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Arwa Alkhawaja

University of San Diego, aalkhawaja@sandiego.edu

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Leadership Style and Employee Turnover

A Mythical Relationship or Reality?

Arwa Alkhawaja

University of San Diego

Abstract

Employee turnover is one of the most challenging dilemmas organizations have to deal with. A considerable amount of research indicates that turnover is mainly a result of a negative relationship between the leaders and managers in the workplace and their followers. However, seemingly conflicting studies seem to show that employees leave bosses they consider to be good at nearly the same rate as bosses they consider to be bad. If the relationship between the leadership and followers is not the sole factor in an employee's decision to quit working, what other factors could be the main causes for employee's turnover? And to what extent does the style of leadership of the manager contribute to overcoming these factors? The answers to these questions are of particular importance to those concerned with the American economy, as it is quite costly to replace an employee on a regular basis. The purpose of this study is to explore the possibilities and methods of retaining great employees without undue sacrifices on the part of managers, leaders, and employees, while at the same time allowing an organization as a whole to develop and progress. On a path towards finding a sustainable relationship between leadership style and employee turnover, the common causes of employee turnover have to be identified first. Then, we will identify a clearer understanding of what leadership means, in addition to identifying main roles and tasks to be investigated. The same approach was used towards identifying what followership means, in addition to identifying its main roles and tasks.

It was concluded that styles of leadership and followership have a direct impact on employee turnover or retention. However, the impact of leadership style is more prominent and has a greater effect than previously assumed. That is because leader is authorized to have the power to change what needs to be changes, unlike followers that are limited with their power and

authority. To build an organization that develops individuals that are loyal to the shared vision without granting too many sacrifices from either the leaders or employees is a difficult task that requires us to extend our attention to the importance of followership as much as we pay attention to leadership. Furthermore, leaders should view their roles as duties rather than privileges. Leaders should be inclusive and understanding of all of their employee's needs to get motivated. Employees are unique individuals and should not be approached and dealt with in the same copy and paste method. Among other factors such as psychology and work styles, it is also important to consider the religious and spiritual needs as well as the cultural variations of employees.

This research helps in shedding some light on the importance of valuing leadership as much as followership. It is also a reminder of the huge responsibility leaders have towards reducing employee turnover, including leaders that are perceived as good leaders. That is because the effect of leadership style on employee turnover is not limited to bad leadership; rather, it includes good leadership with blind spots when self-evaluating their leadership style. However, one essential limitation is the absence of voices of leaders and followers. To further improve this study, interviewing some leaders and some followers get more detailed information about leadership-followership dynamics hoping to reduce employee turnover as possible.

Keywords: LMX theory. Employee Turnover, Leadership, Followership

Introduction

A famous statement about the workplace describes one of the most important factors employees face when considering whether to quit working for an organization; “*Employees leave managers not companies.*” According to a Gallup study taken in 2015, about 50% of the employees who decide to voluntarily leave their jobs do so to get away from their managers and bosses. In the same study, Gallup declared that less than one third of Americans are actively engaged in their jobs due to a lack of loyalty to the workplace. The relationship between managers and their employees accounts for about 70% of that engagement level (Adkins, A. Gallup, 2015). Gallup emphasized the importance of having employees who are engaged in their work by making the following statement on their website: “A highly engaged workforce means the difference between a company that outperforms its competitors and one that fails to grow” (Gallup website). It is clear to see that an employee’s engagement level is very crucial for an organization’s growth and development.

A considerable amount of research indicates that turnover is mainly a result of a negative relationship between the leaders and managers in the workplace and their followers. Therefore, is it not unreasonable to assume that managers should be held accountable for these low percentages of worker engagement and high turnover rates? Or another way to simply say it: bad managers are the cause of unhappy workers and high turnover rates. Looking at this from another point of view, can we not also assume that a supportive boss or leader will make it reduce the likelihood of an employee leaving one job to join another? In trying to answer this question, a study conducted by Ravi and Deepak (2016) surprisingly showed employees leave bosses they consider to be good at nearly the same rate as bosses they consider to be bad. Based on the

previous information, the main question that emerges from this study is: If the relationship between the leadership and followers was not the sole factor in the employee decisions, what other factors could be the main causes for employee's turnover? And to what extent does the style of leadership of the manager contribute to overcoming these factors?

A study conducted by Heather Boushey and Sarah Jane Glynn at *The Center for American Progress* estimates that it takes one-fifth of an employee's salary to replace an employee, placing undue stress on a particular organization whenever there is high turnover rates (2012). Therefore, the issue of high employee turnover rates should be of particular importance to those concerned with the efficiency of the American economy as well.

Considering the previous research done on this subject, the purpose of this study is to explore the possibilities and methods of retaining great employees without undue sacrifices on the part of managers, leaders, and employees, while at the same time allowing an organization as a whole to develop and progress.

