

WEEK ONE ARTICLES REVIEW

STUDENT'S NAME

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ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Any organization has different sources of power. However, understanding those sources and the way they work can help people with power to use them for company's benefit. In formal sources, an employee can derive power from the policies and rules set by the organization. People can also get power from their ability to inspire, persuade, and engage in emotional commitment with people who work under them. Some sources like the expert power cannot be challenged in many occasions as there are not many people who possess the right qualities to appropriately use it. The current paper provides a review of understanding different sources of power in an organization.

Keywords: power, expert power, formal, personal, persuasion, management, followers

Understanding Different Sources of Power in an Organization

INTRODUCTION

People working in an organization have different sources of power which can be used to make decisions and interact with other employees. According to Robbins & Judge (2014), understanding the sources of power can help enhance the ways managers and staff use their power. Power is inextricably linked to leadership, as it is assumed that many people in leadership positions have some level of power. Nonetheless, it is important to identify various sources of power, as this can help employees and management to make better use of the power they possess. It is important to remember that political environment is closely linked to power, where management and employees are able to amass power, depending on their political base. This is not a formal process of getting power, but it plays an important role in determining the extent of power that one possesses in an organization. In some cases, a person who is more political has the greater power to influence directions and decisions made by organization. As suggested by Robbins & Judge (2014), knowing about the sources of power is crucial in understanding the influence that such individuals have in an organization. Power sources can generally be divided into two groups - personal and formal sources. Each of these can be further divided into more specific categories for better understanding. This paper uses two peer reviewed articles to discuss the sources of power in an organization and their subsequent impact on organizational behavior.



ARTICLE 1: Coping with Job Insecurity: The Role of Procedural Justice, Ethical Leadership and Power Distance Orientation

According to the article, leadership and power are interrelated in the sense that most people occupying leadership positions have some form of power that they can exercise over their followers. However, everyone in an organization has a certain form of power that they can use to influence the decisions made by the top management. While power is an essential instrument for getting what one wants, including, getting other people to do something, it is essential to understand if the power is formal or personal. According to Lam & Wai Chan (2012), many employees are not able to exercise their power because they are afraid of the consequences that they may have to deal with later on. However, the article's authors note that educating employees to understand their powers and empowering them to put it to use can be beneficial to an organization. Some organizations have made poor decisions simply because their employees were afraid to exercise their own power and actively participate in making some of the decisions. The authors also note that power distance orientation in an organization can influence the kind of leadership that anyone offers in the implementation of plans and activities of the organization. Power is the main component in the formal and procedural activities of an organization, which makes the implementation of the activities successful.

Lam & Wai Chan (2012) have noted that the power distance in an organization is a determining factor in the implementation of orders and requirements given by managers and leaders. By occupying a strategic power distance orientation, employees of an organization are able to contribute to the growth of their company in the most profitable manner. The role of leadership and politics is important in defining the power distance that an employee occupies. In order to exercise the power that

one has in an organization, it is important to ascertain the legitimacy of that particular power. Managers and heads of departments can use policies and rules set by the organization to practice legitimacy in implementation of their power. Another element that is crucial in the eventual exercise of power is the ability to inspire and persuade others to perform the tasks that one wants them to do. Persuasion should, however, be rational based on factual evidence and logical arguments, so the followers will be willing to do what they are supposed to. Lam & Wai Chan (2012) also note in their article that inspirational power should be based on emotional commitment that seeks to achieve the needs, values, aspirations, and hopes. This idea is reinforced by Robbins and Judge (2014) who have noted that without emotional commitment, it can be challenging to inspire people to do certain tasks.

Another important element of power identified by the two authors in their article is the ability to consult with other people. Consultation is most likely to disempower the opposition, since they will feel obligated to support the decisions made in the organization. A leader who embraces consultation is able to exercise the power over the employees because they are involved in the decisions that are made on their behalf. Power can also be exercised through reward and punishment. Where people know that there is a reward or a punishment, they will be willing to support a given course. Some people are known to exercise their power by being friendly to their followers. Yet, the authors have also argued that power could be exercised through pressure and collaborations. Whichever methods one chooses to use to exercise power, it is important to keep in mind the ultimate objectives to be achieved in the organization.



ARTICLE 2: Who Takes the Floor and Why: Gender, Power, and Volubility in Organizations

Brescoll (2012) article is focused on how people who work in the same organization are differentiated from one another using the aspects of gender and power. According to the author, gender and power can be used to understand the volubility of employees in an organization. Volubility can be defined as the total amount of time that an employee uses to talk about things other than work for the organization. The author explores naturalistic data sets and experiments to explore the influence of power on the volubility of men, as opposed to female workers. In fact, the author in her article sensationally claims that women are not affected by volubility in their work place. The reasoning is simply because women are not accessed to power, as much as their male counterpart.

From the study, the argument is that a close positive relationship exists between volubility of male workers and the power they possess in their places of work. This relationship is not evident for female workers. As thus, it goes to mean that most male employees who occupy positions of power are likely to use verbal means to get the work done by others. Brescoll (2012) notes that analysis of mediation elements indicate that the difference can be explained in terms of the concerns of women as being highly voluble when it comes to a general work place environment. It is especially true in an environment where the consequences from the owners of power are likely to be high. Notably, the researcher indicates that even women in powerful positions have faced a backlash for being too voluble in their interaction with employees. The phenomenon is observed among male and female employees and hence presents a challenge in understanding the perceptions that people have about power and volubility in general.

In her further analysis, Brescoll (2012) digs deeper into the literature that

connects the exercise of power and the gender differences. The author notes that the level to which one is able to influence others to do a given work depends on the political skills that the person possesses. In fact, the ability and desire to influence is much directed to the need to achieve certain objectives. In situations where the stakes are high, political skill, as a source of power, will most likely be very effective. One area that managers have had to use their political skills to flex their power in an organization has been the presentation of important financial and investment information about the organization they lead. Such information is not likely to be received well by everybody. However, because of the political skills, management can get the support of the stakeholders. The support may not be because the deal is good or the financial books are excellent, but because they are able to persuade them to support their ideas. This can possibly be detrimental to the continued operation of the company. The fact that the top management has the political machinations, they are able to exercise their power in terms of the far-reaching decisions they make on behalf of the organization. As Robbins & Judge indicate in their book, some leaders are able to be influential in terms of their power not because of their ingenuity but because their power tactics, which make their actions acceptable by the rest of people.

CONCLUSION

Power is important in getting the activities of an organization done. Sources of power can determine how one is going to influence the decisions made in the organization. Formal sources, such as organization policies and rules, constitutions, and legal statutes can empower managers to take actions without involving the rest of employees. While, in personal power, power distance orientation is important in determining how one uses the power that they have in advancing the objectives of the organization.