

Essay: Influence and Social Power

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Introduction

In the current environment, every individual tends to make decisions based on the surpassing stimuli or vice-versa. In a simpler approach, it can be manifested that both the actions and the words impact the behaviour proclaimed by the others in that similar environment. Concerning the marketer's approach, influence has been considered as an important element and essential item in making the decisions. In the year 1984, Robert Cialdini wrote a book named *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* which had been named as one of the best-cited books in marketing. This highlights the concept of “*weapons of influence*” that determines the fact that channelling and understanding the mix of persuasion convinces one to determine the actions and acts as a larger part of successive referral marketing (Cialdini, 2016). Thus, the aim of this essay is to explain the science that Cialdini sites with the addition of assessing the extent to which the leaders can make the use of unity and a maximum of three elements from “*weapons of influence*” in order to ethically influence the others. Thus, the thesis statement for this essay can be termed as “*Whether Cialdini's “weapons of influence” help the leaders in influencing others ethically or not?*”.

Explanation on “Weapons of Influence” in the context of leaders influencing ethically

Cialdini in the alignment of influence boiled down six distinct ingredients inclining with the “weapons of influence” named as reciprocity, social proof, commitment /consistency, scarcity, authority and liking. As per the viewpoint of Cialdini, the above ingredients highlight the principles of persuasion which are significantly used in influencing persuading others. As per the understanding of Cialdini, it is manifested that it is important to get an individual's attention before creating an influence on them. He believed that individuals contain similar triggers that can be defined to be irrational and automatic. Usually, they conquer the right decision but sometimes they also tend to be influenced and persuaded by the interest of the other (Miller, 2020). As being in the position of the leader, the effect they create is submissively positive wherein their main aim is to make the individuals feel empowered, innovative and inspired. Moreover, to leaders be more effective in times of greater challenges, the leaders are supposed to master the ability to persuade and influence others. Thus, by definition, it can be manifested that the influence is considered to be an ability that affects the behaviour in a particular and known direction with the addition of leveraging the key tactics, inspiring and connecting with them (Orji, Mandryk and Vassileva, 2015).

As per the viewpoint of Giurge *et al.* (2021), the power or the influence is considered to be a pillar of leadership wherein it signifies, the capacity and the ability of an individual in influencing the behaviour of the others in the environment. The influence inbuilt by the leadership is mainly inferred in terms of interpersonal influence that is projected on the behaviour of the others. In justification, French and Raven's taxonomy highlights five distinct social powers such as rewards, legitimate, expert, coercive and referent that highlights the power that is poised over one's behaviour. Moreover, obtaining the power to deliberately influence others is mainly associated with both personal and informational power. Thus, influencing with the help of significant power helps the leaders in building the culture and values within the organisation (Kovach, 2020). In support, the power theory of leadership highlights the aspect of leaders motivating the team or the targeted people with the help of the power of the influence they can possess over them (Chemers, 2014).

The seventh principle of persuasion after the projected six is a unity that mainly embodies the fact of shared identity that is shared by the leaders with their team. The unity principle in terms of persuasion focuses on moving beyond the similarities that are present on the surface level (Cialdini, 2016). In justification, Maslow's hierarchy of needs highlights the five ditching steps that justify the need of an individual. The third step of Maslow's theory is the need for the love and belongingness that is mainly subjected to the interactions, friends and relationships that is built within the workplace involving the team and the leader. Thus, the principle of persuasion highlighting unity tends to boil down this step in Maslow's hierarchy of needs wherein it is mainly focused on making the people being belonged into the group and are likely open towards persuasion with the leaders (Lester, 2013). As per Cialdini's viewpoint, the unity principle is all about the bonds and the relationship. For instance, leaders building a strong relationship with their teammates within the workplace makes them more influential and gain persuading power over the individuals in altering their behaviour. On the other hand, the organisation and the brands can successively boost their businesses with the help of great communication aspects with their targeted audiences (Cialdini, 2016).

Apart from unity, consistency or commitment is one of the persuasion principles that highlight the desire of an individual to be consistent in relation to what has already been done. Once the choice or the decision is accumulated by the leader, they tend to encounter the interpersonal and personal pressures that aim at behaving consistently in addition to the made

commitment. The accumulated pressures result in responding in a specific way that justifies the made choices and decisions (Cialdini, 2016). This strategy can be acquired by the leaders with the help of small initial commitments with the targeted individuals. In justification, the leaders seeking to create the influence with the help of consistency principle tends to look active, voluntary and public commitment that usually is taken down in the form of writing. This helps the leaders in being ethically-driven towards the people with the addition of creating the influence that is ethically correct in altering their behaviours (Sethi and Kapoor, 2018).

