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What do Employees, Managers and Social Identity Theory have in common?

" Well, the more you identify with a group, the more you distance yourself from the other groups".

So what has this to do with management, you might ask.

Michael Willemyns, Department of Management, Victoria University, in his study, addresses the issue of 'employees perceptions of managers. It seems that **the extent to which we identify with particular groups in our organizations has a significant bearing on the way we are viewed by our employees.** This is not a startling revelation you might say, but what is startling are the factors that employees consider constitute satisfactory and unsatisfactory management behaviour.

In his study, Michael surveyed a significant number of employees, across a number of organizations. These **employees provided written descriptions of what they considered to be satisfactory and unsatisfactory interactions with their managers.** The employees also completed structured questionnaires. He also drew upon recent research into leadership style in large organizations, examining the perceived differences between 'bad managers', 'good managers' and 'leaders'.

The study aimed to extend this distinction between 'bad managers', 'good managers' and 'leaders' by examining which aspects of managers' communication styles related to employees' perceptions of their managers as either 'bosses', 'mentors' or 'leaders'. It also aimed to examine the interactive effects of employee and manager gender upon these perceptions. **The findings highlight that many employees assume managers see them merely as an organizational 'subordinate', unless the manager actively makes efforts to communicate that the employee is indeed recognized by their manager as an important and valued part of his or her working environment.**

These findings contribute significantly to the organizational communication literature, as well as having important applied implications for managerial communication. The findings have been summarized in a self assessment table overleaf.



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Self Assessment

The factors, in order of frequency, that employees consider constitute satisfactory and unsatisfactory management behaviour have been listed below. To see how you rate, please complete the self evaluation by circling the most appropriate value and then calculating your score.

0 = never, 1 = very seldom, 3 = occasionally, 5 = frequently, 7 = always.

Satisfactory Behaviours

Gives recognition, praise and thanks. 0 1 3 5 7

Exercises self-disclosure, opens up and gives the employee an opportunity to get to know him better. 0 1 3 5 7

Has common values and interests. 0 1 3 5 7

Decreases the social (position) distance power, employee feels a lot closer. 0 1 3 5 7

Provides advice and support. 0 1 3 5 7

Is considerate of employees feelings. 0 1 3 5 7

Provides an opportunity for involvement in decision making. 0 1 3 5 7

Shows a willingness to compromise and negotiate. 0 1 3 5 7

Provides support and backup. 0 1 3 5 7

Listens and encourages. 0 1 3 5 7

Is sincere and trustworthy. 0 1 3 5 7

Does not get angry with employee, does not shoot the messenger. 0 1 3 5 7

Total Satisfactory Behaviours: _____

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Unsatisfactory Behaviours

Gives unjustified blame. 0 1 3 5 7

Publicly criticizes. 0 1 3 5 7

Criticizes generally as distinct from negative feedback. 0 1 3 5 7

Unwilling to listen. 0 1 3 5 7

Aggressive, insults employees, rude. 0 1 3 5 7

Threatens employees, not necessarily overt, 'the casual sack'. 0 1 3 5 7

Attempts to have employee take sides. 0 1 3 5 7

Disrespect for employees. 0 1 3 5 7

Provides insufficient information for employee to work effectively. 0 1 3 5 7

Does not value the employee. 0 1 3 5 7

Displays inappropriate personal contacts e.g. female harassment. 0 1 3 5 7

Total Unsatisfactory Behaviours: _____

Total Unsatisfactory less Total Satisfactory Behaviours: _____

How have you rated?

0 - 35 = below average.

36 - 59 = average.

60 - 84 = above average.