Self-Leadership: Toward an Expanded Theory of Self-Influence Processes in Organizations

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The considerable attention devoted to individual self-influence processes in organizations has been limited to scope, focusing primarily on self-management that facilitates behaviors that are not naturally motivating and that meet externally anchored standards. In this paper, individual self-control systems are viewed as the central control mechanisms within organizations. An expanded "self-leadership" view is developed that includes (a) self-imposed strategies for managing performance of tasks of low intrinsic motivational potential and (b) self-influence that capitalizes on the "natural"/intrinsic motivational value of task activity. Implications for theory and practice are addressed.

Recently, significant attention has been devoted to a previously neglected aspect of organizational behavior—the influence organization members exert over themselves. This "new" managerial focus has emerged primarily from the social learning theory literature (Bandura, 1977a) and related work in self-control (Bandura, 1969; Cautela, 1969; Goldfried & Merbaum, 1973; Kanfer, 1970; Mahoney & Arnkoff, 1978, 1979; Mahoney & Thoresen, 1974; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974). In the organization literature, this process generally has been referred to as self-management (Andrasik & Heimberg, 1982; Luthans & Davis, 1979; Manz & Sims, 1980; Marx, .1982; Mills, 1983).

This paper, stimulated by the earlier work, proposes an expanded and more comprehensive theory of the self-influence of organization members. First, the fundamental importance, and the need for greater integration, of the self-influence processes into organizational theories are discussed. Second, an overview of conceptualization of self-management thus far in the organization literature is presented. It is argued that while these treatments are useful, they provide an incomplete view of self-influence; therefore, an expanded "self-leadership" perspective is proposed that emphasizes purposeful leadership of self toward personal standards and "natural" rewards that hold greater intrinsic motivational value. Implications for theory, research, and practice are discussed.

Recognizing Self-Control Systems

Organizations impose multiple controls of varying character on employees. Tannenbaum (1962), for example, argued that "organization implies control" (p. 237). Lawler and Rhode (1976) pointed out that control systems try to exert influence by identifying appropriate behavior, providing means to monitor behavior that is taking

place, and coordinating, rewarding, and punishing this behavior. One view suggests that the control process involves applying rational, manageable, control mechanisms (work standards, appraisal and reward systems, etc.) to influence employees through external means to assure that the organization achieves its goals.

An alternative view, however, shifts the perspective of the control system-controllee interface significantly. Simply stated, this perspective views each person as possessing an internal self-control system (Manz, 1979; Manz, Mossholder, & Luthans, in press). Organizational control systems in their most basic form provide performance standards, evaluation mechanisms, and systems of reward and punishment (Lawler, 1976; Lawler & Rhode, 1976). Similarly, individuals possess self-generated personal standards, engage in self-evaluation processes, and self-administer rewards and punishments in managing their daily activities (Bandura, 1977a; Mahoney & Thoresen, 1974; Manz & Sims, 1980). Even though these mechanisms take place frequently, in an almost automatic manner, this makes them no less powerful.

Furthermore, while organizations provide employees with certain values and beliefs packaged into cultures, corporate visions and so forth, people too possess their own systems of values, beliefs, and visions (however vague) for their future. In addition, the counterparts of organizational rules, policies, and operating procedures are represented internally in the form of behavioral and psychological scripts (Abelson, 1981; Gioia & Poole, 1984; Schank & Abelson, 1977) or "programs" (Carver & Scheier, 1982) held at various levels of abstraction.

The point is—organizations provide organizational control systems that influence people but these systems do not access individual action directly. Rather, the impact of organizational control mechanisms is determined by the way they influence, in intended as well as unintended ways, the self-control systems within organization members. This logic is portrayed graphically in Figure 1.

While this perspective is not new, an analysis of theory and research in the field reveals that it has not been well integrated into organizational management. The literature does include cognitive mediation of external stimuli (e.g., social learning theory views—Davis & Luthans, 1980; Manz & Sims, 1980; attributed causes to observed physical actions—Feldman, 1981; Green & Mitchell, 1979; Mitchell, Green, & Wood, 1981; Mitchell, Larson, & Green, 1977; Staw, 1975) but does not adequately recognize the self-influence system as a focal point (rather than a mediator) for enhanced understanding and practice of organizational management. The perspective shown in Figure 1, on the other hand, suggests that the self-influence system is the ultimate system of control. In addition, it suggests that this internal control system must receive significant attention in its own right before maximum benefits for the organization and employee are realized.

