IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES WITH A REFERENCE OF EMPOWERMENT OF EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Leadership studies have looked at the issue of empowerment and have suggested that notions of empowerment cannot follow a one size fits all strategy. Thus, leaders can intervene to craft empowerment strategies for employees which fit the context of the organization. Empowerment is also about exercising judgment and deciding how much to empower each employee and empowerment can be viewed as a dyadic relationship between a supervisor and subordinate. Empowerment has also been considered in the context of identity related issues and the roles that employees perform in this regard. Empowerment has also been linked to creativity and motivation of employees and it has been suggested more empirical evidence may be needed in this regard. It has been suggested that empowerment related practices are individualized at the level of subordinates, and the sense of empowerment is experienced as an individual level phenomena.

KEYWORDS: *Organization, Leader, Empowerment*

1. INTRODUCTION

In organizations, when leaders promote their political interests rather than fairness, then those with political skills begin to do well. On the other hand, those who have seriously contributed to the organization may not obtain any rewards. Consequently, they may not cultivate any sense of contribution and they may only cultivate a disgruntled resentment. Thus, expected contributions need to be placed in a framework where inducements are provided to employees to do well, if firm performance is to be improved.

One of the inducements is a positive sense of recognition and encouragement provided by the leader. It is the leader who is working very closely with employees. Thus, if the leader makes the employees feel that they are contributing to the organization, then they will feel motivated to do well. It has been suggested that transformational leadership has an impact on job related outcomes like job satisfaction only when the self determination needs of employees are satisfied.

While leadership may provide employees with the perception that they are determining the things they do on their own, it is still likely that employees may not get the feeling that they are contributing to the organization. They may rely on positive reinforcements from their leader in order to obtain a sense of such contribution. Rather than search for an individualist sense of autonomy, the feeling of having contributed to the collective good of the organization may be a more effective organizational strategy. Perceived organizational support does not rely on a sense of top down organizational hierarchy alone, but it also depends on the creation of a sense of organizational community.

This means that leadership may also have to create a non-hierarchical and a greater community oriented practice in the organization. One of the easiest ways of creating such a non hierarchical practice is to emphasize the contributions that employees make. Once employees feel that they are contributing to the organization they feel that they are a part of the larger organizational community, and this leads to greater cohesiveness. Yet, as has been seen, the sense of contribution has not been studied much in literature, and has particularly not received attention in the context of leadership studies. This study attempts to bridge this gap by studying sense of contribution as an outcome of aesthetic leadership.

On the other hand, collective conceptualizations of empowerment have largely been ignored in leadership or empowerment studies. Empowerment as an organizational climate brought in by the actions of leaders where employees feel the sense of freedom to freely express their opinions in the organization. Thus, the sense of freedom experienced by employees in expressing their ideas and articulating their disagreements has not been paid much attention in literature till now. Sense of freedom is about the lack of insecurities and fears among employees about expressing their disagreements with their leaders. When employees begin to feel that leaders will not retaliate even when they have expressed contrarian opinions, then a sense of freedom has been achieved in the organization. This study attempts to bridge this literature gap by studying sense of freedom as on outcome of aesthetic leadership.

It has been suggested that when workers are valued and the organization creates a sense of contribution among them, then they are likely to remain in the organization and unlikely to leave. It has also been found that those employees who have greater political skill are thought to have more chances of promotability.

Normative commitments are greatly enhanced when effective surveillance mechanisms are put in place. But increasing commitment through an improvement in surveillance mechanisms often comes at the cost of rupturing the relationship between leaders and followers. On the other hand, when leaders are able to create a culture of excellence in the organization then that itself becomes a motivating factor for employees. Rather than relying on commitment and surveillance, it might be a better strategy to rely on excellence. Self perpetuating authority regimes may often reproduce themselves in organizations and in order to rupture these regimes, a culture of contestation and refutation of domination by the elite may have to be created. It is this degree of refutation that can produce a greater degree of involvement among employees.

Leaders need to foster a sense of freedom, particularly when they are leading a creative team of experts. It is necessary that the values of authenticity and respect be energized in order to provide a sense of freedom to team members. There are several important lessons with respect to aesthetic leadership that can make leaders and organizations more adaptive in times of uncertainty and increased competition.

Leaders are able to foster a greater sense of freedom among team members when they are able to put the mission above personal gain. Further, leaders are likely to be successful when they are constantly in touch with their employees and are committed to listen to voices from the ground.

Leaders need to engage with organizational cultures in strong ways to ensure that their practices lead to employees recognizing their contribution to the organization, which in turn, is likely to lead to greater satisfaction. However, leaders are also need to recognize the organizational processes and practices that should transcend cultural mediation, in order to emphasize performance driven orientations.

