Individual Synopsis: Ethical Challenges of Leadership[*]

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Abstract

This paper is trying to explore the organizational culture and subcultures, which are becoming to be the root of organization. It also includes learning about ethical leadership aspects such as ethical and non-ethical leadership, main characters and ethical practices. Moreover, this paper continues to find out the problems, which relate to organizational culture and subcultures, including the management skill of ethical leadership. In addition, this paper presents the key or critical issues to develop ethical leadership. Finally, it provides more challenges issues of ethical leadership in the future that leaders have to concern and deal with it in the future. To do this research, I select the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) because this is a reputation organization in Thailand and it belongs to government and I select four people from both management position and lower position. (Two management positions and two lower positions) As a consequence, we could see exactly how Thai traditional culture play significant role to organizational culture and create a serious problem as "senior system", which are prohibit overall performance reach a potential and can cause a lot of problems occur in the organization. Furthermore, we could see the leadership style of each leaders to deal with ethical and moral issues

Keywords: Individual; Leadership.

Introduction

According to Schein (2010), we will select representative groups in the workplace and to provide them a framework to think about organizational culture and subcultures. In addition, we will let them to identify, compare and contrast the main artifacts, the espoused values and the underlying assumption. In this assessment, I interviewed four people, which are Governor of PEA, Manager (south part of Thailand), IT engineer and HR officer. As a consequence, we can see their variety

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attitudes, behavior and including subcultures which happen in the organization. Moreover, there are interested issues that expressed some subculture which are contrast with the main artifacts, the espoused values and the underlying assumption. Furthermore, four people displayed their ethical leadership attitudes. Thus, we can analyze how it is influence from their work or culture and what is the most challenging of ethical leadership in this organization. (The results: see appendix B)

Compare and Contrast Organizational Culture and Subcultures Senior system

PEA is willing to provide the equality among the employees and this is one of their policies. However, senior system still happens in the organization because it comes from Thai traditional culture and becomes to be a strong root of organizational culture. Thus, senior system is totally contrast with the espoused values. In addition, senior system has a lot of impacts to the organization and all of interviewees think this is really unfair for employees in the organization.

Firstly, it affects the promotion system. All employees realize that senior would has right to be promoted before other candidates, even though, their performance might be better than senior. This system has become a traditional of organization and if anyone does not accept, most of them will resign and looking for a new job. Hence, we can see senior system still affects performance appraisal system because this organization uses KPI to measure employee's performance. Therefore, they cannot use KPI in efficiency because the promotion still relies on senior system. Moreover, governor continues to point out that this is a serious problem because some seniors do not have enough potential to work in the position. Finally, this problem could decrease overall performance.

Secondly, senior system damages some important work performances because IT engineer reviews that the organization allocates a huge budget to develop electricity energy system by sending employees to oversea to learn from foreigners but it is quite useless because senior has the right to go first. As a consequence, the organization does not obtain the benefits back. In addition, most of them are not experts and do not have enough knowledge in this area. Thus, it quite waste budget a lot because it looks like their vacation in oversea.

The Bureaucracy system with decision-making

One of the espoused values is to become decentralization by distributed the administrative functions or powers of (a central authority) among several local authorities. Both of governor and manager realize that PEA has already released decentralization policy but the decision-making

processes are still a serious problem because of the bureaucracy system in the organization. This is because PEA is not flat organization due to the fact that there are 14 levels in this organization. As a consequence, the authorities always rely on process of each manager to approve. All interviewees agree that decision making takes really long time. Officer explains that sometimes she has to wait for approving process a few months. Allof these could decrease overall work performance and do not reach a potential because it always stick in the process and many project or task might be rejected or refused. Furthermore, it really makes employees to lack of energetic or enthusiasm, no learning or creates a new thing. However, slowly decision making process become to be an organizational culture and everyone can accept.

Discipline and regulation

In this point, there are a few interested issues, which are the main artifacts of PEA. These issues are about uniform and working time. Firstly, PEA has a rule for all employees to wear uniform every Monday. From the interview results, it illustrates that there is only management position follow this rule because they are trying to be a role model. Whereas, the lower positions ignore to wear organization's uniform because they do not recognize that wearing uniform could create a unity in the organization and they think this is not strict rule. Secondly, working time here starts 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. Many employees finish working before 4.30 pm. The interested point is management position does not punish employees because they try to understand that some employees have to manage their family issue such as pick up their children etc. However, management position has never stopped working before 4.30 pm. because they really respect the regulation. Thus, the questions happen now why employees in the lower position do not follow the regulation or discipline of the organization and without punishment. Most of managers are quite flexible and not assertive. This could reflect from Thai culture because Thai people are really kind, do not like to argue or fight with people and have a high compromise skill.