Recent work on cybernetic (control) theory provides a useful perspective for making concrete the nature of employee self-regulating systems (Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1982). Based on the negative feedback loop, Carver and Scheier (1981) present an insightful view of self-regulating processes involving: (a) input perceptions of existing conditions, (b) comparison of the perception with an existing reference value (standard), (c) output behaviors to reduce discrepancies from the standard, and (d) a consequent impact on the environment. From this view, an employee attempting to achieve a given production standard would operate within a closed loop of control aimed at minimizing deviations from standards in existing performance. Unless an environmental disturbance of some kind occurred, this self-regulating process theoretically could occur indefinitely.

Carver and Scheier (1981, 1982) further speculated, based on the work of Powers (1973a, 1973b), that standards emerge from a hierarchical organization of control systems. That is, standards for a particular control system loop (X units of production) derive from superordinate systems
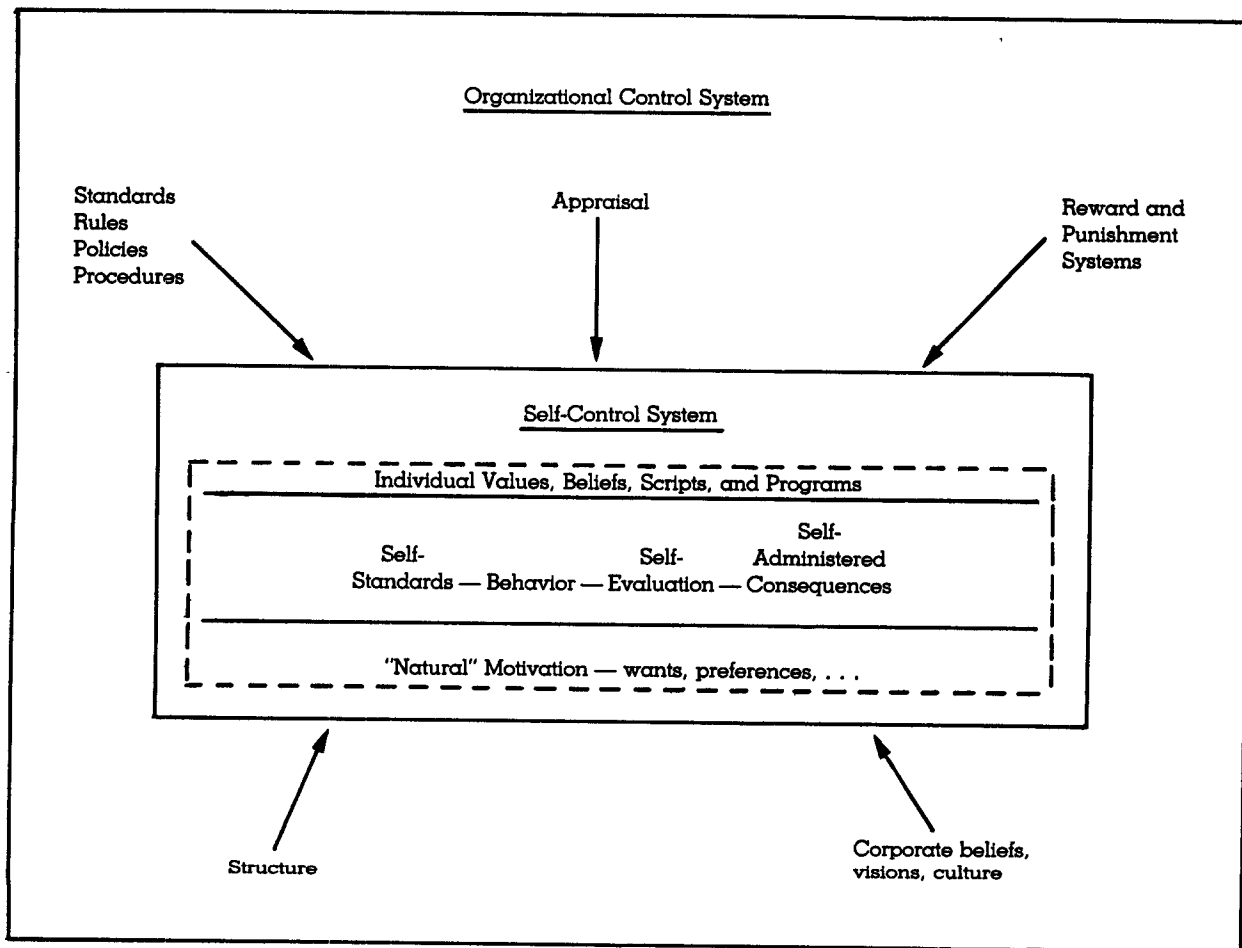
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                    Organizational Control System

  Standards                      Appraisal                    Reward and
  Rules                                                        Punishment
  Policies                                                     Systems
  Procedures

