

Relationship between ethics and leadership



Introduction

This analysis will be based on the critiquing of the two articles. The first Article “ What does ethics have to do with leadership” by Levine, MP & Boaks explains what ethics has to do with leadership and how it can go wrong with the basis of three arguments; values could be seen as the sufficient for leadership, comparison of character that may lead to the same errors, and finally is the observer bias where we see someone who we like or want to be like. The second article “ Leadership, leadership styles, and servant leadership” by Gandolfi, F & Stone is about the different types of leadership styles, how leadership has changed throughout history in terms of why and how effective the leadership style was effective at the time, and how servant leadership although has been rejected and ignored but should be one of the major types of effective leadership.

Overview of Articles

Many theoretical perspectives are discussed in each of these articles in a sense that effective leaders are success when they are ethical and that they should put their followers before the organization by presenting a few points with regards to what can go wrong and how it relates ethics but still contradicts itself. Ciulla claims that “...the definition question in leadership studies is not...” about “ What is leadership?” but about “ What is good leadership? By “ good” she means both “ morally good and effective.” (Pg226, p12), but then being moral and ethical is just a set standard that we have decided upon, but being effective just means achieving a set of goals and the methods does not need to be moral or ethical because being moral

or ethical is just in the eyes of the beholder. For example: Hitler, Sir John A Macdonald, Donald Trump etc. are effective leaders they have achieved goals, pulled their countries out of recession and created countries, but many could claim them to be unmoral or un ethical and vice versa, but all must accept that they were successful, sure Hitler lost the war but he pulled Germany out of its massive depression and currency hyperinflation which made normal house hold goods unaffordable for the average German.

Also we have Sir John A. Macdonald who was the first prime minister of Canada and was the foundation and backbone of confederation which made Canada as it is today, but was he morally or ethically a good person? Some will say “ yes” but also “ no” as he was a drunkard and he would often times beat his wife. Being a effective leader is setting a vision with goals and eventually achieving the vision and goal, but being morally good or a “ good” person is always up to interpretation and what is generally accepted as good behavior at the time. Now let’s look at Gandolfi, F & Stone, S 2018, ‘ Leadership, leadership styles, and servant leadership in terms of servant leadership on whether it is effective and ethical etc. Buchanan (2013) opines that the world has moved through different phases of leadership since the early part of the 20th Century. Specifically, there was first the concept of “ command-and-control” that prevailed into the 1980s, which was followed by “ empower-and-track” through the mid 2000’s, and, finally, “ connect-and-nurture,” which is the current approach. (Pg263, p5) All of these phases have one thing in common and that is they all changed to meet the requirements of the organization. The Idea of a servant leadership however puts the follower first before the organization which in itself is a good method of

leadership since if the follower succeeds the organization is suppose to succeed as well but this cannot be applied universally because a leader is some who leads or commands a group, organization, or country. Therefore the definition of servant leadership is in contradiction of itself because a leader cannot put the follower first because the leader needs to put the goals and achievements and the success of the group, organization, or country before the follower i. e. The leader just cannot make all followers successful and happy, however they will strive to make the majority happy and successful by achieve the goals and visions they set out to achieve for the group, organization, or country.

Leadership historically did not require the person in power to be a good person or ethical to be effective. The leader or person in power just had to get the job done. But in modern leadership and possibly even in the future being ethical and a good person might be one of the requirements but not always what will make the leader effective.

Leaders, Followers, Organizations, and Society

Both Authors' stance is that ethics and leadership are on and that leadership is only truly successful if the leader is a good person and a ethical person. Leader is required to care about his followers more than himself/herself and the choices they make need to be to the benefit of the follower first before the collective group, organization, or country. Personally I disagree with this because ethics and good behavior is just a agreed upon set of rules and behaviors that people see acceptable. The organization and country which the leader is responsible for should be his/her primary focus. Followers are a

part of the organization and part of the country but the leader should not put the people before the country or the follower before the organization and that the leader is not there to be the servant they were chosen to lead. For example, “ Management and organization theory suggests that the most traditional approaches have a tendency to consolidate power amongst few people within an entity, who in turn expect rigid compliance within and across the organizational hierarchy (Winston & Fields, 2015)”. This is not just traditional approach to organizations or countries. This is what we all grew up with and has been programmed into our minds from birth. Let’s compare this to an average family; the father has always been the leader while the mother has a secondary leadership role or vice versa “ sometimes” but the children are always the followers. We do not see majority of parents catering or servant leadership towards their children “ followers”. Yes the parents work and provide for the family “ organization” which in turn provide for the children “ follower”. The parents “ leaders” dictate what the children “ follower” needs and what they should do to be doing to become successful in life.

The most acceptable theory would have to be Bass & Avolio’s (1994) Full Range Leadership Model as it breaks down leadership into three prominent types; Laissez-Faire “ let them do what they want”, Transactional “ compliance by reward and punishment”, and Transformational “ a combination of “ Laissez-Faire and Transactional”. Each of these leaderships can be done either correctly or incorrectly in terms of ethical or unethical. Transactional leader is probably the most used type of leadership in one form or the other because if we look at manufacturing if a laborer meets his

quota he will get rewarded but if he fails his quota he will get punished this is like meeting KPI's of any organization. Also for Laissez -Faire which I think gives the most flexibility for its followers. The follower can do whatever he or she wants as long as the goals are kept and things are done and famous leaders who were Laissez faire styled are Herbert Hoover (secretary of commerce and president of the USA) where his methods were " Hands-Off" , he trusted fully the expertise of his team. Also there is Andrew Mellon who is the perfect example of the 20th century laissez faire leader because he believes that he should choose talented and individuals with expertise to run his businesses, and finally Queen Victoria who believed that people should work hard using their own skills and talents and that leaders should stay out of businesses and problems unless it was deemed dire or necessary. This type of leadership is also seen in everyday families as parents will sometimes allow their children to make the mistakes so they could learn and only intervene where necessary.

