



Munich Personal RePEc Archive

Leadership for the recent time

Alvi, Mohsin

University of Karachi

20 July 2017

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/87400/>
MPRA Paper No. 87400, posted 16 Jun 2018 16:33 UTC

LEADERSHIP FOR THE RECENT TIME

MOHSIN HASSAN ALVI

PhD Scholar

mohsinhassanalvi@hotmail.com

Abstract

Individuals have many innate abilities and learned skills, which support them towards the journey of success. Leadership belongs to those skills, which make a person prosperous in various walks of life. Leadership is defined as the ability to lead others, and considered as an art to motivate others to do something, which a person wants to be done. With the growing competition in global economy and technological advancements in 21st century, critical decisions are being made by the organizations. The business and organizations are also required competitive and ambitious employees to move towards high standards. This argumentative essay explains the role and importance of leaders in current era.

Keywords: *Leaders, Suggestions & challenges, modern ages*

1. Introduction

The leadership can also be defined as the art of managing others to accomplish a mutual task (Yukl 2002). Burk (1985) defined that leadership is the process to influence others towards the attainment of specific goal. A leader can also be perceived as a person with followers, who walk with his followers towards a destiny. Leaders create same destiny for a group of people, which can be a challenging task. The role of leader can be observed in everyday life and many leaders can exist together in multiple fields; such as political leaders, religious leaders, community leaders etc.

Effective leadership skills and critical strategies can benefit organizations in improving their performance and dealing with competing business environment (Ireland & Hitt 1999). Business contains several important issues that need to resolve as soon as possible. Management plays a vital role in making strategic business unit to monitor and check the effectiveness of individual products in line. That's why, trained leaders and managers have become the need of 21st century to succeed in organizational competitions.

1.1 Characteristics of 21st Century Leadership in the Light of Leadership Theories

As it is understood that 21st century organizations and their leadership are different and they are dealing with numerous challenges in business world. Therefore, the focus is on the social skills of leaders, rather than their traits and behaviors.

In the light of various theories of leadership, the trait theory of leadership emphasizes on innate attributes of an individual which help him to play the role of a leader throughout his life. Such people are also known as "born leaders", and they possess the qualities to rule others (Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader 2004). These leaders acquire intellectual skills, extrovert personality, exhibits openness to experience, and self efficacy.

The behavioral theory of leadership stressed upon the behaviors of leaders rather than their innate capacities. The theory believed that leadership is something, which can be learned by the environment. behavioral theories examined the behaviors of successful leaders and evaluated their strategies in certain situations, which reflected their leadership styles (Yukl 1971).

While, the contingency theory of leadership believes that leaders tend to modify their strategies according to the situational needs. The role of leader is dependent on internal and external condition of the organization (Fiedler 2015).

The overall structure of the 21st Century organizations seems highly different as compared to 20th century and seems more complex in the context of distant boundaries, extreme dependency on modern emerging information, IT and communication technologies. The overall way of communication of individuals has changed and this has resulted in various changes in the context of the way people relate to one another. Now, the emphasize is on how they communicate with each other, and how they bring changes in career and life skills. Essentially, to achieve successful in today's business world, one has to possess the crucial skills and knowledge, particularly related to information literacy; media knowledge; and Information and communication patterns. There are numerous characteristics required to become an efficient leader:

1.1.1. Capability to Provide Moral Support and Integrity:

21st century and its challenges demand strong leaders, who desire to stand behind their team in tough situations. The modern leadership does not allow the leader to stand behind and move the team, but it requires the leaders to work along with the team physically, and morally.

1.1.2. Being Present:

Modern leadership skills consist of availability of leaders all the time. A leader can always be present for customers and employees, but make sure not to interfere in others' tasks.

1.1.3. Exhibit Creative Thinking:

Leadership in business needs time management and exclusive time to think creatively about the future goals and plans.

1.1.4. Extensive Knowledge and Genuine Interest in Business:

21st century appreciates the openness to gain knowledge. A leader must have the desirability to learn latest skills with the passage of time. Great leaders think beyond money at the time of putting efforts to achieve business goals.

1.1.5. Managing skills:

A competitive leader possesses management skills, which allows to make a organized system and exhibits the ability to cater all the employees and addressing their concerns. Problem solving and decision-making skills also come under the umbrella of management. Modern leaders manage their personal values and empower their team. 21st century's economy and business organizations need intelligent leaders, who can make quick and effective decisions.