                    ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │            Self-Control System                │
                    │  ┌ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┐  │
                    │    Individual Values, Beliefs, Scripts, and Programs │
                    │  ─────────────────────────────────────────   │
                    │                                      Self-     │
                    │    Self-              Self-       Administered │
                    │   Standards — Behavior — Evaluation — Consequences │
                    │  ─────────────────────────────────────────   │
                    │    "Natural" Motivation — wants, preferences, . . . │
                    │  └ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┘  │
                    └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘

        Structure                             Corporate beliefs,
                                              visions, culture
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Figure 1. The organizational and self-control systems.

of control. Thus, an employee working to achieve a minimum deviation from a production standard at one level may serve higher level systems aimed at higher level standards (meeting job responsibilities, being a conscientious employee, being a good person).

From an organizational perspective, recognizing and facilitating employee self-regulating systems pose a viable and more realistic view of control than views centered entirely on external influence. In addition, overreliance on external controls can lead to a number of dysfunctional employee behaviors: "rigid bureaucratic behavior," (performance of only those behaviors that are rewarded by the control system), inputting of invalid information into management information systems, and so forth (Camman & Nadler, 1976; Lawler, 1976; Lawler & Rhode, 1976).

It is instructive at this point to address current views of employee self-management and then to present an expanded self-leadership view of self-regulatory processes.

Employee Self-Management

Most relevant treatments of self-management to date focused on strategies designed to facilitate behaviors targeted for change (e.g.,

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Andrasik & Heimberg, 1982; Luthans & Davis, 1979; Manz & Sims, 1980). This work generally reflects the view that behaviors are not performed for their intrinsic value but because of their necessity or because of what the performer will receive for his/her performance. A widely recognized definition of self-control, one that illustrates this view, is: "A person displays self-control when in the relative absence of immediate external constraints (performs without external assistance) he or she engages in behavior whose previous probability has been less than that of alternatively available behaviors (a less attractive behavior but one that is implied to be more desirable)" (text added) (Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974, p. 12).

Several specific self-management strategies can be identified. Mahoney and Arnkoff (1978, 1979) provided a useful array of strategies that were applied in clinical contexts. These include: self-observation, self-goal setting, cueing strategies, self-reinforcement, self-punishment, and rehearsal. Much of the employee self-management literature has centered on adaptations of these self-control strategies for addressing management problems (Andrasik & Heimberg, 1982; Luthans & Davis, 1979; Manz & Sims, 1980, 1981). Luthans and Davis (1979) provided descriptions of cueing strategy interventions across a variety of work contexts. Physical cues such as a wall graph to chart progress on target behaviors and a magnetic message board were used to self-induce desired behavioral change in specific cases. Manz and Sims (1980) explicated the relevance of the broader range of self-control strategies, especially as substitutes for formal organizational leadership. Self-observation, cueing strategies, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, and rehearsal were each discussed in terms of their applicability to organizational contexts. Andrasik and Heimberg (1982) developed a behavioral self-management program for individualized self-modification of targeted work behaviors. Their approach involved pinpointing a specific behavior for change, observing the behavior over time, developing a behav-

ioral change plan involving self-reward or some other self-influence strategy, and adjusting the plan based on self-awareness of a need for change.

In terms of cybernetic self-regulating systems (Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1982), these employee self-management perspectives can be viewed as providing a set of strategies that facilitate behaviors that serve to reduce deviations from higher level reference values that the employee may or may not have helped establish. That is, the governing standards at higher levels of abstraction (cf., Powers, 1973a, 1973b)—for example, what it means to be a good employee based on organizational or professional values—can remain largely externally defined even though lower level standards to reach the goals may be personally created. Mills (1983) argued that factors such as the normative system and professional norms can exercise just as much control over the individual as a mechanistic situation in which the performance process is manipulated directly. The implication is that, unlike the perspective suggested in Figure 1, the aims of the "self-managed employee" can be, in actuality, externally controlled by existing higher level external standards.

This view is consistent with arguments that employee self-control is perhaps more an illusion than a reality (Dunbar, 1981) and that self-managed individuals are far from loosely supervised or controlled (Mills, 1983). In addition, it has been argued that self-management strategies themselves are behaviors that require reinforcement in order to be maintained (Kerr & Slocum, 1981; Manz & Sims, 1980; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974). Because of this dependence on external reinforcement, it could be argued that the self-management approach violates Thoresen and Mahoney's (1974) definition cited earlier, ". . . in the relative absence of immediate external constraints . . ." in the long run. That is, while *immediate* external constraints or supports may not be required, *longer-term* reinforcement is. Again, self-management is subject to external control.