2. RESEARCH WORK

Leaders who actively create a culture of excellence ensure that employees are involved in their jobs to a greater extent. This leads to a greater degree of self esteem among employees as the concept of job involvement is related to the self worth of employees. Consequently, employees may also feel a greater sense of belonging and contribution to the organization. Norms of reciprocity may ensure that leaders render support in the form of impression management gestures to reinforce the positions of other leaders who may not be performing well. Such norms of reciprocity through which low performing leaders are supported do not lead to a culture of excellence. It requires a degree of frankness and candour to create a culture of excellence. Innovation diffusion is also strongly linked to the networks operating in organizations and is linked with identity based issues of recognizing excellence.

While corporate excellence may be indicated by financial performance, there are various other indicators of excellence like the organization being a great place to work or great products emerging from the organization. Again studies, especially leadership literature has hardly looked at how a culture of excellence can be conceptualized as an indicator of an organization's functioning. This study attempts to bridge this gap by studying culture of excellence as an outcome of aesthetic leadership.

Authenticity when conceptualized in a reflective sense is able to overcome the challenges of generalizable universalism and is able to create the sense of an exemplary universalism. It is this sense of exemplary universal orientation that leaders in organizations can seek to emulate. It is essential leaders are authentic in a universal sense, and not in a selective sense alone. An individual is able to acquire a subject position only through the refracted positions of other individuals. Similarly, a leader's subject positions only emerge in the refraction of the leader's decisions through that of followers. When the leader acts in an authentic way, then the entire organizational setting in which the leader is situated is suffused with authenticity. Before deciding on a course of events, human beings often take into account the expected judgments of others.

When leaders are authentic, the judgment of others about them also becomes enhanced. Understanding that legitimate normatively is self-imposed, leaders can recognize that normative ideals are most effective when they are cultivate by people on their own. Thus, authentic leaders are able to create a sense of organizational values among followers. Being authentic does not mean that one behaves in a way that is true to one's own authentic self. Being authentic means that one is not principally guided by the perception of others in doing things, but anchors one's actions around concrete ideals. There is a danger of leaders being driven by the perceptions of those who are higher in management than them. In this case, they give up their authentic positions and simply implement instructions.

On the other hand, leaders may also be driven by the perception of their followers. Thus, they

may tolerate indiscipline and not be harsh towards them. Consequently, there is a collapse in organizational norms.

It is necessary to understand authentic leadership not only from the perspective of how leaders describe themselves but also how followers perceive them. It has been reported that the outcomes of authentic leadership are more related to how followers perceive their leaders rather than how leaders describe themselves. It has also been reported that authentic leadership has a positive impact on creativity and innovation. However this positive impact on creativity is mediated by a support for innovation inside the organization. In the absence of such support, authentic leadership may not be able to influence innovation significantly.

This indicates that the practice of authentic leadership is not sustainable if organizational systems and processes do not reinforce it. If there is incongruence between leadership practice and organisational systems, then the desired outcomes may not be obtained. Therefore, authenticity is not only a function of the traits of the leader, but a function of the ways in which the organisational ecology influences the behavior of leaders. It has also been reported that authentic leadership influences the development of psychological capital among followers. Positive work climate partially mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and psychological capital.

This indicates that authentic leaders have to create a positive organizational climate before the successful outcomes of authentic leadership can be realized. Thus, the authenticity of the leader is a function of how the leader intervenes in organizational fields. The character and integrity of the leader is indicated by the stands and positions that the leader takes inside organizations. Those leaders who abide by the organizational status quo in order to further their own interests are not likely to be seen as authentic by followers. On the other hand, those leaders who take clear positions without worrying about political consequences are likely to be seen as authentic by their followers.

3. DISCUSSION

Results also suggest that gender moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and psychological capital. This is indicating of the necessity of authentic leadership to take positions against marginalizing realities inside organizations. For instance, gender prejudices may often prevent an accurate evaluation of the competencies of individual employees. In order to overcome these biases, leaders may have to take positions against prejudices. It is this ability to take stands that may characterize them as authentic.

Humility is characterized in this study as a dimension of aesthetic leadership in the sense of humility being a core aspect of the inner beauty of the human condition. Humility has the capacity to move, inspire and touch. Humble leaders are also considered as approachable by followers. There is a certain degree of warmth in the engagement between humble leaders and their followers. Humble leaders evoke a sense of freedom in their engagement with followers.

Humility in leadership can be practice if leaders are able to model their behaviors on the basis of the metaphors that they find in nature. When leaders exhibit simplicity and child like integrity, they are able to exhibit humility in their relations with followers. Humble leaders lead by example rather than using the force of law, rules or the logic of govern mentality. Leaders who are humble are

therefore not prone to be coercive. This does not mean that leaders who are not humble are not strong.