1.1.6. Effective Communication Skills:

Communication skills are one of the key skills of leaders, which should promote their knowledge. Clarity in communication and power of negotiation should be demonstrated by their conversations, so that their team can follow them and move in an aligned direction.

It shows that 21st century leadership demands a full-range model of leadership. This model is an ideal model and consists of fundamental qualities of the basic theories of leadership. The basic characteristic of leaders in this model include; individual attention to employees, intellectual effectively, motivational tendencies and the power to influence others (Avolio 2003).

1.2 Types of Leadership

A variety of leadership styles can be introduced in work environment, which impacts the culture and structure of organization. The types of leadership are derived from its theories.

1.2.1. Laissez-Faire

The leaders in this category do not bother to meet their employees regularly and do not offer supervision and feedbacks to their team. This leadership style does not meet the needs of 21st century business environment, as it creates interruptions in supervisions and modern trainings, which can affect the production, and services negatively in an organization.

1.2.2. Autocratic

These leaders tend to make organizational decisions themselves, without involving others. They possess authority and give no power to employees to refuse their decisions. According to 21st century competitions, the autocratic leadership style is no more useful practically, because of its restrictions to express creativity by employees.

1.2.3. Participative

This leadership style welcomes the feedbacks and suggestions of employees, and also called democratic leadership style. Due to contribution in decision making process, employees feel accomplished and confident in organizational environment. This leadership style supports the requirements of 21st century business criteria.

1.2.4. Transactional

The employees are offered rewards and punishments under transactional leadership. This style is also useful in 21st century organizational environment. Employees and leaders make certain specific goals together and set a time line and plan to accomplish those goals. The manager has the right to support his team, correct their flaws and train them according to the goals.

1.2.5. Transformational

Communication is the key to practice this type of leadership in an organization. Leaders communicate their goals and plans with employees in an effective way by using positive statements. Leaders and employees work together, but they divide the tasks according to their authority levels.

1.3 Challenges to 21st Century Leadership

Organizational leaders have been dealing with business fluctuations and struggling through tough times since many years for numerous reasons. Some of them are mentioned below.

1.3.1. Modern innovations in Technology

Technological advancements in technology have made the organizational system easier, but, on the contrary, it is constantly demanding system updates and latest versions of devices and gadgets. As much as, the system and devices are improving their standards, the need of trainings and know how about the latest innovation is exceeding. International policies and standardized systems are being applied due to access to latest knowledge about all over the world. In this case, leadership has to take decisions regarding skill development and trainings (Hernez-Broome & Hughes 2004). Organizations expect the leaders that they will have enough knowledge about modern technologies, which becomes challenging for them. The business requires leaders, who

are always ready to utilize latest technological services to customers and employees and run social media efficiently.

1.3.2. Application of Latest Knowledge

All useful global practices and their implication is nearly impossible for any business sector. The challenge to understand latest leadership skills and to follow them is a biggest challenge in 21st century, because of excessive information worldwide (Pearce 2004). In previous centuries, traditional styles of management and leadership were being used in organizations, which were losing their value as the change in global knowledge and techniques was introduced. In this century, advancement in leadership has become significant to work with the team.

1.3.3. Market Competition

Market competition has always been there for organizations and leaders. The leaders have to take accurate decision to meet markets' needs and participation in competition. Balancing the budget, and ensuring high profits can be a great challenge for leaders, which can be catered by effective planning and hardworking team. Market competitions were not considerable to great extent in earlier centuries because of less demands and limited organizations.

1.3.4. Aligning the Team

The leaders are supposed to move the team in one direction. To gain loyalty of employees and build a healthy interpersonal relationship with them is becoming much more challenging in 21st century. To bring the attention of all employees towards one mission and reduce turnover have been difficult for leaders. Current century demands that leaders need to change and manage themselves first, than they should work upon their employees (Drucker 2006).

1.3.5. Collaborative Tasks

To develop collaboration with employees and customers to sustain effective organizational environment is difficult for a leader. To manage a big work force and their management can create hindrance in attaining other tasks for leaders by paying so much attention to the internal issues of organization.

2. Literature Review

The outline of the literature has been designed with the intention of comparing the leadership style of 21st century with the leadership of initial eras. It helped in understanding the changes of leadership styles and their implication and how it got transformed in recent time.