Finally transformational where as it is the combination of " Laissez-Faire and Transactional". These types of leaders are the most successful and probably the most influential because they can inspire people to find better ways to do things or achieve their goals and they can appeal to the followers " why" things are the way they are. An example of this would be John D. Rockefeller where he held everyone accountable for their roles and actions in order to make the vision of his company come true. Also Steven Jobs as one of the most iconic transformational leaders in the world where he challenged his employees to create products that the world didn't know could exist or even need. Finally Hitler, Hitler was an inspirational speaker. Hitler was also able

to direct the German people's rage and frustration of why their country was the way it is and although the reason he provided was wrong he was able to convince it was so correct (pseudo).

I for one only believe that leadership or leaders only have one responsibility and that is to ensure they achieve the goals we as followers chose them to achieve. Whether the methods are ethical moral or good should not be mandatory but as a guideline for leaders to follow on their quest to achieve the goals.

Implementation

Through these two articles we have learned that leadership although has a clear definition " the action of leading a group of people or an organization" is still very complicated and many leaders throughout history weather successful or not have many difficulties when implementing leadership effectively. We know that the leadership today has changed a lot from when it was in the past and even from all the changes and studies and research it is still has numerous areas that we still find difficult to understand and make universal. For example, servant leadership where the purpose is for the leader to put the follower first before the organization but that would not guarantee the organization would be successful or if leaders choose the most ethical and good decision but this could cause the organization of crumble and fail because ethics are based on our values and sometimes the market just cannot support the cost of such values.

From these two articles we could tweak our management/leadership models by focusing on what the employees want (most would probably ask for more

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-ethics-and-leadership/>

pay), and we can strive to try and motivate the employees to figure out how they could perform their roles and tasks easier (normally very difficult in manufacturing especially if the company/organization is very well established that they already have their procedures fully throughout). Or the company or organization could try to peruse a new product line all of which the leader should take a step back and let the employees direct and make decisions. All of this is in fact wishful thinking as most employees lack the expertise or the market experience to make such judgment calls or decisions. I believe that all forms of leadership even pseudo transformation should all be used together and this in term would create the best leader because all forms of leadership could be used for certain situations. For example, employees that just want to be told what to do should only ne told what to do, and for employees that want the extra hand holding and managing we should acknowledge this as well and sometimes if the followers are too upset and have their minds set and unchangeable then pseudo leadership is required and we could redirect the anger and frustration in a more positive way (not like Hitler).

Conclusion

In conclusion leadership is very important in today's society and has only become more difficult to implement effectively. The reason for this is that ethical and moral values which current generation holds in high regard make leadership evolve into new and unexplored area which more research must be done to further help us understand and make universal leadership. An example of this is where Gandolfi, F & Stone try to demystify servant leadership but still in the end fail because servant leadership contradicts <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-ethics-and-leadership/>

itself. Also in Levine, MP & Boaks explains leadership can only be successful and effective if its moral and ethical but we know this historical to be incorrect because some historical prominent figures were sometimes unethical and unmoral leaders for example, China's great leap forward where 30-45million/5-7. 5percent of the Chinese populous died over 4 years and although this is a clear sign of pseudo-transformation Mao will be considered one of China's greatest leaders. Finally pseudo leadership is only considered pseudo if it is in opposition of the ethical and moral values of the environment it is used in.

References:

- Boesler, Matthew (2013, Sept. 20). WEIMAR: The Truth About History's Most Infamous Hyperinflation Horror Story. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/weimar-germany-hyperinflation-explained-2013-9>
- Johnson, J. K. (2013, Jul. 31) " Sir John A. Macdonald". Retrieved From: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sir-john-alexander-macdonald>
- 5 Famous Laissez Faire Leaders. (unknown), retrieved from: <https://futureofworking.com/5-famous-laissez-faire-leaders/>
- Johannsen, Murray(2014, Mar. 22) " 125 Transformational Leaders: Lists of Famous Ones From Many Countries". Retrieved From: https://www.legacee.com/transformational_leadership/list-of-leaders/
- Kerns, Peddy (2011, Feb.) " Tools of the Trade: Sorting Right From Wrong: February 2011". Retricved From: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/ethics/sorting-right-from-wrong.aspx>

- Nikezi, Srdan; Puric, Sveto; Puric Jelena (2012, Jan. 1) “ TRANSACTIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CHANGES”. Retrieved From: <http://www.ijqr.net/journal/v6-n3/11.pdf>
- Akbar, Arifa (2010, Sept. 17) “ Mao’s Great Leap Forward ‘ killed 45 million in four years’ ”. Retrieved From: <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/maos-great-leap-forward-killed-45-million-in-four-years-2081630.html>
- Levine, MP & Boaks, J 2014, ‘ What does ethics have to do with leadership?’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 124, no. 2, pp. 225–242.
- Gandolfi, F & Stone, S 2018, ‘ Leadership, leadership styles, and servant leadership’, *Journal of Management Research*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 261–269.