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and Organizational-In-Group**

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Power Struggles between Top Leadership and Organizational-In-Group

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Abstract

Employees speculate certain outcomes in regards to the power struggle between top leadership and the organization's in-group. Behavioral observations are made towards the entrenched employees and their speculations come to question, whenever the in-group opposes and derails the top leadership's decision making, especially, when the decision concerns one of the organization's in-group members' status. This study researched the relationship between top leadership power and fortified members of the organizational-in-group. Through time, the organizational-in-group have structured their enhanced benefits and sustained their power against top leadership. This power struggle exists on a large scale in academic organizational settings. The organizational-in-group consists of a collective group of lengthy, tenured employees that through time, with strategic manipulations and posturing, have developed a multi-ring, inner circle which fortified their enhanced benefits and sustains their power against top leadership. The organizational-in-group exists in both unionized and non-unionized organizations. Non-unionized organizations often have a more fertile ground in establishing and empowering the organizational-in-group. This type of organizational culture generally neglects the majority of employees' benefits and sustainable welfare. Research data which has been analyzed through empirical/qualitative analysis methodology shows the negative impact, not only on the majority of employees' morals, but also on the organizations' sustainability in the market health and alignment. Organizations should work diligently in balancing the accountability in the distribution of power by starting from top leadership strategically and cascading downward.

Keywords: Organizational-in-group, Leadership-in-group, Power Struggle

Introduction

Some top leadership insecurity of their skills, knowledge and ability often becomes the catalyst in the formation of unbalanced, behavioral power that top leadership consistently will seek to gravitate power to them. This action is pursued by top leadership in order to secure their own position. This especially exists in academic, tenure track organizations. Other times, the power reeling by top leadership is executed subconsciously by the virtue of the authoritative position of the leader. This aims to enhance and secure top leadership power position and employment. As a result, this behavior by top leadership often mobilizes the entrenched and rank-and-file employees to seek security and enhancement to their positions and to build alliances and mobilize relationships with similar interest employees. These employees strive for the same views of interest and benefits as the entrenched employees. Building alliances and securing their positions within the organization is their lifeline to their position and influence. “A central component of a naturally rewarding work process is establishing a sense of purpose” [1, p. 25] At this point, we are witnessing the birth of the ‘organizational-in-group’ within the organization that is seeking to challenge the organization top leaderships’ harvesting power. The leaderships’ in-group employees only exist to support top leadership power and enhance their own position. Leadership’s in-group employees are supportive, influential and are favored by top management and top leader. In reality the term ‘organizational-in-group’ employees are a collective group of lengthy, tenured employees, much larger in employee numbers that exists outside the small circle of top leadership (in-group). One of the ongoing objectives of the organizational-in-group is to have a powerful leadership that can wrestle with and mold top leadership’s behavior to the wishes of the organizational-in-group. Therefore, the power struggle between top leadership and organizational-in-group will be informal activities that are often visible and always in check with both entities. It happened in the George W. Bush administration’s in-group and out-group of power. “The president keeps his decision to fire Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld from Vice President Dick Cheney until two days before he announces it. A retired Army general uses his high-level contacts to shape decision about the war, as Bush and Cheney use him to deliver sensitive messages outside the chain of command” [2,p.I]. These interactions are energy and resource draining and are depleting on both sides. The major dilemma in this power struggle is a negative outcome on a majority of employees, the organization’s future and sustainable welfare.

