Power, Politics, and Culture

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**Introduction**

According to Ram & Prabhakar (2010), “Organizational culture refers to a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that show people what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior.” It is important to consider the fact that these values strongly influence and modify the behavior of employees in the workplace. Like corporate strategy, organizational culture is also important for business success. Organizational politics and power have the ability to achieve changes in the organizational culture, which can ultimately provide benefits to individual or business. Organizational politics is the use of power in an organization along with social networking to make a way towards individual or organizational success. Here, the focus is to determine the influence of politics and power towards organizational culture and leadership behavior.

**Influence of Politics and Power**

A critical examination of politics and power is highly necessary to determine their influence on organizational culture. Power is the ability of an individual to dominate the decision making process along with other perspectives of an organization to make things happen as per his/her expectations. Organizational politics is the use of social networking within an organization to increase power or to influence an organization (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). It is important to consider that politics can be used in an organization to obtain advantages. Politics in an organization can be referred to as the irrational behavior of an individual to attain something that is beyond his/her control. An organization can effectively achieve desired goals and objectives through the appropriate use of power and politics in the workplace. On the other hand, an organization and management can suffer from defective functioning if they are unable to use that power in an effective or appropriate way.

It is important to consider the impact of politics in an organization to evaluate its liability on organizational culture. Organizational politics has the potential to affect the productivity of business due to its detrimental impact on employees. The construction of politics in the workplace usually distracts individuals to achieve the targets and objectives of an organization. The concentration of an individual is highly impacted due to the paradigm of politics, which reduces one’s focus on certain workplace tasks. One of the most destructive effects of politics in the workplace is on the ambience. Organizational culture and environment are highly affected due to the prevalence of politics among employees (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). Creating a positive working environment is essential for employers and management to excel in the market. However, politics can establish a negative environment, which has the potential to spoil the employee’s relationship with one another. Furthermore, internal politics hinder the ability of an individual to work with full potential. Therefore, it is essential to avoid participating in such politics in the organization as it has a detrimental impact on the progress of an individual.

Power is the ability to influence the behavior of individuals in the workplace. Unequal distribution of power in the workplace can have both positive and negative impact on the perception of employees (Saleem, 2015). Furthermore, it is important to consider the impact of power on organizational culture as well. On the bright side, organizations can control personal security, prosperity, and outcomes of interpersonal conflicts by using power. However, the inappropriate use of power can raise conflict or disorder in the workplace. In an organization, the concept of power is usually perceived in a negative manner. Those in need for power are often labeled as narcissists, duplicitous, dictators, and authoritarian. It is important to consider the fact that managers can use power to enhance the performance of employees. Managers can force employees to work up to their expectations by threatening them with negative consequences (Saleem, 2015).

**Sources of Power**

The organization uses its authority of power in different ways to compel employees to achieve specific goals and objectives. There are five main sources of organizational powers that can be used by management and employees. These five sources of power include legitimate power, referent power, reward power, coercive power, and expert power. A critical examination of each source of power is essential to determine its integrity towards organizational success. The major source of power in an organization is legitimate power that a person in the organization holds. Managers and leaders who have to lead their team and subordinates have legitimate power. For instance, the CEO of an organization usually has legitimate power and he/she can highly influence and control his/her employees to work in an effective manner. Expert power also plays a vital role in influencing organizational culture. Expert power is referred to as the power of an individual due to his/her expertise and knowledge in a specific field (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). By utilizing expert power, an organization can effectively engage its employees to work with quality. Problem-solving skills of these expert people are highly valued by organizations. The influence of those who possess expert power is highly regarded as compared to other employees due to their opinions and ideas. Healthy organizations usually utilize expert power in an appropriate and effective manner.

