

Qualities of a Good Leader and the Benefits of Good Leadership to an Organization: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

The problem being faced by today's organizations is that they are either overled or underled thus they need to increase their leading capacities in order to exercise balanced leadership. Generally leadership occurs when there is a relationship between the leader (one who intends to lead) and the people who prefer to follow (followers). This study aims to review literature related to the qualities of a good leader and the benefits of good leadership to the organization with the aim to establish gaps for further studies on the topic.

Key Words: Leadership, Qualities, Benefits, Emotional Intelligence, Objectives.

1. Introduction

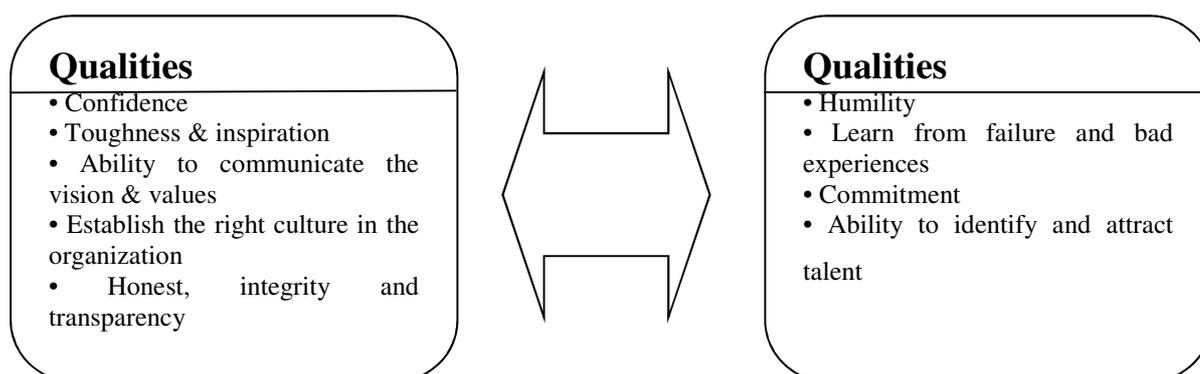
A famous quote by Douglas MacArthur cited in Anderson (2015) states that 'A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent' (Anderson, 2015)². "Leadership is defined as a process of individual influence on a group of individuals aimed at the achievement of individual and or common goals of the group or the organization" (Benscoter and Rothwell, 2012). Thus without two elements of the leader and follower leadership ceases to exist (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

The determinants of good leadership in an organization include the following aspects: the qualities of a good leader, the difference of a boss and a leader, emotional intelligence, objectives of leadership and the advantages of good leadership.

2. Qualities of a Good Leader

Today academics, theorists and psychologists have discovered numerous common traits that define a great leader. A famous quote by Ross Perot cited in Anderson (2015) states “Lead and inspire people. Don’t try to manage and manipulate people. Inventories can be managed but people must be led” (Anderson, 2015). A good example of a good business leader with excellent leadership qualities is Harpo Inc. Chairperson Oprah Winfrey. Harpo Inc. is one of the fastest growing organizations in the world founded in 1986 Chicago, Illinois in the United States of America by the world famous talk show host Oprah Winfrey (Plunkett, 2009) & (Driscoll, 2011). Some of the qualities that have been identified to be qualities of a good leader are depicted in Diagram 1.1 below.

Diagram 1.1 The 9 qualities of a good leader



Muteswa, 2015

2.1 The difference of a boss and a leader

Some experts in the field of leadership and management have categorized leadership as being different from a manager or boss in the organization. According to Anderson (2013) the difference between the boss and leader are depicted in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Difference between a boss and a leader

Boss	Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drives employees • Depends on authority • Inspires fear • Says, “I” • Places blame for the breakdown • Knows how it is done • Uses people • Takes credit • Commands • Says, “Go” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches them • On goodwill • Generates enthusiasm • Says, “We” • Fixes the breakdown • Shows how it is done • Develops people • Gives credit • Asks • Says, “Let’s go”

Source: Anderson, A (2013)

Therefore, in order for a company to become successful it needs effective leaders instead of bosses.