Humble leaders are usually stronger than those leaders who have to rely on force in order to convince their followers. Weak leaders usually have to rely on flattery, intimidation or bribes in the form of status or monetary rewards in order to persuade their followers. Humble leaders, on the other hand stand up for what is right and communicate their message in strong, but courteous terms. To be humble, and not react to situations in an impulsive way, is therefore to be strong in character. It means that the leader contemplates on the situation in rational and logical ways before taking a decision.

In order for leadership practice to be sustainable, it is unlikely that the notion of celebrity CEOs will work on the ground over a period of time.

There has to be a significant interaction between humility and leadership in order for a sustainable and effective leadership practice to be established. At the same time, a strong personal will also has to be a part of humility in leadership. The lack of strong will can lead to humble leadership being misunderstood as the lack of capacity to make tough decisions and stand by the positions that the leader has taken.

Identity work that leaders engage in, comprises both conscious and unconscious processes. Leaders try to model their identities on the basis of the grandeur of the self that they imagine is required, in order to hold on to the requirements of the role which they are fulfilling. When followers respond to these self projections, they also end up emphasizing the unconscious elements which the leader had projected. This leads to a toxic culture being instituted in the organization. Elements which represent the grandeur of the leader, lead to cultures of anxiety where critique and disagreement lose their value.

The leader becomes more important than she should be, and followers find it difficult to disagree with the leader. It is important to remember that leadership needs to respond to the complex problems of society. It is leaders who have a strong grasp of the changes that are taking place in social and organisational spaces, who can acquire charismatic personality among their followers. It is always useful for the leader to be humble in recognizing that it is not possible for a single person to understand the range of complexities that are evolving in organization and society. It is necessary to remember for the leader to be successful, the competence, confidence and morale of followers will play a crucial role.

Empowering practices of the leader are conceptualized as a dimension of aesthetic leadership in this study as empowerment involves a deep level engagement between the leader and the follower. In the highest forms of empowerment, a deep connection is built between the one who empowers and the subject who is empowered. There is a deep level of identity between the subject who empowers and the empowered. There is a deep sense of intuition and trust among subjects engaged in empowering relations. Eventually, this produces solidarity and a sense of collective identity among organisational members. Rather than being transformational, leaders who are empowering can contribute to more effective organisational outcomes. Followers of transformational leaders find that their leaders are effective and they have a high degree of supervisor satisfaction.

On the other hand, followers of empowering leaders experience a sense of self-leadership.

Thus, empowering leaders are able to go beyond the mere objective of creating a satisfied workforce. They are also able to create inspired champions inside the organization.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It has been found that effective leadership leads to the empowerment of employees and enables them to act in more creative ways. Further, for leadership to have a strong impact on empowerment, it is necessary that the organizational context reflect organic attributes rather than mechanistic attributes. On account of these organizational contexts, it has been found that empowering leadership has curvilinear effects, rather than linear effects on employee performance. Thus, leaders need to decide optimal levels of empowerment they need to provide to employees so that excess discretion and autonomy do not lead to a decline in performance. Also, when leaders engage in empowering practices, they need to ensure that goals and role clarity is provided to employees in an effective manner.

In competitive contexts, achievement generating practices help employees to excel and do well with respect to the roles that are demanded of them. In contrast to the achievement generating characteristics of aesthetic leadership, duty inspiring characteristics focus on extra role behaviors such as helping others. However, achievement generating practices are more effective, as in the long run, they can lead to clearly defined roles, which can also help in achieving employee well being and work life balance. Leadership is a complex practice located at multiple levels in the organization, spanning individuals, teams, groups and the organization itself. Leaders have the responsibility of fostering a sense of

achievement at multiple levels in the organization.

It has been established that ethical leadership behaviours lead to high quality leader-member exchange, thus increasing the sense of belonging of an employee. Subordinates rate their leaders on the basis of various stereotypical analysis of organizations, deciding whether organizations are stereotypically masculine or feminine. Also, subordinates view their leaders as being autocratic or negotiating based on gendered evaluations.

5. CONCLUSION

In order to overcome these stereotypes and other constraints emerging from organizational contexts, leaders can adopt various aesthetic practices discussed above in order to increase the sense of belonging of employees. Aesthetic leadership practices can also reinforce cultural attributes that help in expanding the sense of belonging of employees.

Aesthetic dimensions of leadership could emphasize the interaction between the individual and community in the workplace and lead to greater perceptions of excellence. Further, it has been found that increased communication, inclusivity, an experience of the detrimental effects of inequity and impartiality foster cultures of excellence in an organization. Aesthetic leadership may also have overlaps with entrepreneurial leadership in creating inspired champions on the basis of vision, trust, confidence and respect for people.

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