

Leadership and COVID – 19

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Perspective

The corona virus (COVID - 19) is testing our system, says Byung-Chul Han, testing the economic, political and social order, the way we relate, how we deal with our family, friends and neighbors, the stability of our relationships and love relationships, as well as our mental health. The mechanism by which we reason and make decisions is in crisis. Currently, we cannot assure our well-being based on individuality and selfishness. We are facing a world conflict, which welcomes all of humanity, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, lineage or condition.

Daily actions, in normal times, are based on decision-making that obeys personal needs, which we do by virtue of our experience, intelligence, capabilities, abilities and survival need, for the concretion and satisfaction of such ends we need certain incentive and guide. That today, are reflected in a series of decisions and over-actions, for example, the radical decision to close borders between States. Our generation put aside collective action towards a common end (or enemy), based on certain historical contexts. Until today, we lived in peaceful times, where individual sentiment began to emerge with great force, coupled with the fact that, hand in hand with the technological phenomenon, we all apparently represent a role model, having a diffuse image on an external guide. Currently, the self represents my motivator, given by the very personal nature of them.

Given this current paradigm, today, a clear obedience to authority is required, who in principle acts for the public good. This authoritarian culture is based on an obedience mechanism that has reflect a more successful result, in terms of avoiding the massive expansion of the virus. In some States the numbers reflect the reality, but these should not be analyzed in isolation, let alone influence absurd comparisons between States, it should be remembered that it is influenced by a series of determining factors, to mention, population, territory, concentration of people within a city, number of inhabitants per square kilometer, etc.

About the guide that we need today, and that the population, long ago, desperately required. It seems relevant to us to bring to the fore certain considerations about the requirement in the one who carries in his hands the light of the unclear paths that we have to travel today. We do not want to propose a model to follow from a science fiction novel in which we seem to live today, such as a “Big Brother” conjugated with the North Korean police authority or state, nor a disrespectful figure from a country where rules the social riot, but rather a reciprocal trust balance.

Leadership is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that is related to other disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, History. The subject attracts people, heads of state, rulers, businessmen and researchers, as well as managers. This phenomenon arises when a person leads and stimulates the other members to achieve a higher performance, which could result in a beneficial result. In this matter, are brought together intimately related concepts, leadership, psychology and direction.

There are those who attribute the main social and historical events to the leader, that these are coming to change the course of history, others think that this is due to social products; in reality, the role of the leader has a lot to do with history, his influence is enormous, but not total, nor absolute.

Leadership is present in many human groups, as well as in many animals. Human leaders are people, so they have a personality, with strong traits and characteristics that make them different or similar to the rest of their peers, they play a decisive role at any given time. This is exercised according to the group, whatever its nature. We can find leaders in the family, in a group of children, in a couple, in a group of friends, in business, an NGO, in governments, in all kinds of organizations. It is the most important and determining factor in the success of a human group.

There are several theories of leadership, each with its philosophical, psychological, sociological, and managerial position;

each one, with its current, its definitions, its explanations, its functions and its characteristics. The study of leadership goes through different factors such as: personality characteristics, motivation, groups, situations, circumstances or contingencies, technology, expectations, objectives, goal, satisfaction, transformation, emotional intelligence, transcendence. Each theory is distinguished by its concepts, principles, and functions. This is not a mathematical formula.

All situations are different, they spiral over and over again, but with different levels. Times change, currently we are not the subordinates, nor the members, now we are collaborators. Communication, globalization, conditions change, the global village has narrowed.

With leadership it happens the same as with the rest of psychology: we look for integrating models. American professor Edgar Schein¹ points out that instead of continuing to perpetuate cyclical fads, we must develop integrative models, especially as the world is increasingly complex and is rapidly changing.

Leadership is the influence in the population that, through a credibility process, collaborate and cooperate consciously motivated, in the achievement of common objectives and consequently of goals.