3. Emotional Intelligence

Research results of various studies have proven that emotional intelligence is a critical leadership aspect for a person to be called a good leader. Emotional intelligence involves the process in which a person can control his or her behavior in order to maintain and develop day-to-day relationships with others effectively (Goleman, 1998:94). According to Goleman (2000:80) emotional intelligence encompasses four basic capabilities namely; self awareness, self management, social awareness and social skill. These four capabilities are further explained:

3.1 Self awareness - generally emotionally self aware managers are capable of sensing their emotional feelings anytime (Goleman, 1998:96).

3.2 Self management - self controlled leaders are capable of regulating or minimizing destructive feelings or thoughts before they take any action (Goleman, 2000:80).

3.3 Social awareness - empathetic managers or leaders always take into consideration the feelings of other people before making decisions (Goleman, 2000:80).

3.4 Social skill - leaders with good social skills have various abilities when dealing with issues and they always prefer to find a win-win solution. They believe in teamwork, transparency and accountability of actions (Goleman, 2000:80).

4. Objectives of Leadership

The leadership objectives align leadership decisions and actions to what the organization believes, stands for, where it wants to go and how it intends to sustain its long term survival (that is its values, vision, mission and prosperity) (Waters, 2014). There are several leadership objectives and these include the following:

4.1 To build and sustain trust with the organization's employees and other stakeholders by practicing real care for their wellbeing, concerns, suggestions and growth (Waters, 2014).

4.2 To clarify purpose of the organization or responsibilities by communicating the vision, establishing mutual agreement, motivating employees, thinking strategically and providing adequate resources (Frank Covey, 2015).

4.3 To identify, grow and nurture talent through promoting skills development, career growth, managing performance and engaging employees (Frank Covey, 2015).

4.4 To lead in a strategic, organized and uncompromised way through situations involving conflict (Harvard Business School, 2015).

5. Advantages of leadership

There are numerous advantages an organization can enjoy as a result of good leadership and these include the following:

5.1 Promote ethics in the organization - a good leader leads by example and will do anything to ensure that moral values, principles and ethics of the organization are maintained by his or her followers (Mills, 2005:13). A good example of a good business leader who practices exemplary leadership and good principles is Aliko Dangote (President & CEO of the Dangote Group) (Dangote Group, 2015) & (CNBC, 2014). The Dangote Group which owns 13 subsidiaries was founded in Lagos, Nigeria in 1981 by its President & CEO Aliko Dangote who started doing business in 1978 trading in rice, sugar, cement and later on started full scale manufacturing operations (Dangote Group, 2015).

5.2 Linking of employees' job responsibilities and goals to the organization's strategy - leaders help to regularly communicate the purpose and vision of the organization (Mills, 2005:16).

5.3 Increase performance and productivity - a well led organization performs at its maximum capacity and also organizations that invest in leadership training tend to have better qualified managers who can lead the employees more effectively (LMNG, 2012:10). A good example of an organization that is well led and performs at maximum capacity is Walmart founded by the late great entrepreneur Sam Walton in 1962 in Rogers, Arkansas in the United States of America. By 2014 Walmart employed 2.2 million employees globally, owned 11 000 stores in 27 countries and served over 200 million customers per week (Walmart, 2015).

5.4 Improved employee engagement - leadership has a positive direct influence on employee engagement which focuses on creating consensus when it comes to respect in the organization on people related issues such as what employees can do (LMNG, 2012:12).

6. Conclusion

Therefore based on the study findings it can be concluded that leadership involves persuading and convincing people to go the extra mile in achieving the organization's goals. The literature findings clearly indicate that the advantage of a leader in an organization is that they help set the direction the employees should follow to achieve the vision of the organization. In addition leaders also help to increase business performance and productivity through motivating the employees and setting performance objectives the employees should accomplish.

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