

Free essay about dark leadership and normative control

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PART 1: Dark Leadership

Introduction

Dark leadership is defined as the “ systemic and sustained behavior by an organizational leader that violates the organizational interests by denting and /or sabotaging the organizations tasks, resources, goals and effectiveness and/or the motivation , wellbeing or job satisfaction” (Sankar, 2003, p. 112). In recent years, organizational leaders have gained much recognition as agents of entrepreneurship and change. As much as many tend to focus on the positive elements associated with leaders certain liabilities or risks are also entailed (Herbst, 2014). These very behaviors have the power to produce problematic or devastating outcomes for their organizations. This usually takes place when a leader’s behaviors lose touch, become exaggerated or become agents of purely personal interests (Resick, Whitman, Weingarden & Hiller, 2009). This impacts negatively on the leader and the overall organizational well-being. This leadership concept will form the basis of an insightful analysis on Steve Jobs as a leader at Apple Inc. Steve Jobs was a complex man with many contradictions according to Leander Kahney, one of his prolific biographers. This was observed primarily in his religious beliefs as a Zen Buddhist, an anti-materialist religion, yet Jobs founded his company on technological materialism (Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009). In an age where transparency in leadership is valued as part of a conducive workplace, Jobs enhanced a culture of surveillance and secrecy at Apple Inc. He was notably a micromanager per excellence and autocratic a trait that made him popular amongst his employees (Cooper, 2002).

Einarsen & Skogstad cites “ Jobs desire for perfectionism saw him

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inhumanely drive his employees with some quarters acknowledging his constant drive could even burn out even the most zealous worker". He was known for his foul language, verbal assaults and repleted with anger that were intimidating and terrifying to employees. His dark side, however, is well captured in the Apple Foxconn manufacturing plants in China labor conditions (Barling, 2014). These factories were at one time described as labor camps due to the hostile environment associated with illegal overtime and employee abuse. In 2011, there were eleven cases of suicides reported at Foxconn plants the Daily Telegraph notes, due to poor working conditions.

Jobs was " a tyrant and obsessively controlling" (Stashevsky, 2006, p. 93). He was also said to be temperamental and also took credit for other people's innovative ideas. Jobs thought nothing of parking in parking spaces meant for the handicapped. To this business leader the end justifies the means.

Organizational Theories

Studies have found a number theories that can define the aspects of dark leadership, however, two theories or of particular relevance to this cases. These are task-oriented approach and destructive leadership (McIntosh & Rima, 1997).

Using the behavioral approach, we can conclude that Steve Jobs advanced task-oriented leadership. His leadership centered on organizing, initiating, clarifying, controlling and information gathering with the sole aim of meeting Apple Inc.'s objectives. Steve Jobs was typically focused on step-by-step mechanisms to meet specific organizational goals with less regard to the

employees (Weaver, Yancey, Yancy & Iron, 2010). His leadership defined roles and work required putting infrastructure in place, organizing and monitoring the progress of each functional units of Apple. On a positive aspect, the leadership ensured that deadlines were met coupled with consistent high levels of quality and productivity.

The overbearing nature of a task-oriented leader can also bring about dark leadership traits. The employees at the workplace may operate in fear of breaking the rules. This may ultimately impact on their morale and creativity (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007). The fear can be deep-seated among the employees who can hinder innovation within the workplace. This was very much evident at Apple due to Steve Jobs leadership methods that saw employees opt to take calculated risks. He was a hard man to please being a perfectionist and an egoistic individual a fact that made most of his employees to be one-line thinkers (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

Destructive Leadership

Destructive leadership is the next concept that can be used to define Jobs leadership stint at Apple Inc. His leadership was autocratic where much control of the key organizational functions was vested in him (Kaiser, Hogan & Craig, 2008). Isaacson in his biography, Steve Jobs, notes that he was “ impatient and too critical towards his employees’ performance”. His rule was “ synonymous with a tyranny as he was demanding and mercurial”. These destructive leadership traits impacted negatively on his employees’ drive and motivation towards work at Apple (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007). The positive side of it all is that it sparked peak performance at the

expense good interrelationship with the Apple personnel (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). The tolerance to Steve Jobs destructive leadership by the laws can be linked to idiosyncrasy credit. Using this theory, the employees can be said to have embraced the leadership perceptions of Steve Jobs due their shared interpersonal perceptions (Hogan & Hogan, 2001). The secondary interaction with Jobs was enough to make the employees accept the oppressive rule hence incorporating it to the Apple's organizational culture.

Conclusion

Dark leadership has been portrayed as an emerging in organizational leadership. The case study dwelled on in the paper has shown the extreme nature of this kind of leadership. Using various approaches in analyzing Steve Jobs leadership such as task-oriented and destructive leadership approach the positive and negative attributes of the dark leadership are analyzed. There is need for more research to identify other appropriate theories to fully comprehend the dark leadership as an organizational theme and as an emerging issue. The approaches will be key in mitigating the negative elements of the leadership while enhancing the positive attributes for organizational growth.

PART II: Control and Power

Introduction: Control

Organizational behavior is a wide area in organizational theory that seeks to comprehend their impact that a person, groups and organizational structure have on behavior within the company, for the purpose of applying such knowledge towards improving the effectiveness of an organization (Nelson &

Quick, 2013). According to this definition, there are three key elements; individuals and groups, human behavior and organizational effectiveness. These three elements are naturally interrelated, and their behavioral impact is applied to various systems so that organizational goals are met (Zoogah & Beugré, 2013, p. 112). The nature of the organizational behavior study is to investigate to identify or establish the cause and effect. These theories are further integral to an organizational leadership as they describe how the management exerts control over the organization. The control manifests itself in the form of regulation of behavior where the managers praise and promote ethical and productive behaviors and shun or punish undesired behaviors (Sedikides & Brewer, 2000).

