

QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER AND ITS BENEFITS TO AN ORGANIZATION: AN EXPOSITORY REVIEW

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Abstract

Leadership is one of the main factors in bringing positive change to the organization; if there is no leadership in the organization they will not be able to change in the direction they desire and could experience negative change instead. The problem being faced by today's organizations is that they are either over led or under led thus they need to increase their leading capacities in order to exercise balanced leadership. Generally leadership occurs when there is a relationship between the leader (one who intends to lead) and the people who prefer to follow (followers). This study aims to review literature related to the qualities of a good leader and the benefits of good leadership to the organization with the aim to establish gaps for further studies on the topic. Effective leadership and change management will be discussed in this study and also how leadership affects other factors, for instance trust, culture and clear vision, in the organization as it facilitates the change.

Key Words: Leadership, Qualities, Emotional Intelligence, Objectives.

1.0 Introduction

A leader recognizes the diversity of the follower(s) and achieves unity of common values and directions without destroying the uniqueness of the person. The leader accomplishes this through innovative flexible means of education, training, support, and protection that provide each follower with what the follower needs within the reason and scope of the organization's resources and

accommodations relative to the value of accomplishing the organization's objectives and the growth of the follower.

A famous quote by Douglas MacArthur cited in Anderson (2015) states that 'A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent' (Anderson, 2015)². "Leadership is defined as a process of individual influence on a group of individuals aimed at the achievement of individual and or common goals of the group or the organization" (Benscoter and Rothwell, 2012). Thus without two elements of the leader and follower leadership ceases to exist (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives. The leader achieves this influence by humbly conveying a prophetic vision of the future in clear terms that resonates with the follower(s) beliefs and values in such a way that the follower(s) can understand and interpret the future into present-time action steps.

1.1 Management vs. leadership

Management and leadership are present in almost all fields and aspects of organizational life, however, the functions and roles of a manager and a leader differ. Managers fulfil specific roles resulting from their managerial functions and their main job is to direct and evaluate the work of their subordinates (Shockley-Zalaback, 2006, p. 223). Leaders help guide their people (both individuals and groups and entire organisations as well) in establishing goals and support them in actions taken to achieve the goals. Organisations expect managers to be leaders, but not all managers exhibit leadership behaviours, although as research shows (Shockley-Zalaback, 2006, p. 223), leadership communication can be produced by every member of an organization and combined with management communication and managerial skills, may lead to an organization's success.

However, management effectiveness and successful achievement of an organisation's goals are largely dependent on whether managers have the ability to engage members of the organisation in the commonality of their shared mission. Therefore, the issue of leadership has been the subject of various research and discussion which led to a number of theories and approaches, but the great importance of leadership for an organisation's success remains unquestioned. Fixed assets, high-tech equipment, great financial resources and well-qualified staff can count only if combined with effective leaders who are able to take the most of the potential that dwells in their resources. What is more, effective leadership assists in achieving goals and reaching success even if financial, material and human resources are minimal (Blake and McCause, 1991, p. 24).

Kostera, Kownacki and Szumski (2002, p. 336) claim that the leader's main duty is to show a long-term and ambitious goal and to encourage their subordinates to follow the direction given, whereas the manager's duty is to manage the processes involved. The leader sets the goal and the effective manager leads the team to realising the goal using the best possible way. Outstanding and charismatic leaders tend to break rules and often "do what they want to" instead of "what they should do" or "what is accepted" (Kostera et al., 2002, p. 337).

1.2 Qualities of a Good Leader

Today academics, theorists and psychologists have discovered numerous common traits that define a great leader. A famous quote by Ross Perot cited in Anderson (2015) states "Lead and inspire people. Don't try to manage and manipulate people. Inventories can be managed but people must be led" (Anderson, 2015). A good example of a good business leader with excellent leadership qualities is Harpo Inc. Chairperson Oprah Winfrey. Harpo Inc. is one of the fastest growing organizations in the world founded in 1986 Chicago, Illinois in the United States of America by the world-famous talk show host Oprah Winfrey (Plunkett, 2009) & (Driscoll, 2011). Some of the qualities that have been identified to be qualities of a good leader is depicted in the illustration below.