Main Causes of Employee Turnover

There is a considerable amount of research done that explores the reasons for employee turnover and the most common causes are:

- (1) Financial/Income Instability
- (2) Lack of Goals Alignment
- (3) Career Opportunity (2015 LinkedIn Talent Trends)
- (4) Effect of Internet and rapid technological advancement
- (5) Bad management and style of leadership (Gallup, 2015)

Points 1-4 will be discussed briefly, however, the main objective of this research paper is

to focus on the Style of Leadership because it is expected that the style of leadership might overcome the other challenges.

Financial/ Income instability

A lot of employees feel that they are underpaid and that the compensation system is not fair, especially if they compare their performance and their salaries with their bosses and with the organization's CEO. The Internet makes such comparisons easier to make, due to the accessibility of public knowledge of salary rates (Wharton management, 2013).

Lack of Goals Alignment

LinkedIn conducted "one of the largest behavioral & survey studies of job changers in the world – 7 million LinkedIn members and 10K+ survey takers" (LinkedIn, Talent Trends, 2015). One of the main findings of this study is that talented employees are leaving large organizations and joining small organizations seeking "challenge, impact, vision, and culture but not necessarily pay" (LinkedIn, Talent Trends, 2015). In addition to that, the same study shows that younger generations want advancement and at the same time more challenge at the workplace unlike older generations that prefer stability. This encourages the younger generations, who are usually technology savvy and have a high ability to multitask, to look for other jobs that provide challenge and growth for them even if that did not mean better pay (Brack, J. & Kelly, K. 2012).

Career Opportunity

Nowadays employees find themselves having to balance between their commitment to their current organizations and their ambition towards career growth and better opportunities. In a study conducted by Biswakarma about *Organizational Career Growth and Employees' Turnover*, he explains that career growth and better opportunities can be identified by four

factors: “career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth” (Biswakarma, 2016).

Effect of the Internet and rapid technological advancement

The world is increasingly becoming a small village that is more interconnected than ever. In this small village, firing employees, no matter how talented they are, or quitting a job, no matter how extravagant the benefits are, is becoming a much more common occurrence. This is in large part a result of the ease in which finding alternative employees or employers has become due to the accessibility of the Internet (Weathersby, 1999). As such, stability at the workplace is becoming harder to achieve and more challenging to maintain as these alternatives develop. The Internet is not only becoming a fertile field for career hunting by employees, but it is the same, a place where employers can recruit talent as well. There are many employment-focused websites that make job-hunting easier and more efficient especially for employees that are looking for better job opportunities even while they are currently employed.

Another effect of the rapid technological advancement to generate stressful situations by expanding the regular workweek of forty hours into longer extended hours that might conflict with family hours (Buckholdt & Miller, 2009). This usually adds stress on the employee due to the increase of work demands and family expectations. However, if technology makes it much easier for employees to look for other opportunities, it is not always a challenge to leaders, actually, it could be a great tool to improve communications within the organization, and it could be utilized to reach out to the younger generations faster and more efficiently. Social media, if used right, might be used as a good tool to promote unity amongst teams, employees, followers, and leaders.

Bad Management and Style of Leadership

Leadership and management are commonly used as interchangeable terms even though there is a huge difference between them. It seems fit now to shed light on the similarities and differences between them to explore if mixing these terms could be a fatal mistake for leaders.

Management and Leadership

Leadership as a term and as an act is an ageless concept, whereas, management is a very young term that emerged about 100 years ago. Management as a function and process was developed to meet the needs of the developing complex organizations that arose from the industrial era (Kotter, 1990). In his book *Force For Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*, Kotter claims that this modern management consists of three main processes: (1) Planning and budgeting. (2) Organizing and staffing. (3) Controlling and problem solving by monitoring results and identifying any deviations from the plans. (Kotter, 1990, pg. 4). McGrath in an article called *Management's Three Eras: A Brief History* on Harvard Business Review also explains the need for the Management Theory. She wrote: “*Prior to the industrial revolution, of course, there wasn't much “management” at all – meaning, anyone other than the owner of an enterprise handling tasks such as coordination, planning, controlling, rewarding, and resource allocation*” (McGrath, 2014). As such, management produces and maintains order whereas; leadership leads to movement and change. Kotter adds that leadership is different as it is all about causing change. This could be achieved through sub processes: (1) establishing direction and developing a vision of the future (2) aligning people and creating people who are committed to the vision (3) motivating and inspiring people (Kotter, 1990, pg. 5).