Methodology

This research will be utilizing empirical/qualitative research analysis through theories of leadership and power applications. Main headers throughout the research methodology work as a key to open and illustrate the relevance of each header in support of the entire unity of the research. Throughout the research, an author supportive direct quotation is applied to enforce the relevance and

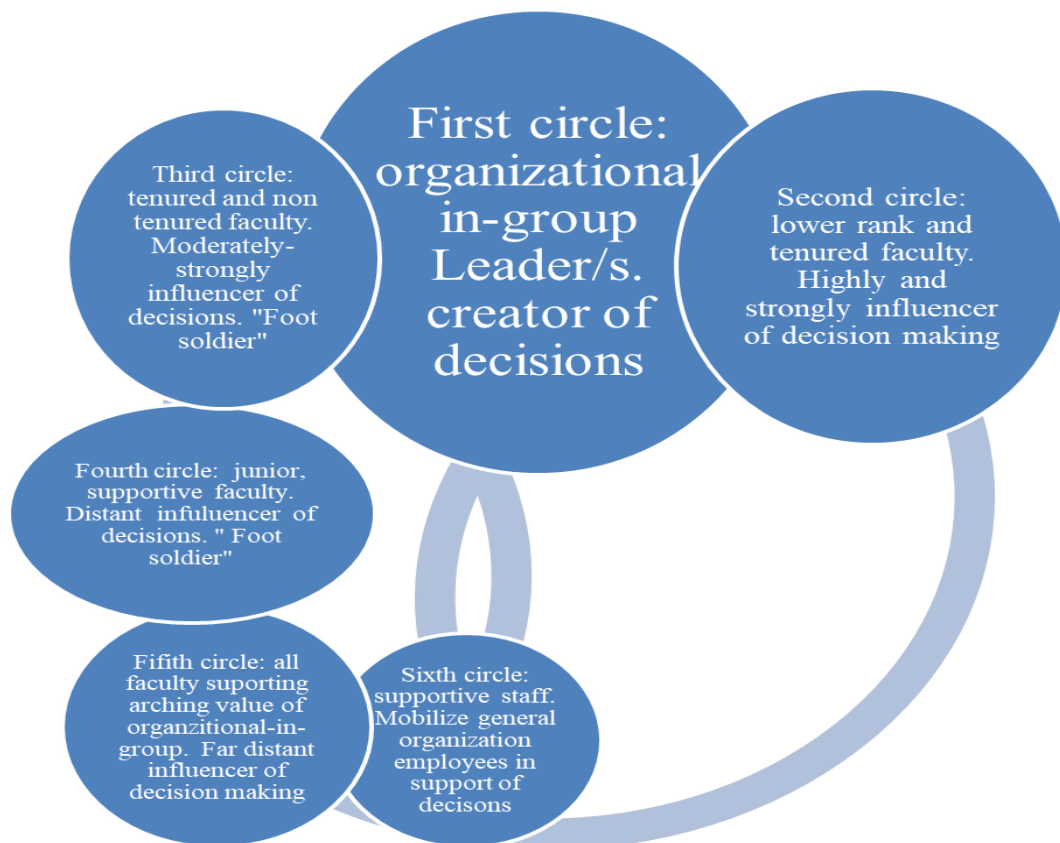
application of the qualitative research to the research abstract. The research framework will show the start-up foundation for organizational-in-group, within the academic setting and how it takes routinization into the organization at large. Then, the research moves to analyze the power structure within the organizational-in-group and top leadership. Organizational-in-group circle diagram has been utilized to illustrate the variation in size according to the amount of power each circle generated. The research used many applied academic experience in illustrating the power relationship between organizational-in-group and top leadership. Then the framework moves towards the finding that shows the power struggles negative effect on the majority of employees and the organization market sustainability.

