Power, Authority and Influence: A Comparative Study of the Behavioral Influence Tactics Used by Lay and Ordained Leaders in the Episcopal Church

Abstract
Power, Authority and Influence: A Comparative Study of the Behavioral Influence Tactics Used by Lay and Ordained Leaders in the Episcopal Church

by
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(ABSTRACT)

Leadership is a social influence process that is necessary for the attainment of societal and organizational goals. Leadership is both conspicuous in its absence and mysterious in its presence â familiar and yet hard to define. Leadership happens within the power and authority structures of organizations. The body of research on the influence processes of leadership has focused on organizations with clear hierarchical lines of power and authority between boss, subordinate and peer. This dissertation was designed to study the influence processes of leadership within a religious denomination, the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA). As a Christian community, ECUSA is guided by the biblical model of servant leadership as it was made known in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

To compare the behavioral influence tactics used by lay and ordained leaders in ECUSA, 152 participants completed the Episcopal Leadership Questionnaire and the agent version of the Influence Behavior Questionnaire (Yukl, 2000). In addition to demographic and contextual variables, participants identified the frequency of use of 11 behavioral influence tactics with a designated target (boss, subordinate, peer, or other/hard to define). Almost one-fifth of the respondents could not classify their influence target according to hierarchical categories.

The responses of 75 ordained and 77 lay leaders in ECUSA revealed few statistically significant differences between groups on the use of Yukl’s 11 categories of behavioral influence tactics. Both groups used collaboration, consultation and rational persuasion most often. Inspirational appeals, ingratiation and legitimating tactics were used somewhat often. Apprising, coalition tactics, personal appeals, exchange were used infrequently by both groups. Pressure was almost never used as an influence tactic by either group. ANOVA and discriminant function analysis indicated a slight tendency for lay leaders to use collaboration, coalition tactics and exchange more often than ordained leaders. Men used legitimating tactics somewhat more often than women. Women used exchange tactics slightly more often than men. No statistically significant differences were observed in the use of influence tactics when age, type of ministry, education or technical/adaptive work perceptions were used as the categorical variable.

This study supported previous research on the directional use of influence tactics, while suggesting possibilities for future research in non-hierarchical organizations. Results also suggested a relationship between leaders’ perceptions of their sources of power in the organization and their use of influence tactics. The paucity of statistically significant findings based upon ordination status and the clear presence of a non-hierarchical category of influence target suggest that the explanatory construct of servant leadership plays a role in the power, authority and influence processes of ECUSA.

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11. AUTHORITY INFLUENCE

Authority implies involuntary submission by subordinates. Influence implies voluntary submission and does not necessarily entail a superior-subordinate relationship. Authority flows downward, and it is unidirectional. Influence is multi-directional and can flow upward, downward, or horizontally. The source of authority is solely structural. The source of influence may be personal characteristic, expertise, or opportunity. Authority is circumscribed, that is, the domain, scope, and legitimacy of the power are specifically and clearly delimited. 12. CONCLUSION

Power, influence and authority are the most important aspect in organization leadership. If you have all of these aspects, everybody will follow your leadership.