Normative Control

Normative control works by attempting to direct and elicit the required efforts of the organizational members by tapping into their underlying experiences, feelings and thoughts that guide their actions. This type of control contextually taps into shared beliefs, cultural values in determining how employees ought to act (Gallivan, Eynon & Rai, 2003).

Collective norms and values as understood in the normative control theory helps practitioners determine ethical guidelines within an organization (Kelloway & Barling, 2000, p. 94). The ethical guidelines are some of the core tools an organization uses to control the feelings and thoughts that guide the organizational employees' actions. Luthans (2002) notes that focus on the norms and common values is central to employees' interpretation of the social reality in a similar manner. It is thus imperative for practitioners to

maintain norms and values of the company and to incessantly work to implement them in the employees' minds.

The key advantage with the normative type of control is its " unique nature that makes it hard for competitors to imitate" (Thompson, 2003). This makes it an authentic control for organization's keen on organizing its members on their distinct collective norms and values (Cardinal, Sitkin & Long, 2004). For practitioners, this control is best for organizations whose attempts to implement other organizational controls have failed. Alvesson (2004) notes that the normative control not only controls but also gains commitment and acceptance from the organizational members. Being a fairly discrete managerial tool, employees whose actions are under control might not fully reflect on it (Pfeffer, 2007). This emanates from the fact that this type control dwells more on " mutual and self-monitoring than direct supervision from the management" (Cummings, Peters, Ross & University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, 2009). The tool is essential for many organizations in that it has a positive effect on its code of ethics making it a much better option as compared to other control tools. It also creates a strong foundation for establishment of an effective corporate culture.

Concertive Control

Concertive control works by enhancing participation, decentralization of roles and increasing the democratic space at the workplace. This type of control operates mainly on cultural norms rather bureaucratic policies and rules developed by the management. Using this approach, a practitioner will be able into the wealth of knowledge possessed by workers by allowing them to

exercise their own control. Karreman & Alvesson (2004) note that approach can largely effective if the workers are well trained to perform each other's tasks. Through the creation of normative rules on rationalization platform much consensus is arrived at by the workers ensuring that this concertive control is effectively implemented.

Introduction: Power

Power is a key concept in the study of organizational behavior. As a concept, it is closely linked to organizational leadership in that leaders have to possess some degree of power in order to able to carry out their functions in an organizational set-up. Power is defined by Pfeffer as “ the potential ability to influence behavior to change the course of events, to overcome resistance and to get people to do things that would not otherwise do” (Pfeffer , 2007, p. 48). In an organizational set up power can manifest itself in the form an attribute to an individual, relationships and organizational structure. This paper will focus on the latter, power as a property of an organizational structure (Dunkel & Kleemann, 2013). Under this dynamic of power, power is seen to be integrated and ever-present within an organizational framework. It usually goes unnoticed and is best analyzed using two key theories: Strategic contingencies theory and resource dependence theory.

Strategic Contingencies theory

This theory focuses on the ability of an individual's problem-solving capabilities. Hickson (2007, p. 76) notes that under this theory “ power is derived from the ability to cope with uncertainty.” In this case, actors and departments derive power from being able to provide solutions to emerging

problems within an organizational setting. This theory ultimately emphasises the place of personality in power as the power manifests itself on how best an individual can solve problems rather than his or her charismatic personality (Dunkel & Kleemann, 2013). Thus this theory offers objectivity in the analysis of power. Strategic Contingencies theory further prevails where there are rational players in the structural setting. Such a structure to be inclined towards problem solving and addressing these problems directly.

Resource Dependence Theory

This theory cites that power emanates from an individual or department's ability to solve the problem scarcity of resources in an organizational setting. This theory underpins the importance of resources for organizational success (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). The application of this theory in relation to power is best expounded by Davis and Cobb's article through the example of power differentials between two actors A and B. " The power of A over B come from control of scarce resources that B values. In this case, power and dependence are basically complementary to each other. B is dependent over B to the extent that A has power over B. Under this example power is assumed not to be a zero-sum game making each entity, A and B, interdependent" (Davis & Cobbs, 2009).

Implications of the usage of power on the different groups of organization members

Power has different implications to various organizational members. The first implication of power is the definition of reality for organizational members. Through power, the mission and vision of an organization can be laid out and

enforced ultimately making it feasible. Power further establishes the socialization process within an organization. The top management may use its power in inculcating its norms and cultures to the rest of the organizational members (Klabbers & Piiparinen, 2013). The other implication of power is that creates order and sense of direction to organizational members. With the privileges that come with power a leader may reward or punish a member to enhance discipline and focus (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

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Appendix 1

A screenshot of Ryan Tate's analysis of Steve Job's leadership <http://gawker.com/5847344/what-everyone-is-too-polite-to-say-about-steve-jobs>

Appendix 2

Ray Williams input on Steve Jobs leadership

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201204/why-steve-jobs-was-not-leader>

Appendix 3

Welch's chart on Normative Control through the management of corporate culture corporate culture. (Welch & Welch, 2006).