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Toward a Broader View of Self-Influence Processes

In developing a broader perspective, self-influence should be viewed as more than a set of strategies designed to facilitate employee behaviors that help meet standards. For some individuals being "less controlled" (not meeting socially based standards) may represent active self-controlled choice.

In addressing the question "What is truly self-controlled behavior?" one can become immersed in metaphysical arguments on the nature of free-will (cf., Dennett, 1984). Rychlak (1979) suggested that the crucial concern is a telic one—that is, the underlying reason one is performing the behavior. For example, is the individual performing because he/she wants to or because of a belief that he/she "should?" Interestingly, Marx (1982) suggested management of one's "should/want ratio" (p. 439) as a self-control strategy for avoiding becoming overburdened with activities that must be done ("shoulds") relative to those that one likes to do ("wants").

Following this line of reasoning, the differences between self-management and external control can become clouded depending on the perspective adopted. Consider a person who truly wants to deal with a problem behavior to achieve a freely chosen personal standard, but despite systematic persistent use of self-management strategies does not succeed. In such a case, calling on another person or organization to establish constraints for his/her behavior (i.e., giving up "self-management") may be the most effective means to achieve a personal goal. Again, Thoresen and Mahoney's (1974) definition of self-control is violated. Yet, acting on the environment to produce constraints may be the most viable avenue for exercising self-influence in such cases.

Schelling (1980) addressed a host of internal struggles (e.g., inducing over withholding on income taxes to assure a surplus of personal funds later), all of which exemplify relying on external constraints to exercise "self-command." Bandura's (1977a, 1978) notion of reciprocal de-terminism, which recognized an interdependent relationship between one's behavior and the environment, is useful here. That is, acting on the environment to cause it to influence or control one's behavior in a personally desired way can be a legitimate form of self-influence (albeit one step removed). Indeed, self-constraints (e.g., lack of confidence, inadequate ability) can sometimes produce greater limitations on one's freedom to behave than rigid external controls.

The question "Who is more or less self-controlled, the person who uses self-management to achieve standards imposed by someone else or the person who chooses externally controlled situations to achieve personally chosen standards?" illustrates the heart of this discussion. The position taken in this paper is that true self-leadership is based on the personal meaningfulness and "ownership" of the individual's governing standards. Invoking external influence to achieve personally chosen standards is a legitimate form of self-leadership. Self-imposing self-management strategies to reach externally defined and personally undesired standards, however, is a form of "self-management" that masks external control.

Toward a Theory of Self-Leadership

In this section, a self-leadership view is proposed. Here, self-leadership is conceptualized as a comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating. It includes the self-management of immediate behaviors and in addition, similar to the notion of "double loop learning" (Argyris, 1982a, 1982b), it challenges the appropriateness of operating standards that govern the employee self-influence system as the reasons for the behavior. Three critical elements of self-leadership that distinguish it and contribute to our understanding of self-influence beyond the previous work include: (a) that it allows for addressing a wider range (higher level) of

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standards for self-influence, (b) that it more fully incorporates the role of *intrinsic work motivation,* and (c) that it suggests some additional *strategies* for employee self-control. Each of these elements is discussed below.

Standards for Self-Influence

A standard establishes a target or goal for performance and can serve a primary controlling function. Locke, Shaw, Saari, and Latham (1981) pointed out that goals direct attention, mobilize effort, increase persistence, and motivate strategy development. Thus, when goals or standards are established by an external source they can serve as a significant external influence or control mechanism.

The ability of standards to influence employees is based in part on knowledge of one's progress in meeting the standards that is received from external sources. Thus, external feedback can have an impact on employee self-control. Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor (1979) indicated that excessive external feedback can place external limits on self-influence. They suggested that in order to shift to an internal locus of control in persons, the frequency of feedback (from external sources) likely will need to be changed (reduced) to allow increased self-monitoring. Despite its importance a systematic review of the role of feedback in employee influence is beyond the scope of the current discussion (cf., Taylor, Fisher, & Ilgen, 1984).

Consequently, the focus here is on the standards themselves. The position taken is that a self-leadership view facilitates a broader higher-level perspective on individuals' guiding standards than does the existing work on employee self-management. Figure 2 illustrates a philosophical difference between the concepts of self-management and self-leadership relating to this issue. The figure relies on a cybernetic control system perspective of self-influence (Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1982). The aim of this system is to reduce deviations from operating standards which are defined hierarchically by increasingly abstract perceptions about the relation between work and self. Conceptually, self-management can be viewed as a set of strategies that aides employees in structuring their work environment, in establishing self-motivation, and so forth, that facilitates appropriate behaviors for achieving minimal deviations from primarily lower-level behavioral standards. Self-leadership, on the other hand, encompasses self-management behavior but it is also concerned with leading the self-influence system at superordinate levels.

