

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR IN K-ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

In entering the new era of K-organizations, having an effective behavior might be a good shield to leaders in facing the unpredictable K-challenges. The purpose of this paper is to point out the traditional view of leadership behavior. On top of that, this paper mentions the need to make the paradigm shift from the traditional view to the transformational leadership behavior. It also highlights few patterns of transformational leadership behavior. Finally, the collaboration of both behaviors with the injection of the Islamic view might provide a new avenue for achieving effective leadership behavior in K-organizations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The success of an organization, or any group within an organization, depends largely on the quality of its leadership. Whether in business, government, education, medicine, or religion, the quality of an organization's leadership leads to the quality of the organization itself. Successful leaders anticipate change, exploit opportunities, motivate their followers to higher levels of productivity, correct poor performance, and drive the organization towards its goals, objectives, missions and visions.

According to Day and Lord (1988), leadership is so important to an organization because of the need for coordination and control. Organizations exist to achieve objectives that are either impossible or inefficient to achieve if done by individual alone. It contributes toward integrating various job activities, coordinating communication between organizational subunits, as the new economic reality and development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) give reasons

for an organization to be a world-class organization. Hence, having effective behavior has become a prerequisite to the current leaders in preparing themselves for the new challenges. In short, the search for strong and effective leadership behavior has taken on more urgency in the current business environment.

The basic idea of this paper is that all organizations are now in or about to enter a new era called K-organizations. As such, to ensure effectiveness, leadership behavior should also be improved to suit this change. This paper discusses and highlights changes in leadership behavior in facing the new challenges in the K- organization. It suggests the collaboration of traditional and transformational behaviors with Islamic elements in preparing current and potential leaders to perform their tasks in more effective ways.

2.0 KNOWLEDGE LEVERS (K-organizations)

As mentioned earlier, nowadays, most organizations has been or about to be transformed to become K-organizations (Knowledge-levers organizations) to face the K-challenges (knowledge-based challenges). The two major elements that constitute K-organizations are the process lever and the technological lever. The process lever allows more freedom in organizing people and resources by eliminating departmental and functional constraints. A maximum participation and involvements are encouraged at all levels of organizations. On the other hand, technological lever encourage and urge management to take advantage on the technological advancement i.e. Information Technology (IT). Exploiting the advances in IT will drive organizations to achieve their vision, strategies as well as facing the competition.

According to Zakaria (2000), such transformation to become K-organizations deals with transformation of knowledge through the organizations. All organizations should be ready to give immediate respond to the imperatives of knowledge management, which are now commonly applicable worldwide. Davenport and Prusak (1997) once mentioned, knowledge is the collection of experiences, heuristic, values and cognition that are in the minds of the individuals. It originates in people and depends on people to use it to produce outcomes and it is everywhere in organizations namely in individuals, embedded in work activities, and deposited in documents and reports.

Basically there are three categories of organizational knowledge; tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge and cultural knowledge. Tacit knowledge is the personal knowledge used by organizational members to perform their work. It is learned through experience in performing their tasks. It could also be learned through observation and imitation. These learning processes build up organizational members' confidence in making intuitive judgment and decision relating to their work specification.

Explicit knowledge is usually refers to the knowledge on how to do things. Patrick Sullivan (1998) refers explicit knowledge, as the intellectual assets own by the organizations. Finally, the cultural knowledge refers to the organizations

shared assumptions and beliefs such as organization's core competencies and how they want to succeed in future. This three basic knowledge should be manipulated and fully utilized to bring the added value to organizations.

3.0 TRADITIONAL VIEW ON LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Classically, House (1971) in the path-goal theory believes that a leader's behavior is acceptable to his subordinates to the degree that it is viewed as a source of either immediate or future satisfaction. He has identified the four-leadership behavior as follows:

Directive

The directive leader lets his subordinates know what is expected from them, schedules the work to be done, and gives specific guidance as to how to accomplish tasks. In other words, the leader will ask his subordinates to do certain tasks with rules and procedures.

Supportive

The supportive leader is friendly and shows his concern for the need of his subordinates. He will focus on the welfare of his subordinates and treat them equally. Basically, the leader is a person whom the subordinates can easily get along and can be trusted.

