Research Paper

The Reflections of Leadership and Followership under Globalization

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Abstract
The concept of leadership has been studied for centuries, but the role of followers in the leadership dynamic has only recently begun to receive serious attention. This is due in part to the complexities associated with globalization, which have made it increasingly difficult for leaders to operate unilaterally. As a result, there is a growing recognition that leaders and followers are interdependent and that both play a vital role in the success of any organization. This paper explores the reflections of leadership and followership under globalization. It begins by reviewing the traditional view of leadership, which emphasizes the role of the leader as a heroic figure who is responsible for setting the vision and motivating others to achieve it. The paper then discusses the challenges of leadership in a globalized world, and how these challenges have led to a new emphasis on the role of followers. The paper concludes by arguing that a more balanced approach to leadership is needed, one that recognizes the importance of both leaders and followers. This approach would require leaders to be more inclusive and collaborative, and it would require followers to be more engaged and proactive.
Keywords: leadership, followership, globalization, complexity, interdependence

I. Introduction

Gene Dixon (2008) stated that in recent years and perhaps in response to the complexities associated with globalization, leadership scholars have begun to acknowledge the other side of the leader-follower equation and the role of followers in the leadership dynamic. This focus is in line with suggestions made by Marion and Uhl-Bien, who criticized the field of leadership studies for its tendency to follow a more reductionist strategy, stating "Leaders are one element of an interactive network that is far bigger than they." (Marion, R., and Uhl-Bien, M., 2001)

Leader-Follower Relationship

According to (Rost J., 1993), "leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." Chaleff (1996) argued that culturally being a follower connotes weakness, passivity or mindlessness. But this need not be the case. Leaders can empower followers, and followers can empower themselves! Leading isn't strong and good, and following weak and bad; leadership and followership are two sides of the same process. One can't exist without the other. You can lead in many ways and you can follow in many ways.

It is the dynamic interaction between leader and follower that constitutes leadership. When viewed through the lens of social identity theory, leadership is similarly formed through an interactive process, whereby the leader psychologically represents the group via exhibiting the normative characteristics of the in-group (Hogg, 2001). We bring this point to light because it again highlights that followers and leaders are inextricably linked. Leaders influence followers and vice versa; they are in a dynamic relationship together and are two sides of the same coin (Rost J., 1993).

Ultimately, a follower doesn't draw power or authority from a leader, but from the organization's purpose and from the commitment and skills he or she brings to that purpose. An effective follower is supportive, not passive! (Chaleff, 1996)

Chaleff (1996) submitted that not all leader-follower relationships are based on fear, but there is a layer in our relationships based on intimidation by authority. The ideal leader-follower dynamic is a healthy relationship between peers, although one party formally possesses ultimate authority. The key is to build mutually supportive relationships. Followers are in just a strong position as are leaders to initiate this.

Avolio and Reichard (2008) discussed contemporary leadership as a process that is fundamentally grounded in the relationship between the leader and follower. They also highlight the importance of psychological ownership (Pearce, C.L., Kostova, T., & Dirks, K.T., 2001) and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) in this relationship. Lapierre et al, (2014) emphasized that psychological ownership enables each stakeholder to claim responsibility for decision making, beyond job descriptions and task functions, and psychological safety empowers the stakeholder to take action to impact organizational outcomes. Authenticity thus encompasses relationships at all levels of the organization, including those formally recognized as leaders and those working informally, or behind the scenes, in influencing the spirit and character of the group. (Lapierre et al, 2014)

Gene Dixon (2008) submitted that leadership is based on a relationship between a leader and follower, and trust is a key aspect of the leadership dynamic. Trust is a function of the leader's willingness to be viewed as vulnerable by followers. Oftentimes, perceived vulnerability is a result of the willingness of the leader or follower to self-disclose mistakes.