The history of leadership phenomenon develops an understanding that the concept of leadership in various fields have passed through numerous phases. The initial studies on this topic emerged as the need to improve team work, and focused on the traits or personal attributes of leaders (Mahoney et al 1960). Trait theories had faith on the innate potentials and characteristics of born leaders, which made them unique from other non leader individuals (Stodgill 1948). The trait theory turned out to be a difficult process in hiring leaders due to difference in individuals' qualities. It pushed others to develop another leadership theory, focusing on people' 'behaviors rather than inborn traits (Stodgill 1948). Those studies convinced people that leaders with active participation in accomplishing tasks often find success, so the democratic style became popular (Bowers and Seashore 1966). With the passage of time, the affectivity of behavioral theories went down to the curve, as the behavioral theories of leadership were not flexible according to the situations. This was the time when contingency theories of leadership were come into

existence (Vroom and Yetton 1974). It was found that each theory was stressing upon different factors in order to improve leadership styles, but the most efficient theory was the one, which was motivating leaders to mold themselves according to their situation and environment. It was the combination of transactional and transformational leadership. Researchers suggested that transactional leaders are more instrumental and believe on working with their team instead of ordering the subordinates to fulfill tasks (Bass and Avolio 1993). On the other hand, transformational leaders are assumed to be full of devotion and energy, with an interest and capability to motivate others (Howell and Avolio 1993).

2.1 Conventional Leadership

Existing literature supported the high performance due to superior leadership qualities, not only the decades before but in recent time as well. Smircich and Morgan (1982) argued regarding the phenomenon of leadership and its process significance in order to explain the rights and obligations of leader towards his/her subordinates. It was concluded that the leader is more successful that works with others and cooperates with ground realities of worker, on the other hand, leaders who follow the standardize schedule are not successful as the democratic leaders. The study shows that the contingency theory is more applicable in organizational situations to make a successful team rather than follow the rigid rules in this area. A study indicated the vital condition of the three and a half decades before, and a female researcher was involved in gathering the data from the working of an insurance company in the working hours. The aim and the purpose of the project were explained to workers in advance and the several questions were asked from the employees that showed the reflection of previous finding in favor of democratic leaders (Bowers & Seashore 1966).

Another attempt was made in United State of America with the purpose of knowing the significance of leader's personality in organizational performance. The researchers used group dynamics q-sort method in order to conduct the research method whereas data have been gathered on cross sectional design base in a group form. It was assumed that the performance of the organization is dependent on the Top management team dynamics. The study was divided into two strands, first is to assess the leader's personality over top management team dynamics and second is to find out the effect of top management team dynamics on organizational performance (Peterson, Smith, Martorana & Owens 2003). Bushra, Usman and Naveed (2011) expressed the vision of transformational leadership style in Lahore, Pakistan. Primary data was collected through questionnaire that was comprised on 35 items indicated the likelihood of the respondents. Sampling units were 3 banks and 200 observations were gathered through these banks. Data was combined from all centers and analyzed the results in a meaningful form. It was revealed that the transformational leader is the cause of commitments of employees towards organizational goals and job satisfaction.

2.2 Contemporary Leadership

One of the supported studies has been done in the central region of Ghana. Mensah and Amponsah (2016) discussed the relation between commitments of teachers towards class lectures and head teacher leadership style. Several leadership styles have been observed and data collected from the respective respondents. Transformational, Transitional and Laissez-faire leadership styles were included as variables of the research. The correlation statistics technique was used in order to interpret the results and it was concluded that the teachers' commitments vary from different leadership styles.

Heath, Isbell, Koschmann, Sanders, Heath, Isbell, Seth, Atwood, Ray, Koschmann & Isbell (2016) presented their own experienced of leadership from different organizations. The report

facilitates to enhance the self-compassion and helps to understand the leadership terminology among selves. The thesis report shared the authors' leadership observations, experiences and their opinions about leadership styles because, not only they leaned about others but learned more about themselves and discovered new things in leadership among them.

Another attempt was made by authors in favor of women are successful in leadership. Adler and Osland (2016) elucidated the most important factor of leading globally. Many studies highlighted about the success of leadership is a reason of male leaders but in recent era females are engaging with upper level management and leading the team in an effective ways. The gender difference is not limited to leading at work but the role of global leader is more than a gender and brings societal change in terms of gender priorities. People are becoming educated and sophisticated that helps women to lead in respective ways, communicate and work among the male dominant world.