Working style

The values of organization is to work as team and focus on collaboration but in reality, most people attitude or underlying assumption is to work as individual because they think working as individual could create more productive. Hence, working as team is just the ideal framework and everyone realizes this is a core value of the organization but they disagree. According to this

organization, there are a lot of senior people who do not have potential to work but the organization has to retain them. This kinds of people lack of energetic or enthusiasm. As consequence, they do not care much about their career achievement. IT engineer reviews that there are a few people to work when they are assigned to work as team. Therefore, people think work as individual make them feel free, finish work faster and more productive.

Socialization

Socialization is totally reflected from Thai culture because most employees always stay together in group to talk and discuss, especially gossip. Gossip becomes to be a traditional culture in this organization. News or information always spread out so fast in this organization because of gossip. This is dominant when employees are unsatisfied in some issues and try to display their emotion, feeling and negative attitude. In addition, a lot of employees tend to use gossip to lobby other people to be their side and understand or believe them.

There is an interested finding in other branch of PEA (south part of Thailand). They create their routine activity to increase the unity and good relationship in the organization by having dinner party with employees in department two times per month. As a result, employees in south part of Thailand are different from PEA at Headquarter because they have higher sense of unity and employees are loyalty to organization. Thus, They are serious to follow the regulation and never break down the rules. This maybe because there are not many employees in the organization when compare with the head quarter. As a result, it is easier to control anything or communicate with employees because management position is closer to employees than the head quarter.

Unfair treatment (punishment policy)

Unfair treatment is an important problem in this organization, especially in punishment system. All of interviewees agree that punishment system here is not strict and very flexible. Management position states that actually punishment system is very strict and fair but it depends on people who bring it to use. IT engineer and officer review that some people are not punished because they have a backup who have a powerful influence this organization or some managers ignore because they are the same side with them. Many employees present a petition but nothing happen. From this point, it is totally opposite with core value, which is transparent because they cannot check and follow up the

process. Finally, all employees understand this culture and try to accept. Another example is no dismissal policy or fired policy here even though, some employees never reach standard performance.

Diversity

PEA is not diverse much because it only relate to religious and gender. There are Islam, Christian and Buddhist in this organization. It also includes Gay, Tom boy, lesbian and trans man. However, all interviewees agree that they do not have any problem to work with these people because people focus on their work performance and really understand their nature.

Ethical leadership and non-ethical leadership

From the results, there are something different in perspective of ethical leader between management position and lower position. Whereas, they all similar in the way of connecting to the moral issue. This could reflect beliefs and values in Buddhist or others religion. For the management position, their perspectives about ethical leadership characteristic cover overall core values of the organization (Initiative creativity, modern news system updated, excellence service, unity, transparent and moral) and leaders have to concern in mission, vision and strategic goal. Moreover, they focus on customer because this is a service business, including responsibility for the social and environment. On the other hand, for the lower position, their perspective is to concentrate on fair treatment, understanding each of employees nature and taking responsibility to help employees to deal with problems. It also includes sharing opinion and listening to the employees. (Hear their voices) Whereas, non-ethical leader from their meaning totally opposite from ethical leader.

Employee satisfaction

Overall, all interviewees rate quite high satisfaction level in 8 from 10. Even though, there are some problems in this organization, they are happy to work here because PEA has good benefits and cover to their family such as medical, insurance and free electricity payment. Furthermore, this organization is really stable and no dismissal policy, including guarantees all their lives because the government supports this organization. It means this organization has never shut down. All of these reasons attract them to choose this organization.

However, they provide some recommendation to change some of organizational cultures here. For the lower position, they would like to get rid of senior system because it creates many problems, especially unfair treatment. In addition, they would like to change organizational structure to be flat organization to reduce the slowly processes and to be faster in decision making. On the other hand, for the management position perspective, they recommend to be stricter in regulation, including punishment system because they would like employees to follow the regulation. Moreover, they would like to create the loyalty and real unity happen in the organization. It also includes building up the conscience of service mind to employees feeling.

Key and Critical Issues to Develop Ethical Leadership

In this part, I will clarify critical issues in this organization and point out the solution to develop ethical leadership by using Johnson's textbook to be a guideline. In this organization, actually, leader has a powerful to make a decision but sometimes they hesitate or ignore to use their power and use their power in the wrong way to protect their people. As a result, it totally breaks the rule and destroys a system. Therefore, this problem directly relates to leader that they have to improve.

The leader's character

Prudence is an important virtue for leader because this is an ability to choose the best action in any situation. (Johnson, 2012) In this organization, leader has to deal with many powerful people from government who influence the benefits of organization. Thus, they should have wisdom to solve the problem or know how to talk and react to these kinds of people. Moreover, senior system is a main problem here and it is so difficult to get rid of. As a consequence, leader needs to know how to work with them smoothly and how to solve the conflict that always happen between senior and younger employees.

Another crucial character is justice. According to Johnson (2012), there are two components of justice, which are a sense of obligation and equally treatment. This is a significant problem here because all interviewees agree that a lot of managers are unfair in punishment system and unequal in promotion system too. Hence, it is really necessary for leader to support equitable rules and laws in the organization and to realize that everyone deserves the same rights.

