

# Concept

Psychology



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The concept of influence and formality are issues belonging to common discussions in line with concerns in management and the study of human behavior.

Influence is about the capacity to produce compliance without relying on certain force, power, any formal actions and rules while authority is a legitimate power prior to command exact compliance (Lieber & McConnell, 2011, p395). By this, it is clear influence and formal authority have remarkable differences which need to be illustrated through certain given situation.

The illustration of this concept has a clear depiction in the issues of leadership and management. According to Kotter (1998), leadership is about coping with change while management is about dealing with complexities.

On the part of leadership, influence is necessary in order to align the people, communicate the vision with them and motivate them. On the part of management, there is a strong effort for establishing authority and at some point, a legitimate source of power is necessary in order to command exact compliance, such as company policies and other relevant rules.

Managers have formal authority in order to organize the entire organization in a certain way guided by set rules and formal source of power. Managers could fire employees, inflict certain level of punishment, or implement rewards. Managers need to do this in order to address complex and diverse human behaviors in an organization and implement procedures to a highly complex group, emancipating many complicated issues or concerns. This concept is clearly stated in Kotter's concept about managers and management. There is strong inclusion of formal authority in management, allowing the people to follow even if some of them may have significant level

of opposition.

On the other hand, leaders have informal source of influence. A person in a group may not necessarily be a manager to become a leader. A person who has an informal source of influence could create followers and not subordinates. A person with informal source of influence could actually effectively impart the vision to his subordinates, creating an atmosphere for substantial change. This is what exactly Kotter wants to elaborate. In the presence of leadership, people would be highly motivated to achieve things even in the absence of formal authority. In other words, there must be a strong inclusion of what exactly would motivate them, which from the psychological perspective should involve understanding of needs and satisfaction (Feldman, 2003). After all, motivation includes certain factors leading to the arousal of human behaviors in particular. This something that could arouse their behavior may not be necessarily a formal source of authority and power, but rather are elemental human needs leading to potential sources of influence.

In other words, influence and formal authority could be clearly illustrated through human behavior and response. Influence and formal authority create human response. However, there is a difference on the reason of response. With influence, the reason is quite personal, but with formal source of authority, the reason could be due to established legal basis or social contract. It is here where rules would set in rather than a free will from exact compliance in the absence of legitimate power.

#### References

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