Regardless of legitimate and expert power, organizations mainly utilized coercive power to compel employees to work in an effective manner. Coercive power is used by managers or employers to threaten other employees. It is highly critical for an organization to properly implement coercive power in the workplace. Inadequate implementation of coercive power can negatively impact the working behavior of employees. Organizations should utilize the significance of coercive power to compel employees to increase their productivity. In order to get the work done, employers usually provide strict instructions on employees. Coercive power is beneficial for employers if they are used in an optimal way to improve the performance of workers in the workplace (Saleem, 2015). Moreover, referent power is of utmost importance for an organization. Referent power can be determined as the charisma of a person with which he/she presents himself/herself. This type of power can be utilized by managers and leaders to motivate others towards work. It is important to mention that reward power is the power of a manager to influence the employee to act in a certain manner through some kind of reward. Managers usually utilize reward power to recognize the accomplishment and hard work of an employee (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). Employee’s motivation is highly essential for management to enhance the productivity of an individual (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). The performance of employees can be changed considerably through managers who possess reward power. However, inappropriate use of reward power for favoritism can severely demotivate other employees in the workplace. Therefore, organizations should need to ensure that reward power is being used in an effective and efficient way.

**Leadership Behavior and Culture**

A critical examination of power and politics is necessary to determine their impact on leadership behavior and organizational culture. It is essential to consider the fact that power and leadership are closely related to each other. The implication of power is significantly higher in leadership practices. No one is willing to recognize the efforts of a leader without power. It is obvious that leadership should not be conceived without power, as a leader has the potential to influence others. The ability of a leader to influence others can only be determined through his/her persuasive and influencing power. Leaders are usually respected, trusted, and admired in healthy organizations. It is beneficial for leaders to utilize various sources of power to strongly influence an organization and its employees. A leader can effectively improve its behavior in the workplace by inspiring and motivating others (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). Reward power needs to be utilized by the leaders to enhance the productivity and efficiency of employees. When employees are praised on the basis of their work's quality and expertise, then it is more likely to motivate them to make a significant effort regarding their daily tasks. It is essential for an organization to adopt the practices of reward and recognition in the workplace. Reward culture in an organization has the potential to improve the overall working environment and organization culture. Therefore, the appropriate implication of reward power rather than favoritism is necessary to create a healthy working environment in the workplace.

**Leadership Influence**

The objective of desired organizational performance can never be achieved with the important role of leadership. It is crucial to indicate that the phenomenon of leadership behavior is recognized as one complex prospect that is associated with different aspects of concerns. It is important for the organizational leaders to identify different forms of complications and align leadership behavior with the actual organizational behavior. Leadership behavior is one complex and critical approach that is linked with the practical implication of appropriate leadership theories (Saleem, 2015). The paradigm of leadership behavior is greatly important because this approach is directly associated with the employees’ performance. It is essential for the organizational leaders to adopt flexible leadership behavior to give the necessary confidence to all the workers without any discrimination. Positive leadership behavior can be a reason of great motivation for the subordinates to perform their organizational tasks effectively and efficiently (Saleem, 2015). It is noteworthy to consider that leadership behavior influenced organizational performance in various important forms. It is also important to explore the complex approach to leadership behavior. The idea of behavioral complexity defined as the overall capacity of the leader to ensure proper involvement in case of various forms of behavioral domains. It is established that the individual with high behavioral complexity is better able to successfully deal with different forms of behaviors and workplace attitudes in the workplace setting.

The paradigm of behavioral capacity makes it easy for the leader to successfully deal with different kinds of employees who own diverse behavioral domains. The theoretical foundations of complexity leadership help leaders to introduce new functional perspectives in the context of the organizational setting (Saleem, 2015). Application of this specific idea is essential to adopt particular leadership styles according to the actual requirements of the organization. The idea of leadership behavior is also closely linked with the elements of organizational structure and overall performance (Ram & Prabhakar, 2010). Undoubtedly, leadership behavior is characterized as the one basic criterion to develop the organizational structure. Appropriate behavior of the leader determines the significant features of motivation, inspiration, and guidance for all the workers in order to meet the basic organizational objectives and goals. The enhanced performance level of the workers is one basic condition to enhance the overall performance level of the organization.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, power and politics are essential factors for an organization due to their positive and negative impact on organizational culture. An organization needs to develop and promote workplace power to ensure increased productivity. The overall productivity of the employees is directly associated with the suitable implications of leadership behavior. The leader’s capacity to successfully deal with different complex situations and workers’ behavior eventually helps them to make proper decisions and avoid the problem of organizational conflicts. Flexible and positive leadership behavior by leaders makes it easy for workers to attain better domains of commitment and work engagement.

**References**

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