Follower trust is characterized by repeated interaction, identification with the group leader or other group members, and perceived independence. For example, leaders can increase follower trust through their initial and consistent behavior in both public and private interactions with the follower or the group to which he or she belongs. (Meyerson, Weick, and Kramer, 1996) Trust in the leader may be enhanced or developed when the leader is perceived as forgoing his or her own self-interest to benefit the followers. (Avolio, 2005)

Nature of Global Leadership

Mendenhall et al, (2017) posited that while the global leadership literature has grown rapidly over recent years, the context in which global leadership occurs remains ill-defined and under-conceptualized. This lack of contextualization risks equating global leadership roles that are qualitatively very different and prevents sufficient clarity for empirical sampling. While scholars have begun to develop the conceptual foundations of global leadership, few attempts have been made to unify the plethora of existing definitions. Mendenhall et al, (2017) argue that the lack of a precise, rigorous, and commonly accepted definition of global leadership limits the field's conceptual and empirical progress.

Northouse (2013) stated that since World War II, globalization has been advancing throughout the world. Globalization is the increased interdependence (economic, social, technical, and political) between nations. People are becoming more interconnected. There is more international trade, cultural exchange, and the use of worldwide telecommunication systems.

Increased globalization has created many challenges, including the need to design effective multinational organizations, identify and select appropriate leaders for these entities, and manage organizations with culturally diverse employees (House and Javidan, 2004). Globalization has created a need to understand how cultural differences affect leadership performance.

The field of global leadership has emerged over the past two decades as a response to the need for internationally operating firms to develop global strategies, expand into international markets and compete in the global marketplace (Gregersen, Morrison, and Black, 1998). The increased intensity and growth in 'global work', defined as situations in which workers collaborate across national boundaries, is unprecedented (Hinds, Liu, and Lyon, 2011). As a result, scholars have begun to conceptualize and develop models that can help global firms to develop global management and leadership talent.

Specifically, global leadership scholars describe the global context as characterized by a greater range of diversity (e.g., Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998), more frequent and far reaching boundary-crossing activities, a greater number of stakeholders that need to be considered when making decisions (Beechler, S., &

Javidan, M, 2007) Mendenhall et al. 2008; Osland, Bird, & Oddou, 2007; Osland, 2010), greater competitive pressures (e.g., Brake, 1997; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009), greater volatility and hence pressures for continuous change efforts (e.g., Brake, 1997; Osland, 2008), greater levels of ambiguities that influence decision-making (e.g., Caligiuri, 2006; Osland et al., 2007), greater complexity (IBM, 2010) which leads to demands for increased cognitive complexity (Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007), social acuity and behavioral flexibility (Osland, Bird, & Oddou forthcoming), and greater needs for integration (e.g., Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009; Osland et al., 2007; Suutari, 2002).

Rosen et al (2000) contend that global leaders must handle environments that are very different from those that domestic leader face; global leaders, they argue, confront ongoing change with stakeholders across cross-cultural, geographical, and socio-political contexts. Similarly, Levy et al (2007) maintain that a domestic leader's familiar and experienced mindset may not readily accommodate global business challenges. Instead, global leaders would need to acquire new knowledge about the different contexts in which they work, and the way they use knowledge and information to analyze a situation and act upon it entails a broader set of choices at a higher level of complexity.

Gene Dixon (2008) buttressed the fact that the world is complex and faster-paced. Nominating committees, not the CEO, pick directors. Boards are more susceptible to shareholder pressure. Information is available from any keyboard allowing every employee to participate in the global marketplace of ideas, information, and news-sometimes as an employee, sometimes as a citizen, and often as an independent entrepreneur and competitor with instant global market access. Leaders are no longer in complete control of the employee-employer relationship. Employees are discipline-loyal, not employer-loyal. The technologically skilled auction their services on the Internet. Employees are virtual. Organizations are ethereal. Competition now includes the third world. Organizations are executing on relevant–not necessarily complete–information in order to keep up. Corporate leaders are sought who will bring a vision of stability to the chaos of stay-at-home workers, electronic monetary exchanges, and growing environmental awareness across all communities.