Self-management, for example, might be exercised by establishing a performance self-goal/ standard of calling on six customers daily, in order to meet sales quotas, and then providing a self-reward each day for meeting this goal. Self-leadership, on the other hand, allows for self-leading of the higher level standards that provide the reasons for the self-managed behaviors —e.g., "Why does one want to meet a sales quota . . . be a good salesperson or be in sales at all . . . be a conscientious provider for one's family . . . be a good person?"

A central distinction between self-management and the proposed self-leadership perspective is a difference in focus. Self-management is largely concerned with a set of behavioral and cognitive strategies that reflect a rational view of what people ought to be doing—for example, stop smoking (Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974), finish a report (Luthans & Davis, 1979), reduce non-productive informal conversations (Manz & Sims, 1980). Self-leadership goes beyond this to place significant emphasis on the intrinsic value of tasks. While employee self-management theorists likely would recognize the relevance of intrinsic motivation factors for self-management, the existing focus in the literature on strategies that facilitate "appropriate" behaviors tends to distract potential developments in this vein. The self-leadership view proposed here is intended to stimulate a broader view of self-influence that includes the important role of the intrinsically appealing aspects of work ("natural" rewards) and how important these aspects are in defining why behavior is performed.

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Figure 2. A cybernetic control system view of the role of self-management and self-leadership.

Intrinsic Motivation in Self-Regulation

Self-management emphasizes rewards that are separate from the task and that are received for its completion (e.g., self-praise, external recognition, and rewards). A broader self-leadership view explicitly recognizes rewards that result from performing activities themselves. These can be described as "natural" rewards (Manz, 1983a, 1983b) because they are a natural part of the task performance process and derive from natural intrinsic responses. Self-leadership goes beyond self-management to address redefining one's tasks and one's relationship with and/or perception of tasks so that desired perfor-

mance results from a natural motivational process. Particular emphasis is taken from the intrinsic motivation literature (cf., Deci, 1971, 1975a; Deci & Ryan, 1980) and especially, cognitive evaluation theory (Deci, 1975a, 1975b).

Cognitive evaluation theory, based on the work of White (1959) and de Charms (1968), was founded on the assumption that behavior is caused by internal states (Deci, 1975b). Although the validity of cognitive evaluation theory has not received universal support (e.g., Farr, 1976; Farr, Vance, & McIntyre, 1977; Phillips & Lord, 1980; Scott, 1975), an impressive body of evidence has been gathered in its support both from Deci and his colleagues (Benware & Deci, 1975; Deci,

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1971, 1975a; Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981; Deci & Ryan, 1980) and from others (Calder & Staw, 1975; Daniel & Esser, 1980; Greene & Lepper, 1974; Kruglanski, Alon, & Lewis, 1972; Lepper & Greene, 1975; Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973). Thus, while this view is subject to potential arguments, for example from more functional viewpoints (Scott, 1975), this assumption as part of a broader view of behavioral causes is accepted here. Notably, social learning theory relies on a reciprocal determinism view in which behavior is caused by internal states as well as external influences, and each of these three components (behavior, internal processes, and external forces) influences each other in a reciprocal fashion (Bandura, 1978). This comprehensive reciprocal determinism view is the assumptive framework upon which conceptual development is based in this paper.

In cognitive evaluation theory (Deci, 1975a), an individual's *feelings of self-determination and competence* are central to the experience of intrinsic motivation. Specifically, rewards that increase these intrinsic outcomes will increase intrinsic motivation. Deci (1975a) suggested that the natural inclination to pursue feelings of competence and self-determination leads to a behavioral pattern. This pattern includes a search for reasonable challenges and an expenditure of effort to overcome these challenges. The logic is that by overcoming such challenges, feelings of competence and self-control will be enhanced.

In a similar vein, Bandura (1977a, 1977b, 1982) viewed individual self-efficacy perceptions as central to social learning theory. He pointed out that perceived self-efficacy will influence the amount of effort and persistence expended in the face of adversity. Bandura (1977b, 1982) also indicated that the strongest contributor to positive self-efficacy perceptions is one's personal performance history.

In performance appraisal, Bernardin and Beatty (1984) suggested that the tendency of raters to be lenient in their evaluations may stem from a perception of a low personal capability (low self-efficacy) to cope with the likely nega-

tive reaction of the ratee. They suggested training to assess rater efficacy perceptions followed by training to allow raters to experience mastery of progressively difficult rating tasks. This approach was designed to facilitate increases in rater self-efficacy perceptions which were assumed to result in more accurate evaluations by raters. Again, a greater sense of competence is linked to one's willingness and motivation to perform a task.