On the other hand, authority is one of the persuasion principles that focus on the fact of people tend to follow the authority figure in the environment. This mainly obliges with the concept of obedience towards the raised authority being considered right and disobedience being considered wrong. It is mainly based on the idea that is followed by the people that is led by knowledgeable and credible experts (Morgan *et al.*, 2017). For instance, this principle is mainly projected within the celebrity endorsements wherein they influence the consumers to be prone towards purchasing the product from the market. In justification, servant leadership highlights the same wherein an individual or the leader is focused on gaining the authority over the power with the help of interacting with others and propound the ethical influence over them. Thus, the source of authority in the alignment of influencing overviews the fact of valuing the people, trusting, caring, listening and humility (Cialdini, 2016).

Leaders can significantly apply the authority strategy in terms of signalling others which makes the leader more knowledgeable and credible in comparison to the others before attempting to influence the individuals. The scene inclining this highlights that it significantly does not matter if the person that is aiming to influence the individual being in the position of the leader should be connected but is likely to prosper from introducing themselves to the community that makes them influential (Hiller *et al.*, 2019). For instance, the group of real estate agents are able to increase the number of subsequent contracts and the property appraisals with the help of arranging the staff at the reception to initially answer the queries put up by the consumers before influencing them; thus, highlighting the authority. In justification, as per the contemporary leadership, the leaders are considered to be contemporary when they use personal knowledge and credibility in influencing the individual with the aim of inspiration and development and making a difference within the living community (Ruwhiu and Elkin, 2016). On the other hand, in support, Gardner *et al.* (2021) posited that as per the authentic leadership theory, the leaders

mainly focus on opting the different elements of leadership wherein they result into changing their approach and styles based on the demand of their situation with the addition of using their own credibility, beliefs, moral compass and the values. Henceforth, this highlights the significance of the authority principle in influencing and persuading others.

In addition to the above, the third principle of persuasion that can be accumulated in ethical influencing is the liking principle. This highlights that people tend to be more influential by the individuals they like. The persuasion science highlights that there are three conditions factors such as people that are similar to us, people paying the complements and the people who tend to cooperate in order to reach the mutual goals. These factors result into influence the likeability of an individual (Morgan *et al.*, 2017). For instance, consumers in the market are likely to buy the products if they are communicated in the market with the help of familiar faces and hence influence them in purchasing the product just because that specific person is selling the product in the market. This strategy can be applied by the leaders in terms of focusing more on the areas of similarity that is shared by the leaders with others with the addition of making the genuine pitch or move before initiating the influence or alternation of the behaviour over others.

As stated by Yukl *et al.* (2013), ethical leadership elucidates that the leadership built in relation to the ethical beliefs and the values are considered to be normatively appropriate as they are mainly conducted with the help of interpersonal and personal actions and reactions. In the major boiling, it is pinned as putting the people in the alignment of leadership considering trust, fairness, charisma and considerations. In concern of the influence and the persuasion, the ethics that should be considered by the leaders is the attitude, beliefs, motivation, behaviours and intention of the audiences. The ethical conduct of the persuasion in relation to the principles can be stated that it is an ethical form of influence that helps the leaders in compelling the audiences in altering their behaviours and intentions within the community by making them believe that the leaders are credible and likely to take the appropriate decisions (Marlin, 2013).

Moreover, the power of persuasion accustomed by the leader helps in creating a better workplace in terms of enhancing the employee engagement, motivation, enhanced and empowered culture within the organisation and inspiring the employees or the team members in being more innovative. The influence and persuasion used by the leaders significantly rule the current leadership theories that are opted by the leaders (Marlin, 2013). In support, the LMX theory of leadership highlights that leader with the help of emotion, trust and respect can build

relations with the targeted people and thus increases the rate of interpersonal relationships. This theory specifically highlights that the leaders or the followers developing a unique and trustworthy relationship with the people based on the needful social exchanges within the organisation results in influencing the outcomes concerning the employees within the workplace (Babič, 2014). Thus, as per this theory, it can be manifested that influence and the persuasion acquired by the leaders is proportional to the outcomes such as engagement, motivation, empowered culture, effective leadership and inspiration concerning employees is noticed within the organisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be manifested that weapons of influence by Robert Cialdini are one of the authentic approaches that can be accumulated by the leaders in influencing the people within the community with the aim of altering their current behaviours. As per the analysis, it has been seen that in addition to the unity, the leaders can also focus on adopting authority, consistency and liking in order to influence the community ethically. The persuasion is considered to bring the ethical parameter of the influence and thus, adoption of these strategies significantly helps the leaders in ethically influencing the targeted people within the community with the aim of making a difference. Moreover, leaders abiding persuasion and influence tends to directly impact the employee outcomes such as engagement, empowered culture and motivation in terms of influencing them to acquire a good and positive approach within the organisation. Thus, the thesis statement can be stated as “*weapons of influence*” by Robert Cialdini helps the leaders in influencing others ethically

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