Birth and Emergence of the Organizational-In-Group

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the mobilizer and driver of the formation is the base of the organizational-in-group. It is more complex and has deeply rooted behavioral drivers that are often involved in the creation of a new organizational-in-group within any organization. Often, the organization structure which inspires the formation of the organizational-in-group is an academic, tenured driver but this does not exclude other forms of organizational structures. One of the major differences between the academic and nonacademic structure is that in nonacademic structure organizations are smaller in size and their inner circles number are less and have less power. This study will concentrate on academic, tenured organizational structure setting. Top leaderships are the catalyst to many dynamic activities in any organizations. As a majority of us are aware that top leadership is inspirational, uplifting and iconic mobilizers in any organizations. Therefore, their behavior is always in check, by not only immediate supportive top management team but also, by a majority of the organizational employees. "Employees learn what is valued most in an organization by watching what attitudes and behaviors leaders pay attention to and reward, whether the leaders' own behavior matches the espoused values" [3,p.421] Factors that are in check include top leadership's appetite for power and control over numerous facets within the organization. The admirations of power by top leaders becomes an attractive driver to harness more power. Top leadership believes that more power is the true path to better position the security and sustainability of their authority. Therefore, top leadership deeply believes power is a guardian of the strategic planning and a moral compass to organization's success. This behavior by the top leadership is a strong mobilizer to the entrenched and rank-and-file employees to seek enhancement to their positions. Security of their job and interest within the organization is at stake. This goes way beyond job security due to the fact that the majority of the entrenched and rank-and-file employees are tenured faculty. Their interest varies from supporting their academic values to supporting new colleagues, who can be excellent participants in supporting the arching values that the future of the organizational-in-group are aspiring to achieve. This motivates rank-and-file employees to build alliances and mobilize closer circles of

relationship with colleagues that have similar interests. “Those “out of power” and seeking to be “in” will first try to increase their power individually. Why share the spoils if one does not have to? But if this proves ineffective, the alternative is to form a coalition- an informal group bound together by the active pursuit of a single issues. The logic of a coalition? There’s strengths in numbers.” [4, p.478] It often starts with colleagues that have similar values, interest and benefits as the entrenched faculty and rank-in-file faculty. The no organizing action by the entrenched employees can be very costly. Especially, in the academic organization which is driven by the front loaders, which happen to be, faculty. Faculty considers themselves to be the true guardians over the quality and stainability of academic programs, student education, institution mission and sustainable health. All these factors become motivators to build alliances and informally organize in a group that strives not only to protect the entrenched and rank-and-file faculty, but also, to safe guard the academic programs, institution mission and sustainable health. At this point the informal organizational-in-group is conceived and soon it will become a reality.

Organizational-In-Group Power Circles



Structure and Power Distribution of the Organizational-In-Group

The entrenched and rank-and-file faculty, which includes younger faculty in their departments, have comparable values and support of the comprehensive beliefs to the overarching goal of the organizational-in-group, is highly attractive to the organizational-in-group leadership. Often the case is that, organizational-in-group leadership seeks to enhance the work environment and safeguard academic standards. It is often that leadership (he/she) is a long tenured faculty and protected by the tenured privilege. This leader sees a need to exercise his/her power alone at first then after the desired change is achieved, his/her personal power become a stimulus to attract other tenured faculty who have similar academic and organizational values. "The first attempt to improve the work situation is usually made by an individual acting alone. Someone who has enough power or influence can effect the necessary changes without collaborating with others." [5, p.591] The prevailing values acted upon alone by the founder leadership become an attractive catalyst to rally and form an informal group of faculty. The reverent power that the organizational-in-group founder possess becomes an informal authority to mobilize other faculty. Often, faculty within the founder's department is similar in rank and time tenured. This second circle faculty has a lower level power than the founder. Faculty members commonly are pursued and encouraged by the leadership to always support verbally and non-verbally the agenda of the organizational-in-group parallel values. We should keep in mind this alliance is an informal group that has no by-laws or formal scheduled meetings. Often the pioneer of this alliance is the informal leader of the organizational-in-group. The pioneer or entrenched faculty of this alliance is an entrenched employee or a senior rank, tenured faculty with reverent power. This pioneer founder has an informal, highest power within the structure of the organizational-in-group. The leader visibly gathers other tenured faculty around him or her. Informal members within the alliances are mainly from the same department within that school with a cascading power structure. This is considered to be the first inner circle of the organizational-in-group. The pioneer faculty share, brainstorm ideas and issues closely within the first circle. The supportive employees within the first circle are encouraged by the pioneer employees to be active in promoting the academic programs and faculty welfares. This encouragement is not limited to recruit other employees whom show comparable values and support to the overall beliefs of the overarching goal of the organizational-in-group but also include similar political beliefs. These faculty members make up the second circle in the organizational-in-group. Frequently, the informal leader within the second circle is a lower rank and tenured faculty in regards to the first circle, but sometimes an entrenched employee with a long tenure within the nonacademic setting steps up. Keep in mind that power structure is informally clustering within the first circle but does filter and share downward with the second circle and to the third circle and so on. The structure is designed informally on the basis of majority prevail customarily practiced. "The power structure in most organizations fairly constant over time because powerful subunits can do many things to maintain their supremacy even though the people change" [6, p.460]