Global Leadership Principles for a Successful Leader-Follower Relationship

Globalization has also created the need for leaders to become competent in cross-cultural awareness and practice. Adler and Bartholomew (Alder and Bartholomew, 1992) contended that global leaders need to develop five cross-cultural competencies: **First**, *leaders need to understand business, political, and cultural environments worldwide.* **Second**, *they need to learn the perspectives, tastes, trends, and technologies of many other cultures.* **Third,** *they need to be able to work simultaneously with people from many cultures.* **Fourth,** *leaders must be able to adapt to living and communicating in other cultures.* **Fifth,** *they need to learn to relate to people from other cultures from a position of equality rather than cultural superiority* (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992, p. 53). Additionally, Ting-Toomey (1999) (Ting-Toomey, S, 1999) said that global leaders need to be skilled in creating transcultural visions. They need to develop communication competencies that will enable them to articulate and implement their vision in a diverse workplace.

In sum, today's leaders need to acquire a challenging set of competencies if they intend to be effective in present-day global societies. As organizations conduct a growing share of operations outside their home countries, their ability to attract and develop people that not only effectively perform global tasks and activities but also actively influence and motivate people at a global level provides a key source of competitive advantage (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009; Carpenter, Sanders, & Gregersen, 2001; Mendenhall et al., 2008).

Over the past two decades, scholars have therefore begun examining the necessary capabilities, skills, and characteristics of people who take on global leadership responsibilities. Specifically, research has sought to identify the scope of global leadership tasks (Caligiuri, 2006), and define a set of global leadership competencies and skills (Beechler & Javidan, 2007; Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, & Oddou, 2010; Jokinen, 2005; Osland, 2008), develop assessment instruments (Spreitzer, McCall, & Mahoney, 1997) and training programs for global leaders (Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011; Suutari, 2002), separate the concept of global leadership from global management (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1992; Jokinen, 2005) and distinguish between global leadership and domestic leadership (Osland, Bird, & Oddou, forthcoming).

A global leader brings people together from different cultures and economic realities with the mindset to lead, act and think globally (Cabrera, A. & Unruh, G, 2012). To be global, one must strive to understand other cultures and cultivate the ability to manage cultural diversity (Hackman, M.Z. and Johnson, C.E, 2009)

Global leaders need to act as bridge builders in order to capture global opportunities and solve problems with sound vision (Cabrera, A. & Unruh, G, 2012). They also must be free from prejudice. Paul the Apostle said that in Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28). Hence, being global is not forcing one's way on everyone, but going into a relationship as equals to learn from one another. Christ said; "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

II. Conclusion

Following the ever-increasing importance of cooperation in a world characterized by globalization and growing international relations, the dilemma inherent in leading across different cultures is the presence of opposing values. Globally, wherever people work across cultures their own modus operandi is the norm and considered socially acceptable, and they never take time to consider that there might be other ways that are equally acceptable in other cultures, thus resulting in a culture clash (Trompenaars et al, 2009).

To resolve this dilemma, the servant-leader bends as it were, the two extremes towards each other, which results in the line becoming a circle, a circle that no longer has opposing values (Trompenaars et al. p.24 2009). Therefore, one major quality expected of a servant leader to lead cross-culturally is flexibility, which is rooted in love and service to others.

An example of flexibility is the story of Apostle Peter in Acts 10:9-16. His ability to provide leadership beyond the Jewish culture was limited by his inflexibility. The Lord asked him to eat what was culturally considered unclean by the Jews, but Peter declined. However, in 1st Corinthians 9:22, Apostle Paul said he had become all things to all men that he may, by all means, save some; thereby demonstrating the unique ability to be flexible-minded enough for God to use him for a global assignment.

(Greenleaf, 2002) opined that what often aid the development of flexibility is the art of listening, empathy and conceptualization which are some of the qualities of a servant leader.

Trompenaars et al, (p.27-28, 2009) advised that cross-cultural servant-leader needs to listen instead of talk, act from the bottom up, instead of top down, and work as part of a community instead of putting focus only on individuals. If we are not flexible, there may be a limit to our influence as global leaders.

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