Participative

The participative leader consults with his subordinates and uses their suggestions before making a decision. Usually, a leader tends to act alone in decision- making process. By considering the participative leader, he will ask for his subordinate 's opinions or suggestions before any action is to be taken.

Achievement- oriented

The achievement-oriented leader sets challenging goals and expects his subordinates to perform at their highest level. The leader ought to set new and challenging targets in order for the organization's success and survival. He has high hope toward his subordinates in achieving the targets. His confidence and guidance are the key factors for them to strive the goals.

Overall, the path-goal theory concerns with transactional leaders. The four basic characteristics of the transactional leaders are:

- Contingent rewards means that they contract their duties in the exchange of rewards for effort, for good performance and accomplishments.
- Management by exception (active) means that they watch and search for deviations from rules and standards and take corrective actions.
- Management by exception (passive) means that they intervene only if standards are not met.
- Laissez Faire means that they abdicate responsibilities and avoid making decisions.

This means that these kinds of leaders guide or motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role task requirements (Robbins, 1998).

4.0 THE PARADIGM SHIFT

However, with respect to today's K-challenges faced by organizations, the kinds of leaders that should be considered are transformational leaders. This type of leaders inspires followers to transcend their own self-interest for the benefit of the organization. They are also capable of providing intellectual stimulation on the followers (Robbins, 1998). The transformational leaders have also four types of characteristics, which can shortly be discussed:

- Charisma means that they provide vision and sense of mission, instill pride and gain respect and trust.
- Inspiration means that they communicate high expectations, use symbols to focus effort and express important purposes in simple ways.
- Intellectual stimulation means that they promote intelligence, rationality and careful problem solving.
- Individualized consideration means that they give personal attention, treat each employee individually, coach and advise.

Many researchers such as Cortada and Hargraves (1999), Kalakota and Robinson (2000) and Tapscott (1996), found that there are seven patterns of leadership behavior, which can be considered to be effective drivers of transformation in the era of K-organization. In discussing the patterns, Zakaria (2000) highlighted the following:

Leaders are innovators

Leaders do not exist at the top of an organization. They can be at all levels of an organization. There are process leaders, middle and divisional-level executives or the chairman of the company.

Banerji and Krishnan (2000) states that transformational leadership holds great promise for advancing associations, businesses and society because it can cause fundamental change, answer deeper issues and create new paradigms.

Leaders get involved personally

Leaders concentrate in developing a vision or settling on strategies adapted. They personally render most of their time in the transformation initiative. Thus, they tend to get involved personally in the work of transformation in the organization.

Moreover, the behavior can be related to the visionary leadership suggested by Robbins (1998). He argues " Visionary leadership is the ability to create and articulate a realistic, credible, attractive vision of the future for an organization unit that grows out of and improves upon the present".

Leaders know what needs to get done at least in general, though not in detail

Leaders are not concentrated on the detail aspect of the transformation process. The detail will emerge during the implementation of the process. As the leaders get a clearer picture of what the problems are and where the organization should go, the explanation of what and how to change evolved. There occurred during the act of transformation. Hence, the act of implementing a transformation strategy results in specific actions and desired outcomes.

Leaders know how to deal with ambiguity and risk

Leaders should be able to deal with ambiguity and risk because the transformation may lead to some uncertainty of change and unanticipated consequences, either positive or negative. Effective leaders must have a sense of the direction they are going, the ability to persuade his followers or subordinates to join and the confidence that they have in dealing with whatever problems occur.

As an example, Gabris and Ihrke (2000) argue that, "One cannot easily separate leadership and management characteristics from technical personnel management reforms. A public organization may have the most technically sophisticated performance appraisal instrument on the market, yet, if employees perceive their supervisory matters as poor leaders, it is highly unlikely the employees will accept the new system as legitimate".

Leaders know how much their organizations can change and at what speed Leaders usually have an ability to look for the appropriate rate and quantity of change in their organization. In today's world, leaders should have many formal tools and techniques to monitor the process of change. Furthermore, they can also obtain knowledge from consultants in order to assist them in choosing the appropriate tools and techniques. However, Bowie (2000) insists that leaders should not use followers for their own self-interest.

