

The new-fangled side of leadership: A view point

Ishfaq Ahmed*

Abstract

This study entails that the default leaders' ideas of preferences and style of command may hamper the abilities to handle the problems adequately and effectively. This leads not only to the diminution of trust in leadership but also harms the leader and follower relations. Moreover it makes us allergic of leadership and affects the overall vision and its achievement. But what can be done as an elucidation, is answered by this study.

Key words: Leadership, dark side, harmful effects.

Introduction

Being a student of Organizational Behavior, I have been in the field of learning and disseminating for last six years. These years have added a lot to my understandings and know how about the subject matter. Leadership for me, like many other researchers, earns a lot of concentration. It's, no doubt, one of the most reviewed, understood, investigated and searched topic in the field. But the more I get of it, the more questions I have in my mind. Few of them are given importance, but many more are still unaddressed and answered. This research covers few of the questions, being learner, student and teacher; I got in my mind in my experience span.

How Germans see Adolf Hitler? How world sees Karl Marx and Masolini? Is not it the other side of the picture (leadership), which is observed by the people facing the opposite elevation? A leader for one group may be a wicked for others. A vision of a leader for one group may be something really required to be achieved while the

*Assistant Professor & Dr., Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
Email: ishfakahmed@gmail.com

same vision may be sightlessness for others. This is what a leader is on the other side of the picture.

Leader and followers have an indispensable relation, where both have necessity and sufficiency relation. Here it means that there is no leadership without followership, and there is followership of only leadership. But one problem with this relation is that leader has to lead while followers have to follow; the question here is that can this relation be overturned? Can a leader become follower and a follower emerge as leader? The history may substantiate this relation but how theories deal with this relation is an area which requires great attention by the researchers.

Davenport, Prusak & Wilson (2003) valued the role of leader and followers, where they concluded that leaders provide vision while those are the followers who make these visions achieve. He termed them "idea practitioners" [...] the individual who works on the ideas of others, makes them realize and gets results for their leaders. It is, therefore, noticeable that why the studies have focused on the role of a leader, why not there is a discussion on the role of followers and why followers are given not as much of importance when comparing with leaders? These are the question which may be given due importance by the researchers. There should be proper theorization of these concepts and even empirical evidence may make things further lucid.

Moreover, leaders are believed to be the one who leads her followers (may include a large number and some-times a number that may countless). But is it possible that a leader may have even a better substitute (leader) in her followership. So what will be destiny of that leader/follower? Can she become a good replacement of existing leadership? Will other followers accept her as a good substitute? What will be the effect of change in leadership on the vision, mission, objectives and strategies to make them achievable? What if the leader may not earn true followership or people leave the followership to shift to the new leadership? How theorists deal with such issues? Do contemporary theories answer such questions?

A latest transition was observed in the political leadership of our country, where one of the leaders (chairman of opponent party ruling in one of the provinces) declared the disobedience and azadi (independence from the traditional system) movement against the ruling party. Leadership of both the parties has been likely to be followed by large number of people. This transition has made a good balance in the leadership, but how the leadership leaves influence on the followers, their views, their perceptions, and actions is an area that requires many fold analysis. Literature tells that leaders have a mammoth role in determining the attitudes and behaviors of

their followers, but how their followers perceive about other leader, how they value and rank them is the question of the day. It leaves doubts in my mind about the true definition of leader and leadership, and this discussion leads us to the first question that who is a leader? Why there is no leader for opponents or is there a good or bad leader?

The perceptions about leaders (ours) and others, is solely determined by our preferences. Which model we like, to whom we want to follow? These are the questions which pose a great threat for the concepts of leadership. Researchers should address such issues and should give a good definition that why a leader has not been a universally accepted authority.

Leaders tend to be the one who give vision and lead others to that vision by setting personal examples. Are leaders always good at devising a high-quality vision? Can they make a mistake and lead others to consternation and dismay? What if they do so, will they lose leader follower relation? These questions, like many, pose an area which hampers the true understands of the concept.

Leaders are believed to have some exceptional personality traits. One of them is low agreeableness, which makes them exposed to wrong decisions. Here leaders, due to lack of consistency of opinion with others, may not be able to get true picture. The persons who found their leader a poor listener may not be willing to share true picture with their leaders, which may result in failure to get true and fair outcomes as assumed by the leaders. Such experience may also hamper the outcomes of the leader and follower relation. Thus a leader and her personality characteristics may be revisited. A leader may also use high agreeableness ability (by showing people orientation), but how, then, they can get results in a favorable way? One way may be through motivation, which is one of the major premises of a leader. But it is a difficult job to motivate all at once, as motivation is a multi-facet and multi-antecedent phenomenon. Thus really aligning personality with leadership is a complex task to do.

Promising Solution/s

Previous sections cover the few of the issues and doubts which are desired to be discussed and answered by the leadership theorists and contributors. But being the one who has investigated and probed these questions, I find a possible solution for such problems. The most distinctive and inimitable solution is to look at the concept of leadership with a new lens. One of the most promising, as noticed from previous studies, is the leadership model offered by Beekun (2012), where they commented

that the leadership model of ALLAH's last Apostle S.A.W.W. is the best substitute for the models of transactional, self-centered or even valued- neutral transformational style. This style is unlikely to be in the vein of the other investigated leadership styles, both from traditional leadership and Islamic leadership perspective. The character (or moral) leadership is based on the teachings of the revelation (Holy Quran) and as implemented by the Apostle S.A.W.W. This style is universal in its implications and equally believed and valued by many non-Muslim scholars even. The wider research on this issue has attracted many researchers of the present era to work and research on Islamic modules of leadership and management. This style has a great edge over other models, but its learning, implications and theorization is at its infancy stage.

Future Directions

It is suggested that like studies on other aspects of Islam (finance, business, management, marketing) the leadership should also be given due importance. Future researchers should investigate the possible uses and applicability of this model in answering the questions highlighted in the previous sections. Moreover, researchers should work at the explanation of this new dimension of leadership. They should make it more clear, precise and applicable for the corporate world of present era.

A great amount of literary support is required for such leadership concepts, as these concepts are at its infancy stage and may not be easily digested by the other cohorts. Moreover, more questions may be raised, suggested, probed and remedial actions may be suggested.

Another important question arises about the following of such leadership style; as by following the teachings of ALLAH's Apostle S.A.W.W. one becomes the follower of that unique leader. He adopts the characteristics of a great leader, then will he/she be the leader in itself (a concept parallel to self-leadership). In that case how leadership and followership will be defined? This question should be addressed by the future studies.

Past few years have witnessed increased attention given to various teachings of Islamic religion and philosophy (including marketing, business practices, management, HRM, motivation, learning and many other aspects). But leadership and its role in nurturing all these aspects have not been linked in the present literature, which should be an important consideration for future studies. This will not only create symmetry in the academic literature on Islamic teachings but will also make things further clear and smoother. The concepts, like Islamic leadership will be

further enlightened and developed but will have a wider or universal implications and solution to the problems of humanity.

References

Beekun, R.I. (2012) "Character centered leadership: Muhammad (p) as an ethical role model for CEOs. *Journal of Management Development*, 31(10), 1003 – 1020.

Davenport, T.H., Prusak, L. and Wilson, H.J. (2003). *What's the big Idea? Creating and capitalizing on the best management thinking*. Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge.