LECTURE 2: DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Assessing Leadership Performance Dimensions: A Thinking Framework for Leadership Decisions

As leadership is crucial for organizational success, it is essential that leaders have means for analyzing situations and determining appropriate leadership actions and behaviors. The "Thinking Framework," developed from extant leadership theory, periodical literature and leadership consultancy best practices, provides a holistic approach for making leadership decisions. The framework dimensions establish a systematic thought process allowing the leader to select appropriate theoretical constructs and behavioral responses for application to various leadership scenarios. The framework also introduces significant avenues for future research as well as direct application for instructors, students and practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the controversies surrounding the study and practice of leadership, it is still the universal competency required for success in business, society, government and life. While there is a wealth of extant research in the field of leadership that identifies a significant array of leadership approaches (see Bass, 1990; Bennis, 1989; Burns, 1978; Day & Antonakis, 2012; Fiedler, 1967; Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2015; Mumford, 2006; Northouse, 2016; Rost, 1991) the complexity and unanswered questions in the study of leadership often make it difficult for practitioners and students alike to gain a clear understanding of exactly what part of leadership theory to employ in a specific situation (Burns, 2003). Much of the current leadership literature, whether from theoretical or popular sources, fails to provide a direct link on 'how' to actually lead (Allio, 2005; Williams, 2013).

To date, extant research has yet to develop a universally accepted conceptual framework for integrating five decades of leadership research and theory for applying the diverse array of leadership behaviors and actions to academic and practical inquiry. In theory, leadership behaviors have been classified into meta-categories wherein leadership behaviors were identified into either task or relationship/concern related with other categories directed towards performance outcomes, such as change behavior, productivity, with effectiveness added as a subsequent dimension (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009;Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). While leadership theories, especially in academia, have traditionally been categorized using the four chronological phases moving from trait theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, into “new theories of leadership”, they still fail to show the integration of traits and behaviors as a holistic approach for leadership practice throughout the evolution or analysis of such theories. This lack of consensus has resulted in part due to some leadership theories being too narrow to explain or guide leadership practice for traversing today’s complex environment (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000; Van Seters & Field, 1990) while other theories are so complex that they merely complicate the situation or are too difficult or consumptive to be employed. The complexities surrounding leadership situations also require leaders to be highly versatile with the ability to perform multiple leadership and many times competing roles, in order to be effective (Kaiser, Lindberg, & Craig, 2007; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006) and therefore leadership decisions cannot be derived from just one theory or behavior. To complicate matters even further, there is no universally set or accepted definition for leadership in research or in practice (Alvesson & Spicer, 2014; Barker, 1997; Bass, 1990; Stogdill, 1974). And in addition, the definitions of 'leadership' and 'management' often overlap and the terms themselves are often used interchangeably (Berson, et. al., 2006; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) adding further confusion to the challenges faced by practitioners, students and theorists alike.

The leadership field is also rife with self-help tactics and ideas for innovation in management practice and with stories and cases of effective leaders, yet few paradigms or models for teaching leadership (Allio, 2005) have been developed. Leadership courses and training programs have been criticized for the teaching of theories that come from a vast literature that is often contradictory, confusing and lacking in cohesion (Rost, 1991) which fall short in teaching individuals how to lead (Allio, 2005; Williams, 2013). The changing perspectives on leadership theory over time (Barker, 1997) and the emerging classifications of "new theories of leadership" (Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006) suggest that the variance in research opinions is not much help to those thinking about or teaching leadership. And to date, the expansive field of study on leadership also lacks an integrative theoretical framework to streamline and subsequently process leadership practice with research findings (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Therefore, if organizational leaders, instructors and students were guided by a straightforward framework for thinking about leadership and leadership decision-making, perhaps they would be able to understand and apply appropriate elements of leadership theory more effectively.

