Leadership In Hksar Essay, Research Paper

Leadership is important to every organization because it is very difficult to success without a good leader. So, many scholars write about leadership and organizational management. Edgar Schein is one of the most famous experts in this field. According to the article Leadership and Organizational Culture written by Schein (1996), leaders should be able to create, build, maintain and change organizations. His ideas would be discussed in the following paragraphs. Also, the case of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) would be applied to the discussion and HKSAR Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa s performance would be considered.

Firstly, Schein thinks that leaders can create organizations. They are taking the role of animator in the stage. Successful leaders should have vision, that means they can foresee the future. Apart from vision, it is very important for leaders to have energy to create the organizations. They would try one approach after another, despite facing repeated failure. This energy often comes from the leaders strong personal beliefs. More importantly, leaders can transmit energy this energy to their subordinates.

Considering the case of the HKSAR, the Chief Executive Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, as a leader of the government, can be regarded as having enough vision. Every time Mr. Tung delivering his policy addresses, he has new fundamental policy like the promise of building 85,000 housing units per year, promoting Information Technology (IT) and Cyberport, environmental protection and building Disneyland theme park. We can see that Mr. Tung is in fact having vision and wants to make Hong Kong more competitive.

In addition to vision, Mr. Tung does have energy. Mr. Tung faced financial trouble when he was working in his family shipping firm in the early 1980s, but he was able to help the firm sail through the recession. He faced similar situation when the Asian financial crises happened in 1998 and he led the government go through the difficult time. Therefore, in general, Mr. Tung can be regarded as a successful animator.

Secondly, leaders can build organizations. They are culture creator at this stage. The leaders beliefs, values and basic assumptions are transferred to the mental model of the subordinates. This is a process of building organizational culture. The leaders may do this in three ways: (1) they only hire and keep like-minded subordinates, (2) they indoctrinate and socialize subordinates, and (3) they set their behavior as a role model.

In the HKSAR case, Mr. Tung can be considered to be conservative and he in fact is trying very hard to build his own culture in the government. For example, he appointed Ms. Elsie Leung, who is like-minded to Mr. Tung, as the Secretary of Judiciary. Also, we can see that most senior civil servants act quite conservatively under Mr. Tung.

Having said that, some of the senior civil servants who are cultivated by the British colonial government like Anson Chan seem to have different beliefs and values from Mr. Tung. So, there is always rumor that Mr. Tung and Anson Chan have some sort of disagreement. Mr. Tung, however, was constrained. He could not appoint all like-minded people to be top civil servants when he came to the power since he had to keep the government stable.

Thirdly, leaders are able to maintain the organizations. They act as culture sustainer at this stage. Successful organizations should attract imitators to keep the organizations developing. Having said that, the founder/ builder of the organization usually does not want to let go of the leadership role and even prevents the growth of the new generation of leadership. The successful leaders at this stage are the ones who permit other forms of leadership to emerge. Also, they must understand the organization s culture, including strengths and weaknesses, to consolidate the elements that are needed to maintain the ability to function and grow.

Regarding the case of HKSAR, Mr. Tung can be considered to be an unsuccessful culture sustainer. In my opinion, Mr. Tung does not want to let go of the leadership role. He is not willing to share his power with his subordinates regarding some important issue like his IT policy and Educational Reform. Also, it seems that Mr. Tung is preventing new from of leadership. He always uses the rotation method to appoint senior civil servants but rarely appoints people outside the government or promotes lower-level civil servants.

Lastly, leaders should be able to change the organizations. They must act as a change agent. Successful leaders at this stage should unlearn things that are no longer serving the organizations well. They, however, cannot change culture arbitrarily, but have to evolve culture by building on its strengths. They must be able to create for the organization a sense of psychological safety . Also, they have to undergo a personal transformation as part of the total change process. The most important feature that the leaders have to demonstrate at this stage is flexibility.

In HKSAR, we can regard Mr. Tung as lacking the flexibility that is needed to change organizations. As mentioned above, Mr. Tung has vision, but the problem is that he implements too many reforms such as Civil Service Reform and Educational Reform at the same time. It seems that he does not have priority to carry out different reforms. Also, Mr. Tung s Civil Service Reform is implemented too fast that it faces great opposition within the civil servants and this does affects the civil servants working sprits. He appears to be lacking some flexibility to slow down the reform a bit to keep civil servants working sprits.

Generally speaking, Mr. Tung did demonstrate some features of leadership in the past three years, but he lacks some other quality of a successful leader. Also, we cannot neglect some factors that affect Mr. Tung s leadership.

As mentioned above, Mr. Tung did demonstrate his strong vision. He has more plans. But some people said that Mr. Tung is too long-sighted and not short-sighted enough. In his policy address, he talked about many plans, but seldom mentioned about the solutions to some social problems like unemployment.

Apart form lacking flexibility, which is mentioned above, Mr. Tung also is criticized that his reaction to crises is slow. In the bird flu crisis, we can see the HKSAR government led by Mr. Tung did not take the issue very seriously and the Head of Health Department even said that she ate chicken every day! And finally the government had to kill all the chicken in the territories. Besides, as a political leader, Mr. Tung should be visible to the public. However, Mr. Tung seems to be media-shy and it is not easy to see him very often through the mass media.

There are some factors that affects Mr. Tung s leadership in the HKSAR. The most important one is the China factor. As Hong Kong is just a special administrative region of China, Mr. Tung has to consider the view of the central government in Beijing, especially when dealing with some sensitive issue like the relations with Taiwan. But Mr. Tung is so conservative that it seems he is mainly accountable to the Beijing government but not the people of Hong Kong. Some people even said that he is just a puppet of the central government.

In addition, Mr. Tung is elected by the 400 selectors and so he has limited legitimacy. Also, he has no political experience before taking office. So, it is difficult for him to manage the HKSAR government.

In conclusion, our Chief Executive demonstrated vision and energy so he can be regarded as a good founder/builder of organization. However, he is surely not a good culture sustainer or change agent. And his performance, to some extent, affected by some factors like the China factor. Mr. Tung is not a bad leader but until now he is not a very good Chief Executive.

References:

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