Kotterman explains in his article: *Leadership Versus Management: What's the*

Difference?” that these two terms are commonly used in an interchangeable approach regardless of the essential differences (Kotterman, 2006). Furthermore, according to Maccoby in a research titled: *Understanding the Difference Between Management and Leadership*, “Management is a Function that must be exercised in any business, whereas leadership is a relationship between leader and led that can energize an organization” (2016, pp. 57-59. Maccoby explains that the management functions cover the technical parts, such as organizing meetings, managing budgets, and other bureaucratic tasks that could be managed by many individuals. He also explains that having many managers to perform tasks is not always important, and he gives an example of GE/Durham plant to support this argument; he explains that groups of 170 employees report to one manager and the task is to supply one of the highest thrust engines in the world for Boeing 777 (Maccoby, 2016). However, Maccoby in his research explains that leaders cause the change by developing a relationship with those they lead and explains that the best style of leadership in this case is the transformational leadership (2016). Management dictates setting priorities for an organization considering the resources, designing the work that leads to the desired results, whereas leadership focuses on creating visions and motivating people by encouraging them to align their vision with the organizations.’ In addition to that, with the dissolving barriers of marketplaces due to the development of technology, managers need to become more people oriented and visionary workers (Weathersby, 1999).

According to the previous definitions, it could be concluded that leadership and management have a lot of similarities and commonalities. The similarities involve planning, recruiting people, making sure that the plan is applied yielding to the desired results, but they differ in the techniques. Based on the previous definitions, it seems that leaders might take poor

measures by acting as managers at the wrong times. It also might be concluded that not every manager can behave as a leader, but a leader can act as a manager and not every leader is a good manager. For managers to be able to overcome the challenges they face, it is recommended that they understand what leadership means. However, to reach a clear distinction in the differences, there has to be an agreed upon definition for leadership. Maybe both need to understand what the other one involves. Good management requires leadership and good leadership requires management skills.

Leadership Throughout History

Throughout history, leadership has been viewed and described as many different things. There has been a huge disagreement over describing leaders; is leadership something that can be acquired through education and practice, or it is rather an inherited trait? To gain a clear understanding over the most current definition of leadership, it is important to briefly study the progression of the definition of leadership and the theories used to understand it over different periods of history. In the Roman Empire, leaders were not chosen based on traits or characters, rather, they were chosen and appointed based on their family pedigree and political connections (Goldsworthy, 2003). However, education traditionally played a great deal in developing the leaders after they were appointed or chosen. This is true in ancient Rome but not the case in ancient China. In China, leaders were prepared and groomed through an enlightening process before they are chosen to be leaders. They believed that enlightenment is the right means to create leaders, so they chose the right leader by enlightening students to the wisdom of the ages (Dicicco, 2003). In China, the only way to rise in the ladder of leadership, other than being a noble person, was to pass the civil service exam (Dicicco, 2003, pg. 15). Dicicco explains that

ancient Persia was similar to ancient Rome in choosing and appointing leaders, but what all three of these ancient civilizations had in common was an attempt at creating a methodology to craft the perfect leader (Dicicco, 2003).

Before moving to discussing the modern definition of leadership, it seems fit to address the effect of religion on leadership. In the professional world, discussing the effect of religion is not a common practice. An exception to that is a study conducted by Gümüşay presented at the 2016 Academy of Management Meeting about the effect of religion on leadership. The study was conducted in Berlin, Germany where he interviewed Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders, in addition to interviewing leaders of secular organizations, such as a city mayor, a member of the national parliament of Germany, in addition to multiple CEOs. The results of this study shows that the Abrahamic Religions had a great impact on the development of the Leadership Theory (Gümüşay, 2016). The importance of this study is not to prove to the world the positive or negative effect of religion on Leadership Theory, it is rather to create a more inclusive culture for those interested in faith and spirituality; granting us more insights towards reaching an agreement over the definitive definition of leadership. For leaders and individuals that believe in spirituality, altruism, and love without committing to a specific religion, Fry conducted research on the relationship between spirituality and leadership (2003). In an article called *Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership*, he argues that incorporating the spiritual leadership theory in the workplace would make organizations more inclusive and more productive, especially after the rise of the call of spirituality and ethics in leadership and in workplaces (Fry, 2003).

Moving to the modern definitions leadership, prior to the twentieth century, the widely

accepted theory was the “Great Man Theory.” According to this theory, leaders are born and not made. As such, leaders and followers were destined to act that way (Cawthon, 1996, p. 1). According to this theory, leaders possess certain characteristics that entitle them to take that role. On the other hand, followers lack these characteristics and therefore, they only can be followers. As such, leadership can be identified as “the interaction of the individual’s specific personality traits with those of a group” (Northouse, 2013, p3). This theory inspired leadership researchers to look for the right leaders with these inherited traits with the assumptions that any existing leader should possess these special traits (Nahavandi, 2012). The Great Man theory was widely dismissed in the last century as a result of the extensive work of researchers over the span of 40 years that tried to identify the unique traits that great leaders should have. Even though some common traits amongst leaders did arise, it is not evident that if anyone that had these traits, they will necessarily become effective leaders (Nahavandi, 2012, p. 65). Failure to prove the accuracy behind the Great Man Theory shifted the attention of leadership researchers to the leader's “behavior” rather than their traits. Kouzes and Posner, in their book *The Leadership Challenge*, explain that leadership started to be conceptualized as a set of behaviors and skills anyone could acquire through practice and learning; leaders could be made (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). This concept seems very practical and realistic; instead of looking for the desired leader with as special trait, it is easier to train an individual with the right behavior that yields to having the desired outcomes. Therefore, the behavior of the leader would determine her/his effectiveness (Nahavandi, 2012).