Table 1.1 The 9 Qualities of a good leader

QUALITIES	QUALITIES
Confidence	Humility
Toughness & inspiration	Learn from failure and bad experiences
Ability to communicate the vision & values	Commitment
Establish the right culture in the organization	Ability to identify and attract talent
Honest, integrity and transparency	

Source: Muteswa, 2015

1.3 Emotional Intelligence

Research results of various studies have proven that emotional intelligence is a critical leadership aspect for a person to be called a good leader. Emotional intelligence involves the process in which a person can control his or her behavior in order to maintain and develop day-to-day relationships with others effectively (Goleman, 1998:94). According to Goleman (2000:80) emotional intelligence encompasses four basic capabilities namely; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skill. These four capabilities are further divided into:

Self-awareness - generally emotionally self-aware managers are capable of sensing their emotional feelings anytime (Goleman, 1998:96).

Self-management - self-controlled leaders are capable of regulating or minimizing destructive feelings or thoughts before they take any action (Goleman, 2000:80).

Social awareness - empathetic managers or leaders always take into consideration the feelings of other people before making decisions (Goleman, 2000:80).

Social skill - leaders with good social skills have various abilities when dealing with issues and they always prefer to find a win-win solution. They believe in teamwork, transparency and accountability of actions (Goleman, 2000:80). Perhaps the leadership style that most relates to quality leadership, is transformational leadership which “searches for ways to help motivate followers by satisfying high order needs and more fully engaging them in the process of the work.”

(Horner, 1997, p275) This is directly “related to quality because transformational leaders are able to communicate and reinforce values and express an inspirational vision focusing on quality. They also encourage quality improvement by building trust and reducing fear, creating awareness for change, developing a culture to support that change and initiating new problem-solving strategies.” Quality leadership is where quality principles become “a basis for guiding, empowering and supporting the constant pursuit of excellence by the employees throughout the organization.” (Feigenbaum, 2007, p38) In this regard the emphasis is on “creating the power of an environment of trust, openness and honest communication to encourage the development of individual quality improvement entrepreneurs.” (Feigenbaum, 2007, p39) The leader specifically “has the responsibility to improve the system, i.e. to make it possible, on a continuing basis, for everyone to do a better job with greater satisfaction.” (Deming, 1986, p248) This leader “instead of being a judge, will be a colleague, counseling and leading his people on a day to day basis, learning from them and with them.” (Deming, 1986, p117) While these are the principles upon which quality leadership is built, how it is applied means that it is necessary to apply the entire array of quality know how (the quality disciplines) throughout the entire company to all functions and all levels and to do so in a coordinated way.” (Juran et al, 1995, p128). Individual qualities of a quality leader, “which will be necessary to implement and sustain progress toward a TQM culture include, drive, motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, knowledge of the business, charisma.” (Puffer and McCarthy, 1996, p115)

This directly reflects the 95% percent of respondents to the National Leadership Index report, who stated that honesty and integrity were extremely important traits in leaders. (National Leadership Index, 2005) These traits are also reflected in research conducted by Kouzes and Posner who researched characteristics of admired leaders, in six continents, in 3 major studies, 1987, 1995 and 2002. In each of these the top 4 characteristics in each were, honesty, forward looking, competent and inspiring. (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

Objectives of Leadership

The leadership objectives align leadership decisions and actions to what the organization believes, stands for, where it wants to go and how it intends to sustain its long-term survival (that is its

values, vision, mission and prosperity) (Waters, 2014). There are several leadership objectives and these include the following:

- To build and sustain trust with the organization's employees and other stakeholders by practicing real care for their wellbeing, concerns, suggestions and growth (Waters, 2014).
- To clarify purpose of the organization or responsibilities by communicating the vision, establishing mutual agreement, motivating employees, thinking strategically and providing adequate resources (Frank Covey, 2015).
- To identify, grow and nurture talent through promoting skills development, career growth, managing performance and engaging employees (Frank Covey, 2015).
- To lead in a strategic, organized and uncompromised way through situations involving conflict (Harvard Business School, 2015).

1.4 Literature Review

Various scholars and researchers have proposed different theories of leadership, but clearly each author will emphasize theories which support his or her opinions. It is impossible in a short paper like this to enumerate all existing factors which have an impact on leadership effectiveness, so what follows below are only some ideas chosen by the author. According to Donnelly et al. (1992) there are six most important factors that influence leadership effectiveness and these include a leader's perceptual accuracy, leader's background, experience and personality, superior's expectations and style, follower's background, maturity and personality, task understanding, and peer expectations. Donnelly et al. (1992) claim that it is vital that leaders are able to diagnose both: themselves, and the total leadership environment before they take action. And not only is it necessary for effective leaders to become skilled at diagnosing and flexible at adapting leadership styles to the situation at hand, they also must be patient.

