A Leader's philosophy and Style Will Determine How His Followers Respond To Him

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WILL RESPOND TO HIM

Introduction

Every thriving leader should know his or her personal leadership philosophy and style.

It is the bases on which his influence and motivational lies. Employee motivation is critical for

the execution of organizational goals and a leader's philosophy will determine how his

followers will respond to him. This Paper examines the value and impact of a leader's

philosophy and style of leadership on motivation of employees.

People look to someone or something to guide them, leaders capable of taking

responsibility for their position. According to Aubrey Malphurs, followers are most crucial to

any leadership event. If followers won't follow, it doesn't matter how gifted or competent

leaders are, there is no leadership. (Malphurs, 2003, p. 119) There is an innate desire for

followership, however, people aspire to follow strong-willed leaders, someone who is capable

of making sound decision. An in-charge type leader, one with acquired experience and

qualification to motivate, inspire and empower his or her subordinates for success in the

organization. It is therefore important that a leader approaches leadership with his unique sets

of belief and attitudes about the nature of people and work which invariably is the basis for

philosophy of leadership. (Northouse P., 2015, p. 83)

In understanding leadership philosophy, it is important to first understand that leadership

is the act of influencing others to work toward a goal (Bauer & Erdogan, 2009, p.285).

leadership is using one's platform at any level or position in life to make a positive and

meaningful, long-lasting change in an individual life, an organization or the society at large.

The writer believes that a leader cannot achieve the place of long-lasting change until he or she

makes the goals real to the followers. Without a leadership Philosophy and style of Leadership, a long-lasting change is not viable.

As different as their faces, so do leaders philosophies defer. According to Northouse, leaders form their personal philosophies base on the lens through which they view people, work, and the human nature. (Northouse, 2015, p. 83) It is that philosophy that carries with it the ability to encourage, and lead others to accomplish the vision and the organizational goals. It is the writer's belief that every leader has his or her unique way of communication, based on a variety of factors. These factors will include his or her personality, experience, educational qualifications and background, training techniques as well as the environment in which they find themselves. The followers also have their ways of perceiving, learning, and responding to different leaders. It, therefore, becomes the job of the leader to, first of all, establish his or her own philosophy of leadership. This brings up the question, what is a leader's philosophy?

According to Northouse, a leader's philosophy is what he or she believes in, his values and principles of management very dear to him. It is the way a leader motivates his followers to give out the best at work, a behavior that is responsible for his or her leadership style. Aspiring leaders must understand and articulate their philosophies before attempting to lead others. The leader would also need to have an understanding of how he or she perceives people and their attitudes to work as well as a set of well-established principles with which he or she can help the followers to create an effective team. According to Drucker, the quality of followers is also a factor. An organization is only as good as it's people. (Malphurs, 2003, p. 120)

To further explain how leadership philosophies are formed, Northouse says that, some leaders assume that people are good and will likely perform their work without any need to be monitored if given the chance. While others think that people are disposed to being lazy and

will not use their own initiatives to work but need to be prodded to perform their duties. In this theory, Douglas McGregor addresses the question, "Do you think people like to work, or do you think people find work unpleasant?" with extensive research in his book titled, "The human side of Enterprise, McGregor draws the conclusion that, "Managers need to understand their core assumptions about human nature and assess how these assumptions relate to their managerial practices." (Northouse, 2015, p. 88) He then proposes two general theories: Theory X and theory Y, to determine how managers view the motivation of workers and their attitudes towards work. Based on understanding of viewpoints on human behavior and the relationship of the viewpoints to their leadership styles. Theory X characterizes as people who dislike work, need to be directed and controlled, and want security without responsibility. On the other hand, people of theory Y like work, are self-motivated and accept and seek responsibility. The writer agrees with these findings on the innate nature of man, stating that people react differently to task and leadership. Some people love to work without persuasion while others just have to be persuaded to accomplish their task. This behavior is inherent in human beings. Everybody cannot function in the same way, otherwise, the workplace will be a boring environment. Some people are very easy to deal with and others not so much, but with understanding leaders, the vision and goals of an organization can be accomplished.