By combining the work of Deci and the literature on self-efficacy, it could be concluded that an important aspect of self-influence is the process of establishing intrinsic motivation by enhancing one's feelings of competence and self-control (more generally one's perceptions of self-efficacy). Furthermore, a primary objective of self-leadership practice should be to enhance self-efficacy perceptions which are reciprocally related to performance. That is, enhanced self-efficacy should lead to higher performance through its impact on effort and persistence. A history of higher performance in turn will have a positive impact on future self-efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1977b).

In addition to feelings of competence and self-control, a third intrinsic motivation factor, the task performer's *feelings of purpose*, is addressed. This additional component is consistent with literature emphasizing the importance of purpose and belief in one's work for fostering task performance. Examples of this are provided in the Japanese management literature (Hatvany & Pucik, 1981a, 1981b; Ouchi, 1981a, 1981b; Ouchi & Jaeger, 1978; Pascale & Athos, 1981; Sullivan, 1983), work that emphasizes the importance of shared vision (e.g., a corporate philosophy) (Hatvany & Pucik, 1981a; Ouchi & Price, 1978), and the job characteristic "task significance" addressed in the job design literature (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). The essential idea is that a reason (purpose) for doing one's work that extends beyond the rewards, reprimands, and so forth, is important. The shared values component of the recently proposed McKinsey "7 S's" approach for characterizing organizations is con-

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sistent with this latter phenomenon (Pascale & Athos, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

One view suggests that feelings of purpose most probably result from worthwhile contributions to something or someone other than oneself (i.e., altruism) (Manz, 1983a). In this sense, "external" corporate philosophies or visions can foster internal purpose if they are defined in an altruistic fashion. It may be that this altruistic component is coupled with an egoistic motive (e.g., altruistic egoism, Selye, 1974). On the other hand, evidence has been gathered suggesting that altruism is part of human nature apart from "selfish" ends (Hoffman, 1981). One American production plant that has displayed highly motivated and committed workers, for example, has as its motto "people helping people" (Manz, 1983b). Examination of Japanese organizations often reveals a similar concern for purposeful (altruistic) ends.

Strategies for Self-Leadership Practice

Self-leadership, with its emphasis on the intrinsic motivational aspects of work, suggests several strategies that can complement existing self-management strategies (cf., Andrasik & Heimberg, 1982; Manz & Sims, 1980). These additional strategies are based on employees wanting to, rather than feeling they should, perform task behaviors.

Work Context Strategies. Briefly, one self-leadership approach involves choosing, to the extent possible, work environments that enhance the natural impact of the physical work setting on performance. A long distance runner who chooses to run in pleasant surroundings as opposed to a conventional quarter-mile track uses this approach. In addition, a sense of *competence* can result from successfully navigating new, challenging terrain. Feelings of *self-determination* are enhanced by the runner's control over running routes, and the positive health benefits *(purpose)* are provided to the runner as well. Together these elements stemming from a chosen desirable work context should have a positive impact on motivation and performance.

A subtle, yet no less powerful, aspect of the work context involves social psychological elements such as group norms, corporate values, and existing interpersonal employee interaction patterns. Two more global concepts that have received significant attention in the literature are: organizational climate (e.g., Field & Abelson, 1982; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974; Schneider, 1975) and corporate culture (e.g., Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Marshall, 1982; Pettigrew, 1979). Again, an individual is using a work context self-leadership strategy by choosing and working to create a social psychological work context that contributes to natural enjoyment of task performance.

Task Performance Process Strategies. Another approach for exercising self-leadership is to build natural rewards into the *process* of performing, that is, to focus on *how* the task is performed. The challenge for the self-leading individual is to discover what activities provide him/her with "natural" rewards and then to build these activities into the task process, where possible.

A manager, for example, may have a choice regarding whether to explain a new work procedure to a subordinate through a memo or face-to-face communication. If documentation is not essential, a manager might choose oral communication because he/she finds the task process to be more enjoyable (more naturally rewarding). These kinds of work process choices that continually arise become the base from which self-leadership can be exercised. If an individual can establish a reasonable level of self-awareness regarding what kinds of activities he/she enjoys and perform work consistent with these preferences (where this is possible without jeopardizing performance), self-leadership is enhanced.

