

IT'S ALSO ABOUT FOLLOWERS: HOW FOLLOWER'S VOICE WOULD ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

Research on leadership in general, including that on sustainable leadership, focuses more on what leaders can do to influence followers and bring forth effectiveness. Much less emphasis has been placed on how followers can enhance sustainable leadership. We propose a threat-reduction approach of utilizing follower voice to help leaders in their sustainable initiatives. Sustainable leadership deals with leaders' efforts in ensuring sustainable practices. Such efforts, though laudable and important, are difficult and require great insights, initiatives and perseverance. We propose that followers are an important source of input and energy for sustainable leaders. When followers are willing to voice to sustainable leaders regarding potential problems and solutions, sustainable leadership could be enhanced. When followers share their voice, however, it is possible that leaders would perceive threat from followers. We propose that to buffer against perceived threat from leaders when followers voice, followers should protect value of sustainability leaders to their organizations and contribute to sustainability leaders' solving of sustainability problems. Followers will appear less threatening when they protect the value of the sustainability leaders to their organizations and when they are perceived as focusing on solving problems. This model has important implications for managing sustainability efforts.

Keywords: Sustainability, Leadership, Employee Voice