  While both positions mays be true, depending on how the manager perceives his or her followers, the writer suggests that when a leader takes his time to study the work environment as well as this follower, he or she is able to draw up an effective plan to motivate his subordinates to effectively perform their scheduled assignments without much persuasion. It is also the job of the leader to train followers to understand his or her philosophy and style of leadership, only then can a leader achieve the team collaboration require for their success and

maximum productivity. The writer is also marveled by the information discovered on the subject of personal philosophy is the basis for a leadership style. In addition, she is convinced that a leader's personal philosophy is inevitable to the leader-follower relationship and suggests that organizations who seek to move to the next level may do so, only with a self-effacing leader who, according to Jim Collins, displayed the fierce resolve to do whatever is needed to be done to make the company great, (Collins, 2001, p. 21) which may includes building a working relationship with subordinates depending on their various needs. The writer confesses that this topic has given her the opportunity to examine her leadership style within the organization she presently works for and has realized that in order to become a competent leader, she must make efforts to understand his executive managers philosophy and leadership skills and figure out how they can collaborate their philosophies and skills as competent managers, collectively as a team as well as individually to better manage their members. To through more light on this subject, McGregor reiterates that by exploring the major assumptions of the theories X and Y, leaders can develop a better understanding of their own perspectives or standpoint on human behavior as it relates to their personal styles of leadership be it Authoritarian, Democratic or Laissez-Faire. These theories are;

Theory X

This assumption presents a philosophy of leadership displayed by many leaders to some degree, who believe that the average person dislikes work and will avoid it if possible and that most people do not like work and only work for the check. 2. That people need to be directed and controlled, as people inherently do not like work, that leaders may have to create some ways to compensate for work that needs to be accomplished for the purpose of motivation. 3. That people want security, not work. People do not want to have to innovative. They do not

want to take responsibility for goal setting, rather, they prefer managers to set the goals while they execute the tasks without having to use their initiatives. (Northouse, 2015, pp. 84,85)

Theory Y

These present a different perspective from theory X. These assumptions can also be observed in many leaders today that 1. The average person does not inherently dislike work. Doing work is as natural as play. That work comes naturally to people and not as a burden, and that people seek opportunities to contribute to the welfare of others. 2. People will show responsibility and self-control towards goals to which they are committed and can and will make conscious choices to work on their own. (Northouse, 2015, pp. 86, 87) 3. In the proper environment, the average person learns to accept and seek responsibility. Here, unlike theory X, this assumption states that people are ambitious and resourceful and want to take responsibility if given the chance.

Surprising as it may be, the writer acknowledges that many leaders today may understand their style of leadership, but have not taken the time to articulate their philosophy of leadership. Not much is discussed or taught on the philosophy of a leadership. In fact, many leaders do not have a philosophy of leadership. Followers do not know what their leaders believe in. on the other hand, others leaders do know what they believe in but cannot properly articulate it well enough to sell it to their followers and therefore there is a communication gap in the leader-follower relationship. It is therefore important that a leader approaches leadership with his unique sets of belief and attitudes about the nature of people and work which is the basis for philosophy of leadership (Northouse P., 2015, p. 83). So how can a leader relate McGregor's theories and their assumption to his or her leadership styles be it X or Y assumptions?

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The theory X leader, see follower as lazy and not willing to work because they do not value work, while the theory Y leader perceives people as efficient and interested in work. According to McGregor, the theory X leader is inclined to be controlling and wants to give direction always. This behavior naturally creates an authoritarian leader, while the Theory Y leader believes in giving some level of control to his followers for their own initiative, a mindset that produces a Democratic leader. The theory X leaders believe in his role as instrumental to getting the job done and that there is need for incentives and rewards for motivating their followers while the theory Y leaders are of the view that subordinates naturally want to work and do not need to be motivated. From these interpretations, it is clear that the theory X leaders are the authoritarian leaders while the theory Y leaders are the Democratic leaders. The laissez-faire leaders become those leaders whose leadership is neither X or Y but are what the writer would call neutral. They are unconcerned about their worker's motivation. They basically have no work ethics, they are not team workers and lack influence because they lack leadership philosophy. They cannot articulate what they believe in. They may just be people who are lazy and do not want to work themselves.