Power Influence and Decision Making within the Organizational-In-Group

In an academic, organizational structure the power influence is exercised through the faculty assembly. A majority of issues that are brought to vote in the assembly, as most of us know, are issues that concern the academic welfare. Each full time faculty has the right to vote on many issues that are brought to the faculty assembly. At this point, the power struggle is from both sides. Organizational-In-Group and top leadership are represented by the president and the vice president for academic affairs. The president and the vice president before the assembly meeting have already worked in building alliances and mobilizing their supportive intergroup circle. Frequently, the intergroup circle is a presidential team that meets every month to strategize for the university's strategic plan formation and discuss many other issues. This presidential administrative team tends to act and behave in a highly administrative, bureaucratic environment. "Thus, in universities the faculty component function as professional system, but the administration tends to operate as a bureaucracy." [7, p. 544] The presidential teams are usually the vice president of academic affairs, vice president of HR, and vice president of students' affairs, IT and information technology vice president, vice president of institutional development, vice president of satellite campus and so on. All the presidential team and their supportive intergroup mobilize to seek alliances and rally supporting votes to be exercised through faculty assembly. As for the organizational-in-group mobilization and recruiting alliances are already in motion to include many rings of the circles are extended to more than six or more circles that include many different schools and departments. Similar formations also take place in organizational settings that are nonacademic. All the above tactics are exercised but the voting system will be done in a form of an organization wide vote, faculty assembly meeting and with the board of trustees and also through online voting. In the academic setting organization, some events of the power struggle can extend to even overturn an executive vice president decision, in which the faculty assembly has no jurisdictions over it. This power struggle was raised when eliminating a young faculty, who was on tenure track and part of the organizational-in-group. The vice president was the sole decision maker, with her own jurisdictions, to terminate that faculty during 2nd or 4th year review of their contract. Here is where you can see a clear situation of the power struggle of the vice president's decision in the termination of faculty member and top leadership and the organizational-in-group. The faculty welfare committee, a standing formal committee that encompasses influential circle members from the organizational-in-group, called for an emergency assembly to overturn the vice president's decision. The vice president of the academic affairs had previously eliminated many other faculty members in similar situations and unfair termination which creates disparate impact. No one came to his/her defense because they were not informal members of the organizational-in-group. "Individuals and subunits who want to exert political influence can select from a fairly long list of political strategies. Decision Making can be manipulated by changing the criteria" [6, p.461]. Special faculty assembly meeting session was assembled. The vice president sat on the stage searching for her own in-group of deans and other vice

presidents to see if they are present to help influence or maybe derail the upcoming vote. After the vice president stated and justified her stance in front of the assembly and her decision of termination of the faculty member remained in effect. She stated that her decision was for the sustainable welfare of the university. The assembly moved to have a secret voting ballot which resulted in giving the vice president a vote of no-confidence on her decision and she was reprimanded and sanctioned by the assembly. As we know this action will carry future consequences of her job security with the university. After two years she was forced to leave the university with deep injuries on her academic records. It is highly likely that this outcome affected her ability to secure a position equal to her old vice president of academic affairs. She had to settle with a considerably lower rank as a director of a program, in a different university in different state. This illustrates the power level and effect of this informal entity that is called organizational-in-group.