Management, for its part, emerges as a productive force in the development of the various spheres of social life, and is aimed at obtaining superior results in achieving the objectives that human sets. We must also consider psychology as a study of the psychic activity, the personality and the performance of man in the different spheres of social life, thus, psychology constitutes a tool of management. Psychology is an essential part of the theory of management, whenever there is a conception of man and his performance. Management carries out a conception on the performance of the human being, which constitutes the object of study of psychology.

We can consider two essential directions regarding management definition. A reference to the subject-object relationship as the main executors of the process without which it is not possible, so it would be a great absurdity not to take into account or try to reduce human factor. In another sense, absurd, reducing the direction to human relations exclusively, since there is another essential dimension that is the technological aspect, referring to the set of actions that is reduced to achieve the objectives. Not recognizing, valuing and analyzing the balance between both elements is one of the greatest insufficiencies that a theory of direction can have.

The exact science model is not satisfactory to apply to these disciplines, since there are substantial differences in objects.

The human factor is a complex and dynamic element that must be studied in its peculiarities. Management does not obey a spontaneous process of life, this requires the preparation of people, who are in charge of planning, organizing, executing and controlling the different tasks that are carried out in an organization in order to achieve the proposed goals.

It should be noted that there is no mathematical formula for leadership, it does require respectable methods and capabilities, and mass mobilizers (not populism). This time requires serious measures, although be careful, that some such as the follow-up of infected people, publication of lists of sick people, their closeness or identifying applications, may be attacks on fundamental Human Rights such as privacy, or interference with the mobile device of entire populations, when it comes to property rights, as China is currently trying. However, it is necessary to play the legal game, if the decision to take these measures requires, for our times, their implementation, and if so, needs to consider limits in space and time, although at the time, there is no clarity of continuity of the permanent state of crisis.

Thus, the leader, of course, is a person, who is endowed with a status, status that is given to him by his own past history, this, fulfills a role and has a series of functions that must be developed based on this status. This, proposes the direction, guides, unites, motivates and stimulates people to achieve the established objectives. Currently, the leader must not only obey a guide, he must plan, organize, inform, evaluate, reward, control, motivate, sharing with the group of cultural patterns, beliefs, norms, values and meanings that exist in a certain group. In order to unite for the sake of achieving its objectives, in this way, the group must feel identified with the leader, who today, of vital importance, implies a combination of social and emotional development. The group, which awarded him the crown of leader, given by an original act, or because the leader has been established externally and which he holds power, he is given the qualification, must identify with him, to achieve common goals.

In COVID-19 times, vital function that leader must exercise falls into the hands of promoting a culture and an organizational climate, responsible for interpersonal relationships, how he communicates with others to achieve cooperation, collaboration and support in the project. Not so different is the management figure, that involves a series of decision-making, enforcing them, informing people to enforce the plan, delegate responsibilities and solve problems. The leadership must influence the members so that they collaborate consciously and motivated in the achievement of the social objectives and consequently of the goals. Latter complements the first².

¹Schein. E (1993) "Psicología organizacional". Ed. Publimez. México. P. 252.

²Kotter, J. P. (2001) El directivo como líder y como ejecutivo: la simbiosis del éxito. Harvard Deusto Business Review, (Especial 100). 62 - 72.

In confused times when it seems to be no origin about the problem, in which, we dare to affirm that this does not always seem relevant, but rather the ability to perceive a conflict and act on it towards its transformation, implies the development of the activity, taking as antecedent the author's knowledge of himself, a clear vision of the group about its values, customs and beliefs, to recognize its ideal leader. Experiencing interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, in which others have great value in identifying on him or her, which is given by a judgment of his figure. Along with the most efficient behavior given by the stimulation, facilitation and support in the development of others. This should understand

that there is not an answer for all areas, but give the space to other experts so that they can give answers for us in a supportive and driving environment. He or she must have a tremendous capacity for humility to recognize that the illumination of truth is not in him or her, but he does have the power to elevate others to give us guidelines to reach required goals.

We are endowed with feelings, reason and language, entity called to rethink the current scenario, limit our unlimited destructiveness, because in this way we will save ourselves. We don't have all the answers, but we do have the tools to give someone the role of guide.



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