An open-ended search for activities that provide natural rewards would be difficult and highly inefficient. Fortunately, the three natural reward elements: feelings of competence, self-control, and purpose, can guide in identifying and building activities into one's work. In essence, the process becomes a self-performed job analysis and job redesign, within the limits of one's job specifications (although these too might

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be negotiated and modified). While an expanded view of cognitive evaluation theory is suggested here as a flexible and general basis for self-initiated job redesign, other theoretical views could be used to provide some specific alternative strategies. A self-initiated job characteristics approach (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Sims, Szilagyi, & Keller, 1975) to job redesign might be one way of exercising self-leadership within these broad guidelines. In this approach, individuals use their discretion to define certain aspects of the performance process to establish enhanced natural motivation potential for work performance.

Other types of self-leadership strategies could be identified beyond those centered on the work context or process discussed above. For example, choice of a vocational field or a particular job position in itself can represent a powerful self-leadership strategy with considerable potential for affecting the intrinsic enjoyment and motivation derived from work. Another important type of self-leadership strategy focuses on management of thought processes, the subject of the following discussion.

Self-Leadership of Thought Patterns. Perhaps the ultimate goal of self-leadership practice should be to enhance the effectiveness of employees in managing their own thought patterns. For example, in addition to systematically managing one's own behavior or altering the physical context or the process by which work is performed, one can manage his/her mental representation of the work. In a sense, the job is redesigned mentally rather than physically.

Any job holds both desirable and undesirable elements for a performer. To the extent that one's mental energy is focused on unpleasant aspects of the work (fatigue, pressure, uncertainty, etc.) the work process likely will be experienced unfavorably. On the other hand, if desirable elements (challenge, learning, variety, etc.) become the focus of one's mental energy, the potential for motivation can be established. This view holds obvious similarities to popularized notions such as the power of "positive thinking" (Peale, 1956). There exists more than a little merit, however,

to the notion that an existing reality is more in the mind of the beholder than in any physical sense (e.g., Beck, 1970; Ellis, 1970; Meichenbaum, 1974).

Leadership approaches that center on managing meaning and vision (Berlew, 1979; House, 1977) incorporate parallel logic. Berlew (1979) discussed an essentially charismatic approach to leadership that provides employees with, among other things, "common vision" (e.g., purpose) and the opportunity for organization members to "feel stronger and more in control of their own destinies" (a sense of competence and self-control) (p. 347). The logic of self-leadership of thought is similar except that the worker takes an active part in mentally establishing worthwhile states for himself/herself.

Recent applications of the schema concept to organizational behavior (e.g., Gioia & Poole, 1984; Hastie, 1981; Langer, 1978; Taylor & Crocker, 1981), derived from a schema-based, information-processing view (e.g., Graesser, Woll, Kowalski, & Smith, 1980), make it apparent that such mental functioning, that has been characterized as being "automatic," almost "thoughtless," goes beyond descriptive power. That is, if consistent (similar to habitual) ways of processing information develop (e.g., relying on stereotypes—Hamilton, 1979), individuals need not be passive subjects but can and frequently do experience these thought processes in a "thoughtful" way (Gioia & Manz, 1985; Gioia & Poole, 1984). By actively self-managing mental activity (schemas or otherwise) desired thought patterns can be pursued.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to address a detailed analysis of how this can be achieved. It has been suggested elsewhere (Manz, 1983a), however, that desired thought patterns might be developed by managing internal verbalizations or self-talk (Meichenbaum & Cameron, 1974), imagery (Bandura, 1969; Cautela, 1966, 1967, 1971; Mahoney, 1974), and one's belief systems (Ellis, 1975; Ellis & Whiteley, 1979). A general illustrative example could be a conscious effort to increase mental energy devoted to work elements that provide natural reward value over those that do not. The objective is to foster the

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development of new thought patterns that aid rather than hinder motivation and performance.

Overall, it has been argued that a broader self-influence view (self-leadership) recognizes not only strategies for self-managing behaviors to meet existing standards, but also addresses the higher-level standards (reasons for behavior) themselves. Thus, self-leadership concerns itself with self-leading ongoing self-influence (cybernetic) systems. An important aspect of this self-leadership process centers on "natural" rewards that foster intrinsic motivation to more fully integrate "wants" with "shoulds" in establishing a more comprehensive view of employee self-influence. In particular, the theoretical view developed here suggests that intrinsic motivation derived from feelings of competence, self-control, and purpose is an important component of self-leadership.

Self-Leadership:
Some Implications for Theory
and Practice

Some distinctions have been drawn between existing employee self-management perspectives and a more comprehensive self-leadership view. Self-leadership is conceptualized as a process that encompasses behaviorally focused self-management strategies and further addresses self-regulation of higher-level control standards to more fully recognize the role of intrinsic motivation. Such an expanded view poses significant implications for both theory and practice.