Power Struggle and Effect on Organization Welfare

This power struggle often develops negative outcomes, not only on top leadership but, also more drastically on the majority of the organizations' employees who are not in the organizational-in-group. "Personal appeals are only appropriate for a limited range of requests" [8, p.217]. Someone can propose that majority of employees should get into the organizational-in-group then the problem will be solved. It is not that easy or accessible to every employee in the organization. The fact is that this entity is an informal group with an informal authority which makes the organizational-in-group not governed by any organization policy. Moreover, it is politically and strategically driven which makes it very hard, if not impossible, for those who do not fit well will be accepted to organizational-in-group. As stated above, this group is well entrenched, rank-and-file employees with outer circles of low ranked employees which provide constant support to the center group. This enforces attitudes within the organizational-in-group to keep the elite members to have a close to perfect fit in attitudes and behaviors. This behavior of the organizational-in-group becomes a strong barrier to entry into this group. "In these situations of uncertain responsibility, there trends to be a certain amount of power lying loose and group wants to grab it" [7, p. 337] This informal organizational-in-group is well aware of their ability to defend and distribute the enhanced benefits to only so many members. They are in complete understanding that the more members enter the group; it will result in the dilution of benefits, status and cause weakening to the group. The negative effect on the organizations' top leadership and their supportive team is minimized and controlled, to some considerable point. This is because top leadership always has its' own support group and autocratic structure with authoritative power. This places them in a position with legitimate power support. Therefore, top leadership chooses the path of least resistance and works in semi-alliance with the organizational-in-group. The negative outcome is always maximized on the general employees' population, who are out of the

organizational-in-group. Often the case is that the effect on the outer group takes many paths. One major one is outer group job security within the organization. Even if an employee succeeds through hard struggle in securing their jobs, the struggle continues in promotion, tenure and advancement process, for the out of the organizational-in-group, employees. If organizational-in-group realizes that the policy of promotion and tenure could become an obstacle for their members' promotions, they will mobilize to change it. The organizational-in-group compartmental thinking envisions that the changed policy will benefit all employees. In reality, this is not true. A majority of these new policies are ambiguity formulated and adds more subjective, execution decision making process. This subjectivity is in the hands of the tenure and promotion committees' members whom often are elected to serve through the voting of department faculty members. The group with the strongest alliance is most likely to win in placing their members in the promotions and tenured committees and other high profile standing committees. The organizational-in-group is often jockeying for control of the influential standing committees to serve on. If there is an outstanding faculty member who can best fit the position with outstanding credentials but he/she does not belong to the organizational-in-group, then he/she will be voted out by the organized circle department member of the organizational-in-group. Frequently, the organizational-in-group is the most organized, well supported group from within its circle and outside. You wonder why some employees who are outside the organizational-in-group, would come to the aid the organizational-in-group, because people often like to side with strong and influential entities for future benefits. This behavior creates an unfair and unhappy work environment to those employees who are outside the group and are often a large number of employees. This unfair culture can effect employees' productivities, performance, loyalty and residing with the organization. More importantly, the image of the organization can suffer in attracting and retaining future good employees. On the other side, if the organizational culture executes procedural justice and distributive justice process fairly and confidently, it will motivate employees to perform better, retain and recruit high performing, future employees. "Further, if employees view due process procedure as fair and available for use, they may be less likely to sue their employers or quit their jobs" [9, p. 497].

Research Findings

The research outcome shows multi-faceted behaviors and organizational structure in a negative outcome. One of the main findings is the disenfranchisement of the majority of employees who are not in the organizational-in-group. Employee's disenfranchisement transcends many other negative effects on the organization. Also, the finding showed the development of polarized, organizational politics that has grave and detrimental effects on organization business sustainability. This research finding enforces the attitudes within the organizational-in-group members that their power survival is to attract and retain the elite members. The organizational-in-group believes that elite

members are an integral part of the group and with a close to perfect fit in attitudes and behaviors of the overall arching goal of the organizational-in-group. This attitude entrenched deeper the organizational-in-group members political polarization. It also affects negatively, the welfare sustainability of the organization marketplace. Moreover, the finding suggested remedies in dealing with power struggle within the organization.