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK

Based on research and experience in the field of leadership, it was determined that a different approach to the conceptualization of leadership may provide researchers and practitioners with an orderly and straight-forward methodology for considering and integrating leadership theory into practice. Prior research indicates that leadership tends to be beyond the ordinary abilities of most people (Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006) and therefore when considering leadership activity, including many people in the overall process of leadership may lead to more effective leadership results (Yukl,1999). The implication is that encouraging students and practitioners to think of leadership in relationship and process terms may guide the thinking process more closely to the actual practice of leadership and remove the sense that leadership is reserved for the few. Creating a framework for thinking about leadership prior to emersion in leadership theory and application may remove much of the confusion that is now existent in the discipline. When using the framework students or practitioners should easily grasp the concept of leadership and have an awareness of the dimensions that should be considered in any leadership activity.

While there is a consensus that most leadership situations are unique, similar issues or parameters routinely exist that must be addressed within each situation (Doci & Hofmans, 2015; Guarana & Hernandez, 2014). Based on the premise of similitude, the "Thinking Framework" includes seven facets that must be addressed to a greater or lesser extent for enhanced effectiveness in each leadership scenario. The framework allows individuals to look at any leadership theory or situation using a common language and a consistent schema, ensuring that they are not omitting critical details necessary for effective leadership decision-making, whether at home, at work, in your community and at any level of organizational leadership.

The framework was developed by examining which behavioral and conceptual constructs should be used when assessing and determining leadership decisions, behaviors or processes by focusing on character as a disposition or trait as a way of thinking (Bass & Bass, 2008). Since a leader's character may or may not be reflected in their behavior (Hannah & Avolio, 2011) a means for guiding decisions or determining behavioral actions is needed for practicing leadership. It must be noted that the framework was not developed to examine extant theory on the locus of character and how leader character is transmitted to and received by followers, or on how character relates to or serves as an antecedent to exemplary leadership styles, or how character is contextualized or how character is developed. The development of the framework was exclusively focused as a means for unpacking the definitions and theories of leadership and character to establish a lens for viewing and making actionable decisions in various situations.

THE THINKING FRAMEWORK

The Thinking Framework is built around two inseparable foci essential for the evaluation of effective leadership: 1) leader's behaviors and actions generate results, and 2) developing and nurturing relationships increases value over time (Staub, 2002). These two elements are supported by Shartle's (1951) findings wherein the best means for predicting organizational success is the culture of the organization and the leader's behavior. This unique framework helps to direct leader decisions and actions while creating a productive culture through enhanced leader-member relationships (Mumford et al., 2000). In assuring compliance to these two factors, the framework requires that seven dimensions be addressed to some degree for effective leadership decision-making to occur (see Figure 1) to obtain the desired results and culture.

FIGURE 1
THE THINKING FRAMEWORK

Background

The seven dimensions evolved from a search on 25 years of documented material from a leadership consultant in combination with an extensive review of leadership research (Staub, 2002). Data reduction occurred as themes and elements were identified and coded (using qualitative software) from an analysis of the training material and notes from the consultant. The coding details allowed for denoting specific themes or subsections that were then verified by the co-authors and consultant to insure evaluation reliability in categorical coding. The categories were then identified with key factors of leadership, labeled and cross-referenced for relevance in predominant leadership theories. The final selection of the seven dimensions was categorized and advanced after a systematic review of leadership literature including articles from the past 20 years (1995-2015) found in The Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Applied Psychology, Academy of Management Review, Journal of Management, Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, the Harvard Business Review confirmed the findings. Additionally, a review of best-selling academic textbooks in the field of leadership during this same time-frame was conducted to cross-reference the selected dimensions.

These seven dimensions (categories) were referred to or identified frequently as concepts and elements essential for effective leadership activity regardless of the scope of inquiry. Additionally, these same dimensions appeared with relative frequency in professional publications, both books and articles published in the popular press frequented by professional managers engaged in leadership activities in their organizations. Many leadership consultants and executive coaches have employed these and similar dimensions as necessary foundational concepts for effective leadership to occur.

