Leadership Thoughts

The last 20 to 30 years gave birth to varied discussions of leadership. The topic of leadership is popular today with a wide variance in ideas and opinions rooted in thoughts from the early decades of the 20th century. Leadership theories exist and are battling for first place in the global environment of organizations. Scholars continue to research leadership theories to discover the best way to lead organizations through the 21st century. Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) believed; there are no comprehensive ideas or understandings of what leadership is, nor do the many theorists agree on what good or effective leadership possesses. Leaders are left to muddle through the theories and arrive at a style that best fits their personality and still be able to deliver the expectation of a wide range of stakeholders.

For most of the 20th century, theorists espoused a tie between leadership and an understanding of human behavior along with morals and values, including value-added for all who are affected by an organization. Barnard’s (1938) germinal thought defined the idea of cooperation between employees and employers.

Essential to the survival of organizations is the willingness to cooperate, the ability to communicate, and the existence and acceptance of purpose. The executive functions are thus to provide a system of communication, to maintain the willingness to cooperate and to ensure the continuing integrity of the organization's purpose. (p. viii)

The purpose is an essential part of human behavior and is an important component of an organization’s needs. Frankl (1959) explained humankind must have a purpose or meaning to survive. Meaning and purpose are as essential to life as air and water. Organizations are made up of people. With purpose and meaning, humankind creates value that is related to everyday life.

Harvey (2001) found “Leaders do not simply aim at goals but develop and communicate a vision and motivate others to work towards the vision” (p. 38). Darling and Beebe (2007) agreed research suggests that at the heart of a successful manager or leader is communication based upon, values along with caring for the people who will carry out the organization's strategies. A leader’s objectives need to include helping others to achieve goals in their professional and personal life. Through people, leaders can make sure an organization’s philosophy, mission, and objectives are reached. If values-based leadership is important then finding the right style or theory of leadership to accompany the values-based idea is important.

**Major Leadership Theories**

Leadership contains many theories and styles. For the discussion Smith,

Montagno and Kuzmenko’s (2004) four definitions are used:

1. **Charismatic leadership** is based on an extraordinary characteristic of a leader who inspires and directs followers by building their commitment to a shared vision and values (p.80).

 2. **Transactional leadership** is a process of social exchange between followers and leaders that involve some reward-based transactions. The transactional leader clarifies performance expectations, goals, and a path that will link the achievement of goals to reward (p. 80).

 3. **Transformational leadership** occurs when a leader inspires followers to share a vision empowering them to achieve the vision and providing the resources necessary for developing their potential. Transformational leaders serve as role models, support optimism, and mobilize commitment, as well as focus on the followers’ needs for growth (p. 81).

 4. **Servant leadership** views leaders as a servant of his/her followers. It places the interest of followers before the self-interest of a leader and emphasizes the personal development and empowerment of followers. A servant leader is a facilitator for followers to achieve a shared vision (p. 81).

Servant leadership is a popular model and includes the needs of the followers as an important part of the success of an organization. Servant leadership requires a paradigm shift from the foundation on which the United States was founded. The idea will require a more socialistic environment of participation and solidarity. The free market system is an integral part of a free society and a free society may find servant leadership too large of a paradigm shift in a for-profit environment.

Goleman (2000) created six leadership styles with different names yet familiar descriptions. Two of Goleman’s styles are:  
 1. **Visionary style:** The hallmark of this style is vibrant enthusiasm and a clear vision that motivates people by making clear how their work fits into the larger vision for the organization (p. 20)

2. **Coaching style**: The coaching leader helps employees identify their unique strengths and weaknesses and tie them to personal and career aspirations. A coaching approach guarantees that people know what is expected of them, and is a mutual commitment to improving performance (p. 20)

Around-Thomas (2004) charted and tested Goleman’s Leadership styles and arrived at a conclusion. Goleman’s visionary and coaching styles are the two styles showing the strongest and most positive impact in organizations today. The coaching style coupled with the visionary style of transformational leadership is integrated into the culture of successful organizations.

**Leadership Approach**

Full Range leadership is supported by, Antonakis and House (2002), Bass (1998), and Spinelli (2006). Full Range Leadership requires the continual development of skills while adapting a leader’s innate personality traits founded through Hartman (1987) Color Code and Myers-Briggs personality assessment including life experiences. Personality assessments are essential to a leader’s continual growth.

Spinelli (2006) found a strong correlation between effective leadership and the full-range leadership style. “A concept critical to the “Full Range Leadership” model is the theory that leaders possess the ability to exhibit each style to some degree” (p. 17). Arond-Thomas (2004) stated:

Many studies have shown that the more styles a leader exhibits, the better. Those who have mastered four or more have the best climate and business results. Thus, resilient leaders are fluid. Having access to the full range of styles is what promotes resilient leadership and consequently, resilient organizations. (p. 20)

Possessing the ability to exhibit each style demands a constant reflection of a leader’s innate drives and an intellectual decisions. Full Range is an effective leadership style and allows for adaptation to each situation, to maximize the influence needed to contribute to the growth and well-being of all stakeholders.

**Conclusion**

Leadership is not void of value, and good leaders lead an organization by demonstrating and expecting a strong ethical core. Follower satisfaction is significantly related to the overall experience in an organization. Jaussi and Dionne (2004) found that positive unconventional behavior produces positive results in organizations. Employees like to work with leaders who are not always acting in the same way. Stimulation is found when leaders tend to demonstrate a variety of leadership styles. Barbuto (2005) examined followers' work motivation and full-range leadership behaviors used in the workplace and found a higher variance in followers’ satisfaction and achievement with full-range leadership. The full-range leadership model is a continual improvement goal.

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