In an effort to determine and predict the leadership effectiveness, researchers shifted their attention from focusing on the leader solely towards focusing on broader view of contingency

(Nahavandi, 2012). This approach argues that the style of leadership that will be effective depends on the situation. In other words, what works depends. One of the key factors to consider is the relationship between the leader and followers, a factor that was particularly emphasized by Fiedler (1967). Fiedler further suggests that, a task-oriented leader evaluates followers and co-workers based on their achievements and task performance, and they tend to pay more attention to details. Whereas, the relationship-oriented leader evaluates the followers based on their loyalty and sincerity (Nahavandi, 2012). Fiedler's contingency leadership theory or model suggests that effectiveness of leadership depends on the leader's understanding and managing the situation in which they lead (Nahavandi, 2012). This theory is considered as one of the most reliable models of leadership regardless of some strong criticism. However, many voices support the link between the effectiveness of leaders and their ability to adapt to changing situations. One such voice is the works of Hersey, P. & Blanchard, K. H, who conceptualized leadership as a behavior depending on the situation (Hersey & Blanchard, K. H. 1977). The situational theory argues that leaders lead in a current situation based on their ability to use their personal abilities and skills in that specific situation. This means that the situation will determine who emerges as a leader, and it also be understood that different situations require different leadership behavior. In addition to that, the relationship between the leader and the followers is based on four styles of the leader and four styles of the follower. The four styles of the leader are (1) telling (2) selling (3) participating, and (4) delegating. The four followers styles are (1) enthusiastic beginner (2) delusional learner (3) reluctant contributor, and (4) peak performer (Hersey & Blanchard, K. H. 1977). This theory is flexible to the leader who is able to use his/ her skills to attend to a situation, whereas the followers will obtain a variety of responses based on their personal style

(Hersey & Blanchard, K. H. 1977).

In addition to situational leadership theory, other leadership theories focused on the relationship between leaders and followers, such as the relational leadership model. Relational leadership is defined as a pattern of interconnected relationships between leaders and followers to make sense of the situation, to decide what measures to take and how to do those (Gittell & Douglass, 2012). This model focuses on people coming together in order to accomplish a beneficial change (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). This shifted the attention towards the empowerment of individuals, and people's empowerment became the focus rather than task and goal oriented effort as a business management style. This theory helps us understand interrelated internal and external relational contexts (Blustein, D. 2013).

Another model with a similar relational approach is the Leadership-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, which suggests that the behavior of the leader is not the same towards all followers (Graen, G. B. & Uhl-Bien, M., 1995). This relationship is a two-way (dyadic) relationship between leaders and followers. The quality of this relationship depends on the mutual respect, trust, and support. This theory suggests that there are different kinds of relations that take place between the leader and the followers. The favored group of individuals for the leader is referred to as the in-group. Other less favored followers are referred to as the out-group. The in-group individuals receive more support and encouragement compared to the out-group individuals (Nahavandi, 1993). Leaders differentiate between the in-group and the out-group individuals based on their perceived personality, personal characteristics, and competency at performing the job (Bauer, T & Ergoden, B. 2015). The stages towards granting an individual the in-group title happens in stages that could be summarized as follows: the first stage takes place

when the leader assesses the competency of an individual offering him/her the chances to exhibit and prove capabilities. The second stage involves un-structural work-based negotiations between the leader and the follower, if trust is gained, the follower will join the in-group as long as this mutual trust is maintained. As a result, the follower will be granted an easier access to the organization's resources (Nahavandi, 1993). In-group members tend to take the role of advisors and usually have a better chance of a quality exchanges with the leader than the out-group followers. As such, in-group followers have a better chance of taking the tasks and benefits that suit their ambitions and aspirations (Bauer, T & Ergoden, B. 2015).

LMX theory sheds light on the importance of communication in leadership. According to Bisk Education in University of Florida, the friendly communication style between the leader and followers tends to be linked to better follower performance (Bisk Education, 2017). However, the LMX theory does not make it clear how high quality exchanges between the leader and the follower are usually created especially when the leader attempts to inspire the followers to go the extra mile and go beyond their task requirement and expectations? One can hope to find the answer in the Transformational Leadership Theory. This theory argues that a transformational leader is the one who inspires followers and subordinates to create a vision to identify and acquire the needed change. The transformational leader is usually inspirational, courageous, and a risk-taker (Northouse, 2016). According to that, this leadership style is a process in which the leader and the follower develop a relationship that increase morality and motivation for them both (Northouse, 2015). In order for transformational leaders to be able to lead efficiently, they must exhibit four factors. According to Northouse, these factors are displayed in the model of Transformational Leadership in figure 1.