Styles of Leadership

The writer earlier established that based on understanding of viewpoints on human behavior and the relationship of the viewpoints to their leadership styles managers are able to assess the motivation of workers and their attitudes towards work. It is therefore imperative that conventional routines must change to meet the changing environment. (Sims, 2002, p. 242) Sims also argues that organizations can ensure success by developing individuals in leadership positions as leaders and managers. Leadership is not management although we often use this word interchangeably. According to Peter Drucker, a business consultant, and professor of

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Management at the New York University Graduate Business School taking a team from

ordinary to extraordinary means understanding and embracing the difference between

management and leadership. McConnell (2006) states that "people obey managers because

they must or they expect to; people follow leaders because they want to." (McConnell, 2006,

p.147) Drucker in his book "The Executive Executive," attempts to explains the difference

between management and leadership by summing it up in one quote that, Management is doing

things right; leadership is doing the right things. (Drucker, 2006) The writer finds this

distinction very fascinating and very comprehensible. She interprets that quote to mean,

managers, follow the rules while leaders make the rules.

According to the writer, all leader operates through a technique called the leader's style.

A leadership style is a leader's way of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating

people. Northouse explains that a leader's behaviors are indicative of their style of leadership. If

a leader loves to be in control, he or she may likely be an authoritarian leader, if he or she loves

to create room for innovation for their followers, they are likely to be democratic leaders and if

the leaders are carefree then they are inclined to be laissez-faire. Irrespective of the style,

leadership is the pillar on which every organization stands. For the purpose of this research

paper, three styles of leadership are identified, namely:

The Authoritarian Leadership Style

Authoritative leaders make economic, social, and political decisions without the consent

of its subordinate. According to Northouse, this kind of leaders give instructions concerning

task and procedures about what should be done and what should not be done, controlling all

activities without any meaningful contribution from followers, it is a one-man leadership. A

good example of this type of leadership is capitalism, communism, and liberalism. This kind of

leader who wants to be in full control gives no room for innovation or self-discovery in an

organization. When this style of management is in place, it gives no room for freedom of

speech among group members. All communication is directed to the leader. The people are

afraid to air their views about issues as they may not be without consequences. (Northouse,

2015, p. 90) In government, this style of leadership is prevalent in the third world countries.

People are not motivated to excel. This leadership creates discontent, hostility and even

aggression. (Northouse, 2015, p. 90) A good example of this type of leader is Muammar

Gaddafi, Brotherly Leader and Guide of the Revolution of Libya. Gaddafi seized power in 1969

from the absolute monarchy of King Idris and ruled by decree. He employed ways to rid his

country of anything he perceived as foreign imperialism influence and strengthened ties to Arab

autonomist leadership. He took over oil industry in Libya, using the proceeds to fund

revolutionary militants across the world, to the extent that Libya was categorized an

'International Pariah' which created animosity with the United States as well as the United

Kingdom. In 2011 a revolt against Gaddafi headed by the National Transitional Council (NTC)

broke out resulting in the Libyan Civil War. NATO intervened on the side of the NTC, bringing

an end to Gadhafi's authoritative leadership. He was captured and killed by NTC militants

Authoritarian leadership does not create conducive working environments for its people,

however, authoritarian leadership can be beneficial when a decision needs to be made quickly.

It is result oriented, accomplishing more in a shorter time. (Northouse, 2015, p. 90)

Authoritative leaders stimulate competition through employee incentives.

The Democratic Leadership Style

The Democratic style of leadership is one of the most popular leadership styles today

for several reasons. It treats followers as partners who are equally able to accomplish their

work. This style of leadership seeks to bring people together to solve a common problem. It

also creates diverse ways of communication that promote a consensus in decision making and is

easy to recognize in a leader by the numerous meetings they initiate with their subordinates for

Problems Solving. They try hard to treat everyone fairly without putting themselves above the

subordinates, presenting themselves as guides and not as directors. (Northouse, 2015, p. 91)

Peter Drucker points out that, the Leader who works most effectively, it seems to me, never

says "I." And that is not because they have trained themselves not to say "I," they don't think

"I." they think "We" They think "Team." (Drucker, 2006) They are interested in the opinions of

their team and develop plans of actions around their general consensus. In summary, the

democratic leader offers information, guidance, and suggestions, not commands. Unlike the

authoritarian leaders whose words are final, the Democratic leader's final decisions are centered

on negotiations with team members. They promote teamwork and participation, making

followers feel included. (Northouse, 2015, p. 91) The outcome of this leadership is mostly

positive;

  The writer shares an experience with a leader of the church where she currently

worships, who claims democratic leadership but appears more authoritative. He gives the

leadership team assignments to make decisions in certain aspects of church administration like

deciding on measures to keep the youth in church and then turns around to criticize their

measures. The criticisms do not seem to be constructive in nature but outright condemnation,

more like an authoritarian leader. He then creates his plan without the input of the leadership.