Suggested Remedy in Dealing with Power Struggle within the Organization

When it comes to power in any shape, form and setting, it becomes difficult to convince those who possess power, to relegate it. Power has properties that when certain people arrive to it, they become attracted to power, and then become addicted to power. This addiction becomes a positive or negative internal mechanism with oneself. One feels that they cannot sustain their existence without the nourishment of power. Eventually, at the end of their journey, they will be devoured by power. “ He “Niccolo Machiavelli” stated that a person should never cultivate private virtues that in public life can prove politically suicidal; instead, one should develop vices if these will help perpetuate one’s rule” [10, p. 102]. The workable solution is convincing top leadership to abandon negative and non-functional power from their control. It is the leader’s ability of relinquishment of negative power from their control as a positive outcome for all. This translates into empowerment of subordinates down the chain of the command and holds them responsible. Top leadership should be convinced that relinquishment of negative power from their control to subordinates becomes a key mechanism in their hand to evaluate subordinates. This abandonment of power becomes key success indicators of subordinates in the hand of top leadership to evaluate and assess their downward chain of commands. In return, this will become enhanced, positive, power gain for top leadership. They relinquished negative power to be delegated to subordinates, only to gain this power back as enhanced positive distribution of return power. This will build trust and increase the leaders’ legitimate, positive power with subordinates. The trust factor will foster healthier relationships and should cascade downward through the chain of management and employees. Eventually, the trust and truth of top leadership actions will foster new positive relations. The action of truth from top leadership in genuinely sharing power with lower rank employees is a positive, constructive gain on all parties involved. This power will boomerang back to top leadership with respect and enhanced referent power as leadership theory demonstrated. As an overall effect this should diminish the need for organizational-in-group formation and eventually the power struggles.

Limitation of the Study

This study has constraints of utilizing a larger sample of participative universities and colleges in this research. One workable path to recruit and create a sufficient size of universities and colleges in the sample of this study is the

identification of needed segment that has a genuine interest in achieving a healthy, organizational setting and admiration of referent power. One method to identify those is through an enticement survey. This enticement for participation in the survey can be in a reward to universities and colleges. Reward can incorporate a form of considerable discounted registration to their faculty in attending research conferences and publications.

Conclusion

One of the amazing attributes of power is that it never relinquishes both internal and external dynamic change. It is one of the most influential forces in our lives. It not only shapes the human history, good or bad, but it has truly inspired mankind to arrive to what we are now. Therefore, power struggles are not only within organizations but also within human and natural laws. To try to understand and direct power in organizations is a crucial starting point that can lead to a better understanding the importance and the influential effect of power on human life. Just take look at the catastrophic human migration which is taking place right now. It is clearly a result of a failed utilization of power struggles among world leaders. World influential leaders with tremendous different aspects of power, like the U.S.A., should now act as an integral part of positive power in bringing the world together, without inferiority of one over others. This could be achieved with moderate success by enabling the United Nations instead of disabling it. China is jockeying to lead the world and the United Nations. We should support any global power for humble and equity for all humanity to lead the world. If the superpower leadership influences its followers blindly, which is one of attributes of leadership power struggles, then this can show us the constant struggle of good and destructive power, as well as, polarize a democratic society and learning system to regress. Organizations, both academic and non-academic, are part of societies' nucleus building block. To manage and direct human utilization of power in a healthy, universal path is in the world's sustainable prosperity. Both academic and non-academic organizations can yield a variety of benefits on human wellbeing. Both educational institutions and world organizations could develop and position present and future world leaders. This is our one and only beautiful planet and the most crucial job to sustain it.

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