

Questions for Review

1. How would you define power? How is it different from leadership?

Answer: Power refers to a capacity that A has to influence the behavior of B, so that B acts in accordance with A's wishes. Power may exist but not be used. It is, therefore, a capacity or potential. Probably the most important aspect of power is that it is a function of dependency. The greater B's dependence on A, the greater is A's power in the relationship. Dependence, in turn, is based on alternatives that B perceives and the importance that B places on the alternative(s) that A controls. A person can have power over you only if he or she controls something you desire.

Leadership is different from power in goal compatibility. Leadership requires goal congruence while power requires dependence, not goal compatibility. A second difference relates to the direction of influence; leadership focuses on the downward influence on followers, power does not. Thirdly, the research on leadership has focused on style. Research on power has focused on tactics for gaining compliance.

2. What are the five bases of power?

Answer:

1. Coercive Power - A power base dependent on fear of negative results
2. Reward Power- Compliance achieved based on the ability to distribute rewards that others view as valuable
3. Legitimate Power - The formal authority to control and use resources based on a person's position in the formal hierarchy
4. Expert Power - Influence based on special skills or knowledge
5. Referent Power - Influence based on possession by an individual of desirable resources or personal traits

3. What are the nine power or influence tactics?

Answer:

1. Legitimacy
2. Rational persuasion
3. Inspirational appeals
4. Consultation
5. Exchange
6. Personal appeals
7. Ingratiation
8. Pressure
9. Coalitions

4. In what way is sexual harassment about the abuse of power?

Answer: Sexual harassment is any unwanted activity of a sexual nature that affects an individual's employment and creates a hostile work environment. Sexual harassment isn't about sex: it is about abusing an unequal power relationship. Harassment can damage the well-being of the individual, work group, and organization.

5. What is political behavior and how would you distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate political behavior?

Answer: Many definitions focus on the use of power to affect decision making in the organization or on behaviors by members that are self-serving and organizationally non-sanctioned. We shall define political behavior in organizations as those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organization but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization. Politics is a fact of life in organizations because organizations are made up of individuals and groups with different values, goals, and interests. This sets up the potential for conflict over resources. Resources in organizations are also limited, which often turns potential conflict into real conflict. Also, gains by one individual or group are often perceived as being at the expense of others within the organization. These forces create a competition among members for the organization's limited resources. Finally, the realization that most of the "facts" that are used to allocate the limited resources are open to interpretation creates political behavior. Because most decisions have to be made in a climate of ambiguity, where facts are rarely fully objective, and thus are open to interpretation, people within organizations will use whatever influence they can to taint the facts to support their goals and interests. There is a "legitimate-illegitimate" dimension. Legitimate political behavior refers to normal everyday politics. There are also illegitimate political behaviors that violate the implied rules of the game.

6. What are the causes and consequences of political behavior?

Answer: There are both individual and organizational factors involved.

1. Individual factors. Researchers have identified certain personality traits, needs, and other factors that are likely to be related to political behavior.
 - a. Traits—employees who are high self-monitors, possess an internal locus of control, and have a high need for power are more likely to engage in political behavior.
 - i. The high self-monitor is more sensitive to social cues and is more likely to be skilled in political behavior than the low self-monitor.
 - ii. Individuals with an internal locus of control are more prone to take a proactive stance and attempt to manipulate situations in their favor.
 - iii. The Machiavellian personality is comfortable using politics as a means to further his/her self-interest.
 - b. An individual's investment in the organization, perceived alternatives, and expectations of success will influence the tendency to pursue illegitimate means of political action.
 2. Organizational factors. Political activity is probably more a function of the organization's characteristics than of individual difference variables. When an organization's resources are declining, when the existing pattern of resources is changing, and when there is opportunity for promotions, politics are more likely to surface.
 - a. Organizational culture is characterized by low trust, role ambiguity, etc.
 - b. Making organizations less autocratic by asking managers to behave more democratically is not necessarily embraced by all individual managers.
7. What is impression management and what are the techniques for managing impressions?

Answer: This is the process by which individuals attempt to control the impression others form of them. We know that people have an ongoing interest in how others perceive and evaluate them. Being perceived positively by others should have benefits for people in organizations.

Some IM techniques include:

1. Conformity
 2. Excuses
 3. Apologies
 4. Self-Promotion
 5. Flattery
 6. Favors
 7. Association
8. How can one determine whether a political action is ethical?
- Answer:** There is no obvious or clear-cut way but there are 3 questions that may help:
1. What is the utility of engaging in the behavior?
 2. Does the utility balance out any harm done by the action?
 3. Does the action conform to standards of equity and justice?
9. How does culture influence politics perceptions, preferences for different power or influence tactics, and the effectiveness of those tactics?
- Answer:** Three areas are important to answer this question.
1. Politics Perceptions - Negative consequences to the perception of politics seem to be fairly widespread.
 2. Preference for Power Tactics - The choice of effective tactics is heavily dependent on the culture of the country in which they are to be used.
 3. Effectiveness of Power Tactics - Still open to debate; too little research has been done.