2.3 Implications

Another attempt suggested and indicated the positive relation between democratic leadership and cultural intelligence. Beside this, the implication of the research was also explained with the same methodology in different context and population (Brannen, 2016).

3. Conclusion

Leadership has been introduced as the vital skill to work in a team to move towards the fulfillment of targeted goal. It was found that with the emergence of latest technologies and advancements in business field, the leaders and managers are expected to behave in a different way and try to acquire knowledge about modern procedures for strengthening the organizational system (Pearce, 2004). To mobilize the business in 21st century, they need to improve their communication and persuade their employees and customers against their competitors. They need to improve their interpersonal skills and become team player to stand with their team (Mumford, Campion & Morgeson, 2007).

We have understood that delegation of authority or distribution of tasks is very much crucial in leadership skills. The encouraging behavior of leaders and empowerment of employees can develop skills of creativity and critical thinking amongst them to deal the organizational system, and procedures more efficiently. An effective leader always welcomes employees' participation in improving organizational progress and increased participation in dealing with social problems. There is no doubt in saying that leaders and managers in the 21st century organizations must do things efficiently than the leaders of the 19th and 20th century to bring a positive change in organizational culture and effectively lead and succeed in the highly competitive global economy. They must be leaders, advocates and entrepreneurs of the organization, who always ensure that their organizations can adapt and innovate in today's dynamic technologically-driven work environment.

By applying appropriate leadership style, leaders can be helpful in achieving organizational goals and can play a significant role in minimizing above mentioned critical issues to improve organizational performance. The current era requires transformational leadership style that not only facilitates the works to work flawless and efficiently; but it allows potential worker to enhance their skills and build their career by getting training from supervisors during the job.

References:

[1] Adler, NJ & Osland, JS 2016, 'Women Leading Globally: What We Know, Thought We Knew, and Need to Know about Leadership in the 21st Century', In *Advances in Global*

Leadership, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, *Advances in Global Leadership*, vol. 9, pp. 15-56

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S1535-120320160000009003>

[2] Avolio, B.J., 2003. Examining the full range model of leadership: Looking back to transform forward. *Leadership development for transforming organizations: Grow leaders for tomorrow*, pp.71-98.

<https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=3s54AgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA71&dq=full+range+theory+of+leadership&ots=dm7TyAb8pM&sig=peDmXEX1RmteICtOLMJJX6MK1js#v=onepage&q=full%20range%20theory%20of%20leadership&f=false>

[3] Bass, B.M. and Avolio, B.J., 1993. Transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Public administration quarterly*, pp.112-121.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/40862298?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

[4] Brannen, J.C., 2016. 'The relationship between cultural intelligence and transformational leadership: A study of people leaders', The University of the Rockies, Doctoral Dissertation in Occupational psychology; Organizational Behavior

<http://gradworks.umi.com/10/00/10003176.html>

[5] Bowers, D.G. and Seashore, S.E., 1966. Predicting organizational effectiveness with a four-factor theory of leadership. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, pp.238-263.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2391247?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

[6] Burke, W.W., 1985. *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*, by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus. New York: Harper & Row, 1985, 244 pp., \$19.95

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hrm.3930240409/full>

[7] Bushra, F, Usman, A & Naveed, A 2011, 'Effect of transformational leadership on employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment in banking sector of Lahore (Pakistan)', *International journal of Business and Social science*, vol. 2, no. 18,

<http://search.proquest.com/openview/1ff18510531dcb4419aff5fac891b182/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>

[8] Drucker, PF 2006, 'The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done (Harperbusiness Essentials)', New York: Collins.

<https://www.amazon.com/Effective-Executive-Definitive-Harperbusiness-Essentials/dp/0060833459>

[9] Fiedler, F., 2015. Contingency theory of leadership. *Organizational Behavior 1: Essential Theories of Motivation and Leadership*, p.232.

https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=YXOsBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA232&dq=contingency+theory+of+leadership&ots=3A8Ycz_fbb&sig=sP0pbWIJYSaXkEvcDX-Zu8a1M4U#v=onepage&q=contingency%20theory%20of%20leadership&f=false

[10] Heath, RG, Isbell, MG, Koschmann, MA, Sanders, ML, Heath, RG, Isbell, M, Seth, JG, Atwood, RD, Ray, TC, Koschmann, MK & Isbell, MG 2016, 'Interorganizational Collaboration: Leadership Ethics & Communication for the 21st Century', Saint Mary's College of California,

Thesis in Developmental psychology; Organization theory
<http://gradworks.umi.com/10/12/10124251.html>

[11] Hernez-Broome, G. and Hughes, R.L., 2004. Leadership development: Past, present, and future. *People and Strategy*, 27(1), p.24.