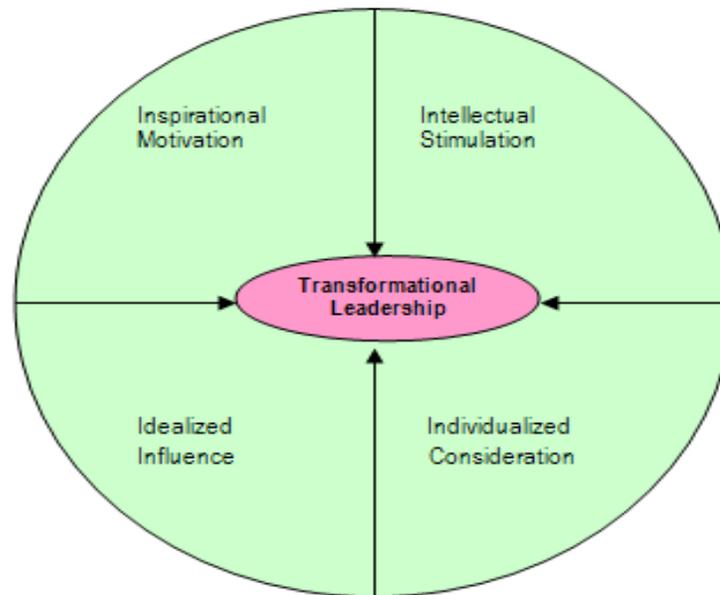


Figure 1: Model of Transformational Leadership

Northouse in his book *Leadership, Theory and Practice* explained these factors shown in figure 1 as follows:

1. **Inspirational motivation:** this means that the leader possesses skills of emotional appeals to inspire followers to commit to higher purposes than their individual goals. This requires the leader to have strong communication skills.
2. **Idealized influence:** this is a charismatic influence where the leader acts as a role model for followers. These leaders influence both the mission and the vision of the organization
3. **Intellectual stimulation:** the leader encourages followers to be more creative and innovative.
4. **Individualized consideration:** leaders act as mentors and coaches to each follower.

This theory was “positively related to follower satisfaction, motivation, and performance” (Northouse, 2016, p. 177). However, this theory argues that organizations and followers will be

always dependent on leaders that possess charismatic characteristics. This implies that it would be difficult to train individuals to become transformational leaders (Northouse, 2016)

From the available literature, it is obvious that there has been no common consensus over defining leadership in a way that it could be acquired. However, Rost defines leadership as “an influential relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect mutual purposes” (Rost, 1993, p. 102). Later on, Heifetz created another conventional definition. In his book *Leadership without Easy Answers* he redefines leadership as an activity, insisting on the notion that leaders are made and not born (Heifetz, 1994). He further explains that leaders usually deal with two types of problems: technical and adaptive. The technical problems can be solved through previous knowledge, expertise, and good management while keep the system as is. Whereas adaptive problems require learning and change of mind and heart that lead to change in the system (Heifetz, 1994). Adaptive changes are much harder than the technical ones because they deal with the reality of having to change and challenge the status quo, and people are generally resistant to change (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). Therefore, leaders always deal with adaptive challenges that require undesired change, and they might get assassinated, whether physically or metaphorically, if they do not lead the change successfully or at the least, they may lose their followers and employees (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002)

In addition to Heifetz's works towards identifying the roles and tasks of leaders aiming to be an effective leader, John Maxwell gave a comprehensive description of these responsibilities that could be identified in Figure 2. (This is more of a practitioner model with almost no research – he has lots of interesting points, but it is not academic).



Figure 2

Retreated from <http://www.1000advices.com/guru/leadership.html>

Maxwell explains in his book *The 360-Degree Leader Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*, leadership is an influential relationship at four main dimensions.

Figure 2 explains these dimensions as:

Top right Self-Leadership: Maxwell explains that for a leader to be able to lead and cause a change, one must learn how to lead them self, first. This could be achieved through learning, creating an inspiring life-vision that is worth living, visualize this life, and then taking an action towards living this kind of life.

Bottom right Lateral Leadership: This means inviting colleagues to work you through explaining the benefits of their cooperation, leading by example, prompting learning new behavior, and explaining the reason for the need of change.

Bottom left Leading Up: Maxwell argues that an efficient leader 'leads up' by inviting boss and self to do more to reach their goals. For this to be achieved, leader is more likely to be within the in-group of the boss to be able to have a high quality exchange (Northouse, 2016).

Top Left Leading Down: This explains the roles of a leader as Maxwell differentiates between leadership from one side and authority and management on the other side. He argues that possessing management and supervision skills are no longer sufficient in today's business world. Maxwell proposes that leaders should lead by example, empower, energize, and encourage teamwork (Maxwell, 2005).

Before going any further to analyzing the relationship between effectiveness of leadership behavior and employees turnover, a question appears which is: can we measure leadership effectiveness? If we can, then it would not be a weak argument to link the behavior of leaders to their employee turnover.

