

Complexities of Organizational Dynamics and Development: Leaders and Managers

Dr Eulalee Nderu-Boddington

Ph.D. Education
Assistant Professor at Prince Sultan University Riyadh Saudi Arabia
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ABSTRACT

This article shows the theoretical framework for understanding organizational dynamics and development - the change theory and subordinate relationships within contemporary organizations. The emphasis is on power strategies and the relationship to organizational dynamics and development. The integrative process broadens the understanding of patterns of organizational dynamics and development and enhances the understanding of factors that influence subordinates' perceptions of well-being and their performance in the workplace.

Introduction

Leaders and Managers

Leaders and managers operate as antithetical figures (Zaleznik, 1977). Change challenges leaders but threatens managers. True leaders are authority figures with inherent strengths and innovative performers. True leaders use leadership to fit the situation, benefit the organization, and inspire the workforce. In contrast, managers are reticent to shed established bureaucratic styles of governance regardless of the organizational problem. The outcome suggests an uninspired workforce. True leaders are prepared to confront resistance from other entrenched authority figures and managers. Resistant authority figures use their energies to attempt to block restructuring efforts: “Leadership inevitably requires using power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people” (Zaleznik, 1977, p. 67). Leaders take charge, project concepts into images, develop concepts into substance, and motivate subordinates.

True leaders embrace high-risk positions but also project empathy toward subordinates. Emotional signals have the ability to enhance relationships with various levels of subordinates from key players to unskilled players (Zaleznik, 1977, pp. 67, 72-73). In contrast, managers are problem solvers who apply traditional techniques to resolve organizational issues: “Their [managers] leadership stagnates because of their limitations in visualizing purposes and generating value in work” (p. 68). Managers appear to lack a world-view design because they operate within a comfort zone perceived as a safe bounded system that is separate from the environment. Fear of change leads managers to cling to bureaucratic embeddedness and to hesitate to integrate new concepts and approaches from modern science.

Individuals and Goals

Successful adaptation to changing conditions in the workplace requires intact intrinsic motivation, self-actualization, coping strategies, persistence, and commitment. “The best coping is that which changes the person-environment relationship for the better” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 138). Commitment refers to cognitive choices, values, goals, motivation, and persistence (p. 56). Fundamentally, innovative leaders operate as role models for other human subsystems throughout the organization. Positive role models enhance goal-seeking attitudes of colleagues, team members, and network members.

Innovative leaders integrate commitment at work with internalization of values, practices, and self-efficacy goals (Bandura, 1995, pp. 214-215). People at work internalize a hierarchy of values (Locke, 1991). Performing and achieving sequential steps in developmental growth helps to soften the degree of conflict, chaos, and paralysis of action. Values link needs and action. Values bridge the gap between what is required to live and the actual action taken (p. 291). The problem between conflict and values occurs in the organizational setting when subordinates’ intrinsic values clash with organizational culture and practices (Meyer & Allen, 1997, pp. 99-101).

In order to produce trust, individuals must entrust themselves to others; they make themselves vulnerable. Before they are willing to take such action, they must examine their fears about what others may do to them, or their fear about designing their own vulnerability. Such an inquiry will lead to the underlying assumptions and values they hold which, in our language, are part of the governing variables of their theory of action. (Argyris, 1994, pp. 10-11)

Versions of new capitalism that include trust enhance subordinates’ performance and productivity because trust generates commitment and motivation towards organization goals (Sennett, 1998). New capitalism, however, preaches short-term values for teams and networks. A dilemma exists. Members of teams and

networks may feel valued while resolving a particular issue but feel discarded when the issue is resolved (p. 27).

Dynamics of Learning and Coping with Change

Researchers are unclear whether coping strategies, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and persistence enhance learning among subordinates more than among unskilled subordinates (Bandura, 1995). Whether learning occurs in the workplace may depend on authority figures, the governance style, the organizational culture, and attitudes of subordinates. Self-efficacy builds a sense of confidence in a person's own capabilities to achieve tasks regardless of changes in job description or assignments (pp. 177-179).

Restructuring initiatives, a changing workplace, and transformational processes may affect subordinates differently regardless of specialization skills or hierarchical level. Coping and adaptation alone may be insufficient to promote learning inasmuch as a fundamental relationship exists between self-directed learners, intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and learning (Bandura, 1995, p. 17). In addition, individuals with intact self-regulation skills perform better than poor self-regulators (p. 18).

Two forms of gratification may influence whether learning occurs inasmuch as researchers have found a relationship between openness to learning and gratification (Kramer & Tyler, 1996). Individuals with long-term goals and long-term gratification cope with multiple changes integral to restructuring better than do individuals with short-term goals and short-term gratification: "Individuals high in the tendency to delay gratification attach significance to information indicating their likelihood of receiving benefits in the future" (p. 406).

Achieving performance goals and adapting to change may fail to build new skills. “Success will not strengthen the individual’s self-esteem and confidence in learning new abilities, taking risks, and producing and successfully dealing with surprises” (Argyris, 1995, p. 166). Achieving self-actualization heightens an individual’s self-esteem, self-confidence, future learning capabilities, and risk taking. Achieving self-actualization helps individuals to successfully deal with surprises emerging from restructuring initiatives (Maslow, 1987, p. 183).

Multiple intrinsic and extrinsic factors trigger conflicts during restructuring initiatives. Training methods that enhance self-esteem tend to enhance learning and adaptation skills and strengthen the organizational culture (Schein, 1992). Authority figures can implement training programs to improve learning among subordinates—for support systems for growth and development, for adaptation processes, and for reducing daily workplace frustrations (p. 11).

Teams and Networks

Highly skilled subordinates and authority figures vary in their need for dominance, freedom, and power. Some subordinates are content with achieving mastery through specialization. Other subordinates may identify with authority figures and seek a particular hierarchical status to dominate other subordinates. There is no reason to believe that dominance over subordinates is fading because implementation of nonhierarchical authority increases in modern bureaucratic institutions in response to advances in technology and specialization (Thompson, 1961). Delegation of authority can produce a complicated scenario for subordinates at lower hierarchical levels. There is no best method to govern subordinates at each hierarchical level.

Power in Organizations

The use of power and control in organizational dynamics and development invites divergent interpretations. Webster (1994) lists 26 ways to describe the tentacles of power. Power can be used to crush or to elevate. The power to crush extends beyond control of the body and seeks to control the mind regardless of whether the authoritarian figure is human, religious, and/or charismatic. Similarly, Weber (1947) defines power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (p. 152).

Summary

The article shows a foundation of knowledge of organizational dynamics and development, the change processes. Some major theorists such as (Foucault, Weber, and Thompson) have been used to construct a holistic view of human subsystems in contemporary organizational systems. The result shows the discourse of power in organizations functions as tactical elements within the field of control relations (Foucault, 1977). A single strategy can dwell within contradictory discourses of power because changes in internal events or environmental conditions trigger change. In embedded bureaucracies, disciplinary practices of power show rigidity regardless of the strategy at the time (pp. 101-102). The concept suggests that power functions as an unstable force in non-boundaried organizational systems because it is delegated and dispersed throughout the organization through various hierarchical levels. Non-boundaried organizations possess alternative forms of viability and stability that diminish the reliance on power. Types of stability include dynamics of change, learning, managing, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships.

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