It suggests the existence of at least three self-influence perspectives. The first, labeled here as employee *self-regulation*, consists of an ongoing cybernetic control process aimed at reducing deviation from existing standards that are arranged hierarchically. Usually, self-regulation in the short run occurs automatically and adjustments are made to help reduce discrepancies from established reference points. Control can be anchored to the existing external (e.g., organization) control system where self-regulation serves as a process to satisfy this system.

Employee self-management consists of a set of self-management strategies that are designed to facilitate behaviors that help meet standards. In the immediate time period (i.e., negative feedback loop) these standards may be established by the self-managed individual (e.g., a self-set goal of X units of output on a given day). The self-management strategies (including self-set goals), however, tend to serve as mechanisms for reducing deviation from standards in higher-level control loops (meet job specifications, be a "good" employee, etc.). The focus is on behaviors to facilitate performance of what "should" be done.

The *self-leadership* perspective proposed in this paper represents a broader view of self-influence. This view includes self-management strategies to foster functional behaviors for meeting standards; it also addresses how appropriate or how desirable the standards are themselves. In addition, the self-leadership view goes beyond a behavioral focus to more fully recognize the importance of intrinsic motivation. Recognition of individual "wants," in addition to "shoulds," is viewed as a legitimate aspect of self-influence. The self-leadership view more accurately reflects the concept of free will as an issue of why behavior is performed, not just whether it is personally chosen, by addressing the legitimacy of governing standards and the intrinsic based "wants" of the individual.

These different concepts indicate a need to distinguish the specific view of self-influence that is adopted by management theories. Theories that provide for employee autonomy (e.g., self-management) actually may represent efforts to control employees through achieving greater deviation reduction at higher levels of control. One study (Manz & Angle, 1985), for example, described an insurance firm that introduced self-managed work groups (almost universally viewed as a mechanism for increasing worker autonomy) apparently to increase control over insurance sales people in complying with company procedures and goals.

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Indeed, the whole notion of employee freedom and autonomy in existing management theories deserves closer scrutiny in the light of differing perspectives on employee self-influence. Future research should address the implications of different kinds of autonomy and self-control at different levels of control (e.g., over immediate behavior, over work system standards, over the organizational mission, etc.). Questions such as "What are the implications (in terms of commitment, performance, ethics, etc.) of worker involvement strategies that seek employee participation to meet goals established by executive management vs. programs that involve employees in establishing higher-level organizational and personal goals?" are especially relevant.

The self-leadership view posited in this paper also suggests several self-leadership strategies that are based on the intrinsic motivational aspects of work. They offer the potential to make employee self-control more universal. After all, if the ideal of having employees experience their work as a naturally enjoyed activity can be achieved, theoretically, autonomous work performance should be as natural as play. The logic here is similar to early participative management theorists (e.g., Argyris, 1964; McGregor, 1960), who suggested that when a person is performing because of the reward value of the task process itself, the potential for greater commitment to the task is established.

Realistically, however, such an ideal is likely to remain an objective that can be continuously pursued but never completely achieved. As a consequence, self-leadership for every employee may not be feasible. Some persons will be better candidates for self-leadership than others. For example, if the values and beliefs of the organization are not sufficiently congruent with those of the employees the potential for breakdowns in the control process and for suboptimized outcomes is increased. Conversely, the feasibility of self-leadership for a specific employee whose work values are highly discrepant from the organization's may seem quite low. Such a situation may pose a difficult dilemma; should the organization opt for employee compliance based on external control or should it accept lower organizationally valued employee output in the short run in order to encourage employee commitment and self-leadership capability in order to let the two value systems hopefully converge over time? Not every employee may appear to warrant the investment entailed in the latter alternative, but achieving the ideal of an organization consisting of highly committed self-led employees may require that such hard choices be made.

Conclusions

The recent attention to self-influence processes has challenged researchers and practitioners to rethink many of their fundamental assumptions regarding organizational research and practice. Indeed, employee self-control should be viewed as a central element of important organizational processes such as leadership, control, and management in general. The employee self-management literature, however, typically has centered on a set of behaviorally focused strategies that tend to divert attention away from, or overlook, the reasons the behavior is being self-managed.

A more comprehensive self-leadership perspective has been proposed to more fully address the higher-level standards/reasons that employee self-influence is performed and to suggest self-influence strategies that allow the intrinsic value of work to help enhance individual performance. Further research and theoretical development is needed to address several central elements of self-influence—for example, the derivation of personal standards at multiple hierarchical levels, human thought patterns, self-influence strategies that build motivation into target behaviors—that have been neglected in the employee self-management literature. This paper is intended to be a first step in advancing the existing literature toward such a broader self-leadership perspective.

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