Measuring Leadership Effectiveness

In a study called *What are the Best Practices to Assess Leadership Effectiveness*, Kang and Jin explain how hard it is to measure the effectiveness of leadership for a variety of reasons such as the possibility of the backlash and bias on the side of the subordinates or employees when they disagree with the leader. In addition to that, there is no reliable standard instrument or assessment procedure (2015). However, Kang and Jin suggested using the current available assessments wisely (2015). Measuring a human behavior is always a complicated issue, as such;

the organization should use many different assessment methods such as questionnaires, interviews, surveys, and any other available tool. But the organization should use the tools that illuminate the issue it wants to analyze. In the case of this research, the assessment conducted by Gallup mentioned in the introduction of this research serves this purpose. The study explains the relationship between employee engagement and style of leadership and management. They found that the relationship between managers and their employees accounts for about 70% of the low engagement level of employees (Adkins, A. 2015).

Margaret Wheatley explains a possible explanation for the low engagement of employees as a result of manager's actions. Wheatley explains that there a lot of cases where employees want to contribute and assess a situation but the leaders hold them back by not taking their opinions and suggestions causing the employees or followers to detach themselves from the organization, thus their loyalty is lowered (Wheatley, 2005). According to Nanjundaswamy and Swamy, the "leadership style, organizational commitment and work satisfaction are interrelated. Thus, leadership styles and actions can affect the quality of work life." (Nanjundaswamy & Swamy 2014, p. 58). Affecting the quality of work life is expected to decline the productivity of the organization, and according to Kokemuller, in his article *Methods Used to Measure Successful Leadership*, this could be another measurement of the effectiveness of leadership (2017).

Leadership effectiveness can be measured to a high degree of accuracy, but before going deeper into analyzing the relationship between leadership style and employee turnover, it is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of both leaders and followers. This understanding allows us to avoid the blame game and wasting energy, time, and money without

resolving out to the core of the issue.

Roles and Tasks of Leadership -

According to Heifetz, leadership is about challenging the status quo rather than maintaining equilibrium (Heifetz, 1994). He also adds that maintaining the routine and problem solving is the role of good experienced managers and ones with authority. Authority can be identified as “Institutionalized and legal power inherent in a particular job, function, or position that is meant to enable its holder to successfully carry out his or her responsibilities” (Business Dictionary). As mentioned above, managers are authorized to solve problems that require their expertise, but it can be declared strongly than not all managers can make good leaders and not all leaders can make good managers. This means that leadership is an activity rather than a title, and any individual that wants to take the responsibility of leadership, whether being authorized formally or not, should pay attention to the following roles and tasks: (Heifetz 1994).

1. Diagnose the environment based on the values at stake and untangle issues involved
2. Keep the level of agony of the working conditions at a tolerable and bearable level
3. Identify issues that cause denial, work avoidance, scapegoating, and attacking individuals rather than issues
4. Allow individuals to take responsibility of issues according to their tolerable level
5. Acknowledge individuals’ pain and losses
6. Protect the whistleblowers and those who ask questions that challenge the status quo
7. Help individuals to align themselves with the organization's vision

According to Maxwell, the role of the leader is to inspire and to create followers who are self-leaders. In addition to that, as explained earlier, the contingency theory and the

transformational theory both propose that leadership is the culmination of the interaction between the leader, follower, and the situation. The task of the leader would then be to cause the necessary change (Maxwell, 2005). That being said, can a leader succeed without having good followers? Should there be common characteristics for good followers?

Although there is not much emphasis in the literature about what followership is, its importance, and its roles; some literature could be representative of this issue. Kelley R. wrote a study in Harvard Business Review explaining the importance of fellowship for the success of leadership. Kelley argues that organizations rise and fall because of good leadership and that followership is almost equally as important (Kelley, 1978). Hence, it is very important for leaders to understand how to cultivate good followership. As such, understanding the roles of followership is essential. Followership could be identified as the capacity to take the needed and expected role from you, to be part of the team collectively and cooperatively and to move towards achieving the envisioned goals (McCallum, J. 2013). A follower's effectiveness also depends on their enthusiasm and on their self-reliant participation in a given organizational goal. Usually, followers differ in the motive behind their participation and their tendency to accept the roles expected from them. This means that followers perform well, or not, based on their motivation and their interest in accepting an expected role for their benefit (Kelley, 1978). In addition to being motivated, good followers usually possess common qualities such as self-management, commitment to the organization's visions and goals, a drive towards developing their own competence, courage, risk-taking, honesty, and credibility (Kelley, 1978). It can be said that the difference between leaders and followers is not personal traits or characteristics; rather, it is the role they both play, and each is responsible for carrying the tasks of their roles in

a genuine fashion.

Motivation and having good followership qualities do not guarantee followership effectiveness and do not guarantee loyalty to the organization, as some employee turnover at some circumstances are always inevitable and this turnover challenges the effectiveness of leadership.

Methodology

This study is an applied qualitative research study that intends to minimize employee turnover in organizations relying on the accumulated knowledge leadership studies.

