” in a second grouping she places “craftsman” as well balanced, steady, reasonable, sensible, predictable, and trustworthy. Finally she identifies “technocratic” as cerebral, detail-oriented, fastidious, uncompromising, and hard-headed. She speculates that no one profile offers a preferred leadership style.

She claims that if we want to build, we should find an “ARTIST LEADER”. If we want to solidify our position we should find “craftsman leader”; and if we have an ugly job that needs to get done (like downsizing), we should find a “technocratic leader”. Pitcher also observed that a balanced leader exhibiting all three sets of traits which occurs extremely rarely; she found none in her study.

4. Conclusion

Nowadays it is hard to rightly define what is leadership and who is the true leader. Every guru of the subject tries to provide definition in accordance with his situation and perception. But all the intellectuals are almost agreed that a leader is supposed to “Create Growth and Learning” and prove himself a great motivator.

Further while conceptualizing the role of leadership in organization it is well agreed that a leader should be competent enough to influence his people to strive willingly in order to attain group objectives. For this cause he has to lead by self example thus looking as an inspirational individual. Inspiration is really a charismatic ingredient that ensures the accomplishment of group goals by the people very willingly and with great motivation.

An organization is called as an efficient if it optimally can convert its resource input into output. However, organizational effectiveness solely depends upon, how much talented and motivated are its personnel and its talent management team. Business strategy be beautifully framed to challenge the competitions as well as its monitoring system should be very well working.

Sometimes question arises which is the effective leadership that can perform in real terms. Its answer is that the leader who can unite the people in shared vision delivering trust, integrity and value is really capable to improve an organization and society at large.

So it is well established that to command and control the intellectual capital (human beings) there is a need of more superior intellectual capital (leader), who can appropriately inspire and influence them. Thus it is the competent leadership that really makes the difference in the organization.

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