Ethical perspective

Justice as fairness to guarantee equal right and opportunities behind the veil of ignorance is very interested topic that could connect to this organization. Rawls (2001) claims that leader is encouraged to be fair and they have to guarantee and ensure that all employees have equal to access promotion, training, and other benefits. It also includes providing a support to them. PEA has a problem of unfair promotion and benefits. This is because of senior system. Thus, it is so difficult to use stepping behind a veil of ignorance even though; this is a helpful technique because it is impossible to exclude a social class differences from the decision-making procedure as long as a senior system still be powerful in this organization. Therefore, this is a conflict issue that we need to find the best solution in the future.

Code of ethics

PEA has been created core values for many years but they did not have code of ethics. According to Johnson (2012), code with written document could create a positive influence on ethical behavior and to be a tool to encourage people in the organization resist unethical group or organizational pressures. Thus, to build up code of ethics could increase the level of ethical concern for all of employees and it is really help people to focus on crucial ethical standards, outline expectations and to guideline people act appropriately. However, the important things that they need to concern is to create code of ethics align and support with core values. If the organization does not make it in the same direction, it would create more confusing and useless to have code of ethics. Finally, leader plays significant role to present these codes and convince employees to believe, trust and follow these code of ethics.

How to get rid of "senior system" (Thai traditional culture)

According to PEA, there are fourteen levels of their work structures. Therefore, reorganization to be flat is the most important tool to help this organization to decrease a powerful of senior system. Flat organization could reduce a lot of processes in decision-making and it would not have too many hierarchies in this structure. Moreover, PEA has just released decentralization policy. As a consequence, this policy is totally decreasing a powerful of senior system in this organization because we focus on empower to employees which do not need to rely on managers. It means employees could make a decision independently. Hence, leaders should understand all of these changing and open their mind to set up new perspective and bring it to use more strict as a role model. It also

include stricter in punishment system than before when the problem happen because of senior system.

Challenges of Ethical Leadership Issues in The Future

To achieve in business, it is so difficult to concern and balance on both company's profit and ethical standards in the same time. Hence, overcoming the challenges of ethical leadership could provide more benefits to the organization in the future and keep a good relationship with the public, stakeholder, supplier, client and people in the organization. (Saez, 2012) There are some important challenges that the organization should concern and prepare themselves to deal with them which are following this;

Consistency

One of the most challenges of ethical leadership is how to maintain ability to consistently adhere to the rules or standards because consistency is very crucial to inspire employees to trust and respect you, including indicates that you stand by your core values. In some situations, it is so difficult for employees to understand leader because some rules or standard would conflict with employees feeling or attitude but they do not know the real purpose that leader try to provide more benefits to them and organization. Thus, this is a hard job for manager to manage and to communicate with their employees.

Gray areas

The difficult part of ethical leadership is when leaders confront with moral gray areas because doing the right thing might be less beneficial to your business. Sometimes this topic does not have right or wrong but it depends on leader's decision and the way that they think. However, one thing that leaders have to accept is the results from their decision-making by taking all responsibility.

Lack of transparency

Transparency is the significant key for business achievement because this could develop a sense of trust and believe from people. The organization should allow public to know how transparent you are such as organizational structures, decision-making processes, policies and all kinds of procedures in the organization. (sustainablebusinessforum.com) However, some organizations focus on the public but they hesitate to concern their employees who are the most important person. Leaders should start to build up transparency with employees because showing a transparency to them could

create more unity and loyalty in the organization. In addition, it could decrease unfair treatment problem in the organization too.

Crisis management team and plan

It is really important for the organization to prepare themselves to face with the crisis all the time because we do not know when the crisis will happen. Therefore, leaders should play significant role to create the idea to establish the crisis management team. This team should consist of experts in all areas such as marketing, financial, human resource, IT and law etc. because they have to analyze strength, weakness or any aspects in deep details with full of knowledge to prevent the crisis occur in the organization. It also includes establishing the policy to support crisis management. Furthermore, leaders should provide more information to employees to understand and convince them to realize that crisis management is very crucial issue that we need to concern.

Conclusion

PEA is Thai organization and presents the aspects of Thai traditional culture obviously. I can learn a lot about the organizational culture and subcultures in this organization and it is very interesting because this organization absorb Thai culture and reflect as the way of people behavior, attitude and values. In addition, I obtain a lot of knowledge of ethical leadership because I have an opportunity to know what people think and how they combine the theories with their leadership skill in problem solving. Moreover, I see many crucial problems in this organization and I realize that ethical leadership is very important because most of problems relate to ethical. Hence, leaders have to play a significant role to deal with it effectively. It also includes broadening their perspective to prepare and create a strategy to deal with the challenges of ethical leadership in the future.

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