Discussion of Leadership Style and Employee Turnover

Just like the most valuable cars on the market, even leaders tend to have a blind spot when it comes to evaluating their own leadership style. Oftentimes this blind spot manifests itself in the shape of a shadow the leader cast unknowingly on their followers. Assuming that the leader is a well-intentioned individual that aspires the best for the organization as well as for the followers, how can leadership style thus be accountable for employee turnover?

As mentioned earlier, the transformational leadership theory places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of developing a relationship of trust between the leader and the followers. For trust to develop, one should expect fairness and justice to be present in a relationship. Justice is often spoken of in the language of accountability. Manning & Stroud in their book *A Practical Guide to Ethics*, highlight the importance of leaders acting with fairness and justice towards their followers. They define people of integrity to be those individuals that are fair and just with others. This integrity is infectious and is often times the make or break of a particular work force. An organization that lacks a culture of integrity cannot function efficiently

at all. Thus, they conclude that it is of utmost necessity for leaders to lead with integrity in order to have an effective organization (2008). When it comes to employee turnover that is caused by a feeling of unjust treatment, the most common ailment is that of an employee that feels that they work for an underpaid salary. This happens when employees feel that they are contributing great work quality to a company but are getting paid substantially less compared to colleagues that contribute far less than they do (Capelli, P. 2013). In addition to that, MacDuffie explains that a perceived feeling of unfairness is expected to develop some psychological strain on the employee. Such a feeling is expected to cause employees to lose trust in their leaders. This lack of trust leads to accusations of a lack of integrity. This might directly result in employee turnover or in the long run, eventually decrease their loyalty toward the organization affecting their development and growth.

Utilizing leadership theories discussed in this research paper, it is not unreasonable to claim that this issue is an example of leadership ineffectiveness. If trust is lost between the leader and the follower, then this influence is expected to fade away. As such, it is vital for leaders to exhibit fairness and transparency when dealing with employee's income and paychecks. If leaders cannot figure out how to balance the salaries and benefits of the followers themselves, then they should delegate this task to others in the organization that can help in assessing the financial capabilities of the organization in a way that guarantees fair pay for employees based on their experience and their competencies. One step towards gaining trust from employees and followers is having a transparent policy platform, because I believe that employees will eventually figure out the unequal financial treatment sooner or later, and this will prove extremely detrimental to building loyalty to the leader and overall organization.

Another reason for employee turnover that can be resolved with leadership style is the lack of alignment between the individual's goals and the organization's. This might cause the employee to feel alienated and as such, lose loyalty to the organization (Senge, 1990). In his book *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge explains how to develop an organization with a culture of a shared vision (Senge, 1990). When employees and followers participate in making and constructing the vision for the organization, they can be expected to commit to the improvement and development of the organization towards achieving its vision. Wheatley explains that people, in general, commit to what they care about, and not what they are simply told to do (Wheatley, M. 2005). If employees, followers, bosses, managers, and leaders do not have a shared vision, then they will likely build many rocket launchers that are all set to fire to the moon in different directions. The ground team must be united to get to the moon or else the rocket ship will be lost in space. Similarly, an organization will not be able to achieve its goals if all the individual members that make up the organization do not have a shared vision.

From the literature discussed above, if leadership is viewed as an influential, adaptive, and a motivational relationship with self and with others, then it is crucial for leaders to cultivate the desired inspirational culture among followers and employees, and to do their best to understand the follower's qualities and needs that promote and propagate such a culture. Loyalty cannot be bought; the salaries and the benefits of a particular organization can be great and yet normally hardworking employees could be left feeling uninspired. They could feel alienated because they are not part of the in-group and nowadays, rapid technological advancements make it much easier for disenfranchised employees to land a job with another organization, so this problem needs to be addressed by organizations wishing to retain their talent.

The workforce is becoming increasingly competitive, as such; leaders should create innovative opportunities for their followers and for their employees to help them develop professionally. Interesting tasks should be offered fairly to everyone and not only to the favored ones based on personal connections. Leaders should do their best to improve methods of communications in a way that helps employees and followers feel that their voices and opinions are valued and appreciated. Esteem is one of our most basic needs as humans and we all like to feel appreciated and so it is important for leaders to fulfill this desire in their followers (Maslow's Hierarchy of needs).