Leaders know how to manage corporate culture and human behavior

Leaders in K-organization should manage the issues of corporate culture and human behavior in terms of building a culture of innovation, entrepreneurial or project based culture. It is important to note that organizational culture varies widely depending in the nature and goals of the organization.

Another important aspect is communication skill because in managing corporate culture as well as human behavior, leaders should be able to provide their employees or subordinates with the organization's objectives in their own 'language'. Madigan (1999) once mentioned, "never confuse talking and communicating. A little self-examination about what you say and how you say it can mean the difference between a listener tuning you out and

hanging on your every word". In addition, Goleman (1999) suggests that organizations should enhance the emotional intelligence of leaders in their organization to get the maximum positive results of their performance. Further, Kemper (1999) adds emotional intelligence is the major ingredient in achieving the effective leadership behavior.

Leaders should act collectively

Leaders in a K-organization are born in teams through collective action of individuals working to achieve vision and solve problems. An effective leadership is not simply obtained through one individual but through the collective action of many. According to Burns (1978), a transforming leader should motivates the follower and seeks to satisfy higher needs of the organizations.

In Situational Leadership Theory, Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1982) stress a close relationship and effective communication skills between leaders and followers will significantly influence leadership effectiveness.

5.0 ISLAMIC VIEW IN STIMULATING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Leadership is one of important functions in Islam. It cannot be separated from life. The question on leadership had already born from century to century. Under the Islamic perspective, the concept of leadership is very strict and rigid but easy to apply. According to Bukhari & Muslim, RS- 1 528, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) says "each of you is a guardian, and each of you will be asked about his subjects. Leaders will be asked about their people's right... All of you are leaders and to be asked for the people you lead".

In discussing further, there are four concepts of leadership behavior highlighted from Islamic perspective according to the Al- Quran and the Al- Hadis , which can be exercised at all time (Yusof, 1989):

Leaders must be with his followers or subordinates in his everyday life until the day of judgments

Leaders and their followers must work and unite in whatever decision or actions undertaken by them. They should hold the responsibility of their actions. As being mentioned in the Al-Quran (Al-Isra' 17: 17), which means that on the day of judgments, Allah will call upon all human beings together with their leaders.

Leaders must have ethical behavior

Leaders are persons who can be trusted. They should possess high value of integrity, loyalty and sincerity. In Islamic view, leaders are not special persons. The pride of being a leader is not belonged to the person holding the position but to ordinary people surrounding him. This is argued in the Al-Hadis where the prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is reported to have said that you have to be afraid of the prayers by the person to whom you are acting cruelly because their prayers are acceptable for Allah without any boundary.

Leaders must act "adil"

This means that they can be trusted because everyone is counting on them. They should also equally treat all followers, subordinates and people under their control where it is significantly related to Islamic way of life. Other aspect is integrity where leaders have to honestly do their duties for the benefits of others. In addition, all duties, which are undertaken by leaders, must be done sincerely.

Leaders must provide actions taken through the "musyawarah" process

Here, leaders should have open mind to listen to their followers' or subordinates' views. They should avoid exercising their veto power. As a result, the final decision will satisfy others.

Leaders must avoid personal interest in making decision.

Leaders must consider their actions solely for future benefits of their followers, subordinates, people and, country and thus striving toward goals achievement in their organization or country.

6.0 CONCLUSION

To sum up, this article provides useful information regarding the effective leadership behavior that should be employed in facing the K- organization. Leader or potential leader in this new globalization era should realized the importance to fully equipped themselves with all the relevant "tools" in managing such organization. Today, the world demands not only a good leader but also the most important thing is to become an effective leader.

The authors find that the most effective leadership behavior that should be exercised is the collaboration of both, the traditional behavior as well as the transformational behavior. By injecting the Islamic view on leadership behavior will provide extra credit to the leaders in ensuring their effective performance. This collaboration will also help to channel leaders in making better decisions.

Further research can be developed to integrate all the above aspects and perhaps, will come out with uniformity in considering the most effective leadership behavior to be applied worldwide.

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