From the traits of a democratic leader, it is clear that he is not a democratic leader even if he

claims democracy because he does not employ the use of dialogue for addressing conflict. The

writer's understanding of a democratic leadership is that it brings about cordial relationship

amongst team members, making them appreciative of one another and willing to participate in group deliberations. Another good outcome of the democratic process is that it motivates team members to become innovative, although the turnover is not as quick as the authoritarian leader.

The Laissez- Faire

Managers vary in their values, attitudes and behaviors and the way they lead their followers. However, they are expected to provide direction and meaning to the people they lead and are responsible for informing team members of important stated goals and objective, (Howard 2005) when a leader does not appear to be controlling or motivating followers to fulfill organizational task and goals, he or she has absolutely nominal influence. This is the Laissez-faire leadership style. This style of leadership does not follow any of McGregor theories X or Y. This type of a leader ignores workers and their work motivations and practice the standalone type of leadership, sometimes referred to as 'Nonleadership' (Northouse, 2015) Leadership as clearly proven by various researchers is an influence. if this is true, the writer suggests that the Laissez-faire not be included as leadership but a managerial style.

This topic provides so much information that the writer believers that leaders of organizations who are passionate for the growth of their organizations and whose businesses are experiencing stagnation should revisit their philosophies and styles of leadership, to thoroughly address the issue of motivation as it relates to leader-follower relationship preventing their organizations from moving to the next level. Like leadership coaching, a leader philosophy can be revisited to get rid of outdated ideas and beliefs that are no longer effective while recreating new ideas and philosophies that have been overlooked and make new plans of action as to how to coach their followers to move the organization to the next level of success. Sometimes it becomes necessary for the leader to consider external aid like coaching for leadership

development. As Noel M. Tichy says, (Erdogan, 2009) when leaders coach leaders around that

teachable point of View, learning and teaching are continuously in a Virtuous Teaching Cycle.

(Howard Morgan, 2005, p. 122) leadership is not inherent but as the author of Youth Leadership

Josephine A. van Linden puts it, "leadership is a personal and developmental Process,"

(Fertman, 1998, p. 11) therefore, all leaders and aspiring leaders must take this process very

seriously, with the intent to obtain the highest level of success in every venture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the writer has analyzed three different styles of leadership as well as the

philosophy that creates the leader. She also agreed with Northouse (2015) that, each leader has

a unique style of leadership, and some are very demanding and assertive while others are more

open and participative based on how the leader respond to different situations. (Northouse,

2017). Through this research, people can identify what type of managers are the most effective

with outcomes but not effective with teamwork as well as the leaders that are best in motivating

and inspiring teamwork and shared values. This leader may not achieve instant result however,

success is achieved for the long term. In addition, the writing through extensive research has

observed that the greatest leader is one that invests in people and not just productivity because

According to Werbel and Gilliland (1999), coordination and collaboration between employees

and organizational values is the reflection of employee involvement and its turnover towards

the organization. (Zareen Mamoona, 2015) The writer also suggests that a good leader should

be a blend of the three styles of leadership, the authoritarian, the Laissez-Faire and the

Democratic. However, she believes that the democratic style of leadership should be the most

dominant because most team workers love to know that their inputs are valued, their voices are

heard and that their opinions matter. The authoritarian and laissez-faire should be the least

dominant as all leaders are required to have these strengths and not come across as weak by the

employees. Both the authoritarian and Laissez-faire styles of leadership complement the

dominant style (Democratic) in different situations. Every good leader knows when to be firm

on their followers and when to let down their guards, when to push followers to greater heights

and when to give affirmation for good performance. When organizations facilitate a culture in

which organizational values, norms, vision, mission, and objectives are shared with everyone,

then employee motivation and involvement can be achieved more easily (Mujtaba 2014).

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