Transformational theory argues that leaders have the responsibility of promoting an environment of trust between the leader and the follower and this is expected to result in increasing the levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for both the leader and the follower. Leaders must learn how to reach out to the employees and followers in a way that would reduce employee turnover as much as possible. Otherwise, they, the leaders, might find themselves having to leave the organization, but unwillingly. In addition to that, abuse of power must be avoided by understanding that there is a world of difference between leadership and authority. Authority is given to someone for an exchange of service. Whereas, leadership is an activity and a choice to mobilize and to cause change, leaders do not need to have a position or a title to lead. That being said, leadership is not about dictating rules and commands; rather, it is about influence and catalyzing a change. As a result of true leadership activity, people start allowing leaders to influence them (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). If leaders do not act upon these fundamental differences between leadership and authority, leaders would most likely end up having employees that act with compliance only and massive employee turnover will result. Once I was

attending a meeting where a board member of a non-profit organization was upset that employees were complaining about the autocratic leadership style of their manager. That member was demanding all of the employees to adjust to the style of that manager. In my opinion, she did not truly understand what leadership is. It is not about compliance of employees; rather, it is about influencing them. In situations in which a leader must confront a follower, Heifetz and Linsky tell us that leaders must be aware of the asymmetrical power relationship present between them and their followers. Therefore it helps to at least try and approach the followers from a humbled level of equality in order to insure willing compliance rather than forceful one (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The non-profit organization I was referring to ended up losing two of its employees as a result of that style of management and due to the lack of understanding of how the relationship between a leader and a follower should be handled.

In my opinion, one of the biggest obstacles to the effectiveness of a leader is when the behavior of the leader varies from one employee to another according to the LMX theory. Since this behavior causes the formation of the in-group and the out-group, biases are expected leading to deterioration in effectiveness. Ethical leadership dictates fairness (Manning and Stroud, 2008). How can fairness be practiced ethically with the presence of a favored group over another? One can argue that in-group (favored group) forms based on the competencies of its individuals, but, according to LMX theory these competencies are graded based on the alignment between the style of work of the employee and the leader's, or in other words it is based on the ease of dealing with some employees that do not tend to question the status quo. As a result, employees or followers that might have unique unorthodox performance styles might be shunned away and downgraded to belonging to the least favored group even if they are amongst the most highly

competent employees. As I explained earlier, this unbalanced treatment of employees will definitely lead to higher turnover rate. Based on that, effective leaders should constantly question their own personal judgments, assumptions, biases, and stereotypes when dealing with followers or employees who seem to be least motivated and least interested in the growth of the organization.

Leaders should be inclusive and understanding of all of their employee's needs to get motivated. Employees are different individuals and should not be approached in the same cookie-cutter way. Among other factors such as psychology and work styles, it is also important to consider the religious and spiritual needs as well as their cultural variations.

Conclusion

For any organization to promote growth and create a culture where everyone feels the sense of belonging in a group effort that does not happen in one day and one night. This strong foundation starts when we, leaders and followers, start viewing others as humans with needs and feelings, not as steps in a ladder for us to climb. AS individuals, sometimes we fall in the trap of self-betrayal where we: (1) inflate other's mistakes because we do not like them or because they are not in our in-group (2) inflate our own value and virtue or inflate the virtue of others that we like and care about because they are in our in-group (3) justify our reasons that make us be judgmental towards others (4) always blame others especially for our faults and we deny responsibility for our mistakes (Arbinger Institute, 2010). One of the most important values that I believe an efficient leader should have is justice, towards self and towards others. To my opinion, this value is one of the hardest, yet, most important to gain followers trust, for the leader to become an inspiration to others. WE usually tend to turn a blind eye on the mistakes people

whom we love and care about, and at the same time, we tend to put under the microscope the mistakes of others whom we don't love and care about. For example, parents tend to defend their children's mistakes, and be patient with them and the same time, other children's mistakes that usually viewed as major ones. Leaders should educate themselves about their followers and meet them where they are and respect their needs (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

It is the responsibility of the leader to break the cycle of in-groups and out-groups. It is true that followers should do their best to be proactive and reach out to their leaders, but if leaders were unapproachable and do not like to communicate outside of their small in-group, then the effort of those employees will, most, likely go for vain.

However, being kind, patient, and an open-minded leader does not mean over trusting and being very lenient. People vary in their level of virtue, and some see others as means to accomplish their goals only. This is the time for the leader to be decisive in making decisions. This might displease some individuals that are self-opinionated; however, leadership should support teamwork by having a dialogue amongst the team, listening to the challenges, encouraging the innovative weak voices in the organization. This will in enlarging the in-group and disintegrating the out-group gradually.

To build a learning organization that develops individuals that are loyal to, we have to extend our attention to the importance of followership as much as we pay attention to the leadership. Yet, leaders should view their roles as duties rather than privileges. That is because they are authorized to have the power to change what needs to be changes, unlike followers that are limited with their power and authority

Implications and Limitations

This research helps in shedding some light on the importance of valuing leadership as much as followership. It is also a reminder of the huge responsibility leaders have towards reducing employee turnover, including leaders that are perceived good or bad. The first step towards achieving this goal is to view others as humans not as objects and to consider spirituality, culture, and religion as means of motivation when needed as means of minimizing leadership blind spots. Another implication is utilizing the advancing technology to improve the communicational skills. However, one essential limitation is the absence of voices of leaders and followers. To further improve this study, I would interview some leaders and some followers hoping to get more detailed information about leadership-followership dynamics to reduce employee turnover as possible.

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