<http://search.proquest.com/openview/250fc5ece9d36b844b2c0a47d01726a9/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>

[12] Howell, J.M. and Avolio, B.J., 1993. Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of applied psychology*, 78(6), p.891.

<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/apl/78/6/891/>

[13] Ireland, R & Hitt, M 1999, 'Achieving and maintaining strategic competitiveness in the 21st century: The role of strategic leadership', *Academy of Management Perspectives*, vol.13, no. 1, pp. 43-57. <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/1567311/achieving-maintaining-strategic-competitiveness-21st-century-role-strategic-leadership>

[14] Mahoney, T.A., Jerdee, T.H. and Nash, A.N., 1960. Predicting managerial effectiveness. *Personnel Psychology*, 13(2), pp.147-163.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1960.tb02462.x/abstract>

[15] Mensah, DKD & Amponsah, N 2016, 'Ready to Take Off with 21st Century Leadership Styles to Influence Teacher Commitment in the Central Region of Ghana', *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 47-59

<http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Ready-to-Take-Off-With-21st-Century-Leadership-Styles-to-Influence-Teacher-Commitment-in-the-Central-Region-of-Ghana.1.pdf>

[16] Mumford, T.V., Campion, M.A. and Morgeson, F.P., 2007. The leadership skills strataplex: Leadership skill requirements across organizational levels. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(2), pp.154-166.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984307000069>

[17] Pearce, C.L., 2004. The future of leadership: Combining vertical and shared leadership to transform knowledge work. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 18(1), pp.47-57.

<http://amp.aom.org/content/18/1/47.short>

[18] Peterson, RS, Smith, DB, Martorana, PV & Owens, PD 2003, 'The Impact of Chief Executive Officer Personality on Top Management Team Dynamics: One Mechanism by Which Leadership Affects Organizational Performance', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 88, no. 5, pp. 795–808

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Brent_Smith/publication/5764345_The_impact_of_chief_executive_officer_personality_on_top_management_team_dynamicsonemechanism_by_which_leadership_affects_organizational_performance/links/540d8e790cf2f2b29a3869dc.pdf

[19] Smircich, L & Morgan, G 1982, 'Leadership: The management of Meaning', *The journal of applied behavioral science*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 257-273.

http://homepages.stmartin.edu/fac_staff/dconant/mba601/notes/LeadershipTheManagementOfMeaning.pdf

[20] Stogdill, R.M., 1948. Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *The Journal of psychology*, 25(1), pp.35-71.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00223980.1948.9917362?journalCode=vjrl20>

[21] Vroom, V.H. and Yetton, P.W., 1973. *Leadership and decision-making* (Vol. 110). University of Pittsburgh Pre.

<https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=LX6ZBRsX3kAC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=Leadership+and+Decision-Making&ots=nbdnWMGHiO&sig=MmHDjNkwHPmGcaQiFmocHrnBaZo#v=onepage&q=Leadership%20and%20Decision-Making&f=false>

[22] Yukl, G., 1971. Toward a behavioral theory of leadership. *Organizational behavior and human performance*, 6(4), pp.414-440.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0030507371900262>

[23] Yukl, G.A., 2002. Leadership in organizations.

http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/26015119/media-f7b-97-randd-leaders-business-yukl.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1479743453&Signature=7tS8xIIjgPVq0qNoWy8nGVv8tFk%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DLeadership_in_organizations.pdf

[24] Zaccaro, S.J., Kemp, C. and Bader, P., 2004. Leader traits and attributes. *The nature of leadership*, 101, p.124.

http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/37161158/Zaccaro_et_al_-_2004_-_Leader_traits_and_attributes.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1479746427&Signature=%2Brg9XA01cgki8BN7hvwTvf%2FNA0%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DZaccaro_et_al_-_2004_-_Leader_traits_and.pdf