Kostera (2002) recognize the importance of a leader's ability to adapt to new circumstances as an important factor influencing leadership effectiveness, but they also emphasize the importance of a leader's continuous development and knowledge, his or her firm and valuable cooperation with the followers (including the ability to create a team, integrating it, and leading it), and the ability to co-work and cooperate with other

leaders and superiors. The concept of stewardship or mission is described as well in terms of leadership and its effectiveness. The main principle of the concept is that a leader does not have to be a frontperson and example but depending on the task or situation, should remain in the background and support their followers and help them develop.

Another approach to factors influencing leadership effectiveness is presented by Shockley-Zalaback (2006), who emphasizes the importance of communication competency saying that: “nowhere is communication competency (with all its aspects) more important than when individuals are attempting to lead and establish visions and directions for organisations” (Shockley-Zalaback, 2006, p. 244). She supports her opinions by citing the results of various research carried by Chris Argyris, Peter drucker, and Bennis and Nanus, where communication effectiveness is proved to be vital for organisational success. Shockley-Zalaback (2006) also lists some principles team leaders should follow (within so-called ‘principled leadership’) and identifies constructive communication behaviours for leaders including: task, procedural, and interpersonal responsibilities, all of which may lead to the achievement of organizational goals.

Lowenhaupt (2014) presents the results of very interesting research which aimed to describe the importance of the language of leadership, especially the language school principals use in communication with their employees during reforms and negotiations. The research showed that the language with its logos, ethos and pathos, is fundamental in the construction of organisations and in the leadership of those organisations. And again, in other words, the way leaders communicate is essential and often vital to achieve the goal or to succeed, especially during difficult times (Lowenhaupt, 2014, pp. 447 – 449).

Finally, the concept of personal contract is vital for leadership effectiveness. Wellin (2013, p. 151) describes principles of personal contract as firstly, identifying and discussing mutual expectations by leaders and their subordinates, followed by communicating individual needs, and finally, finding the best ways to meet and fulfil

the needs in circumstances given. Personal contact is so important for leadership effectiveness because it draws direct attention to the issue of what both sides (the leader and the follower) need and want to give each other. Such a sharing of information about mutual expectations and proposals leads to a reasonable discussion resulting in higher engagement and finally, higher effectiveness boosting profits for an organisation (Wellin, 2013, p. 151; Wołowska, 2013, p. 54).

1.5 Quality and Leadership

The importance of leadership as an integral part of quality management is well documented. (Saraph, Benson and Schroeder, 1989, Anderson, Rungtusanatham, and Schroeder, 1994, Black and Porter, 1996, Ahire, Golhar and Waller, 1996) “Leadership, which includes management commitment, is contained in virtually every definition of total quality and every prescriptive model on how to achieve it.” (Grandzol and Gershon, 1997, p46) Indeed “any individual or organization that wishes to take their initial steps on their journey toward quality must begin with a near sighted examination of its organization leadership capability and culture.” (Mauro and Mauro, 1999, p37) Feigenbaum stated that “quality today has become the foundation for constant management innovation and leadership” (Feigenbaum, 2007, p38) Deming stated about his book.

Out of the Crisis that “actually, most of this book is involved with leadership.” (Deming, 1986, p248) Juran stated that “attaining quality leadership requires that upper managers personally take charge of the quality initiative.” (Juran et al, 1995, p128) While quality and leadership are closely aligned what defines quality leadership.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion and study findings, it can be concluded that leadership involves persuading and convincing people to go the extra mile in achieving the organization’s goals. The literature findings clearly indicate that the advantage of a leader in an organization is that they help set the direction the employees should follow to achieve the vision of the organization. In addition leaders also help to increase business performance and productivity through motivating the employees and setting performance objectives the employees should accomplish. It has been proved that while managers manage processes necessary to complete the tasks, these are

leaders who encourage their subordinates to follow the path to the goal and complete the task willingly and enthusiastically. And although a lot of research have been carried out, none of them has given a precise answer what makes a leader. Over years, various offers have been presented including: trait, style, situational, and transformational approaches to leadership, but each of them has its followers together with its opponents. Nevertheless, all the authors agree that leaders are outstanding people who thanks to their qualities of character, interpersonal skills, and ability to adapt to changing environment, can help their organizations succeed.

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