The Seven Dimensions of the Thinking Framework

The seven "dimensions" of the Thinking Framework that must be activated at some level for effective leadership include: Purpose, Vision, Competency, Integrity, Passion, Intimacy and Courage. The descriptions of purpose and vision begin the exploration of the seven dimensions. The common issues that relate to purpose and vision are ever present, regardless of organizational level, complexity of the situation, or the players involved. For a leader to have the vision necessary to keep the organization on course, it is critical that there be clarity of purpose. With clarity of purpose and vision, all members of the organization will be able to pursue common goals and will see the relationships between their activities and organizational goals and hence provide a base for exploring the seven dimensions.

Purpose

Purpose is the direction or the meaning of organizational endeavors; it provides the "how" for defining goals or vision and reflects what activities and actions represent. Purpose is not what a leader does but rather what a leader's activity means. When considering the purpose of a firm, leaders should ask 'what does this organization do for customers, employees, owners and the community?' A Deloitte survey found that employees (executives and hourly workers) in organizations with a strong sense of purpose were 82% more confident in their firm's potential for success, similarly only 48% of employees in organizations without a strong sense of purpose felt confident regarding their firm's future prospects (Deloitte, 2014).

Both leaders and followers are responsible for understanding purpose. Without understanding the ultimate purpose of the leader or follower in a situation it becomes very difficult to focus appropriate attention and energy on activities that will be most effective in a given situation. Therefore, it is essential that leaders have clearly communicated values or purpose as companies with a strong 'sense of mission' will create employees with a strong emotional commitment to the firm. Commitment in turn appears to be deepest when there is a match between the employee's values (including purpose) and the company's values (Bart & Tabone, 1998; Campbell & Yeung, 1991) further supporting the need for a strong sense of purpose founded on core and shared values (Pearce, 1982) reflected in a mission or values statement. This not only helps organizational members focus on what is most important to organizational stakeholders(Ireland & Hitt, 1992), but provides a basis for making purposeful decisions that will ultimately improve organizational performance (Bart, 1997).

The goal in defining purpose is for all work-related activity to be tied to and measured against it. Effective leaders at all levels should analyze and plan around purpose that reflects the dynamic circumstance of organizational effort. It is also important to continuously evaluate purpose in terms of environmental changes as purpose is a dynamic dimension that must continuously evolve with environmental and circumstantial change.

Vision

Vision is the goal or the specific focus of organizational action. Leaders should have a clear vision which provides the end state to be accomplished (Covey, 1996; De Pree, 1997; Fairholm, 1998; Melrose, 1995; Neuschel, 1998). Wherein purpose is "how" the leader wants the organization to be or the instrumental value, vision is the destination or the "what" or terminal aspect of what the organization hopes to achieve (Rokeach, 1973). Vision is the internalization of values and goals which can motivate followers to work towards the vision as they are attracted to the behavior itself (McClelland, 1975) as it serves as a transcending ideal that represents shared values (House, 1977). Vision and purpose are therefore interdependent; a vision without clarity of purpose is just a good idea and purpose without vision has no sense of appropriate scale (Senge, 1990). Vision articulates the direction for collective effort, identifies a clear path for the commitment of mutual effort (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996), and may be identified as an aspect of charisma (Bass, 1985). Vision is formulated to move the organization, team, or individual toward a specific “super goal” that helps in living out the purpose.

Those charged with the responsibility of assuring the survival of the organization must recognize the role played by vision. Vision is often referred to in terms of the qualities that lead to a high degree of trust between leaders and followers. Trust results when leaders create a compelling vision that brings people together based on a shared purpose (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2003). Transformational leaders use vision as a sense of purpose to transform the commitment of followers by listening, testing ideas and seeking feedback (Xu & Cooper-Thomas, 2011). Charismatic leaders can use vision to motivate and mobilize others by creating a meaningful reality for the future (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

It is essential that leaders are able to clearly communicate and transmit the vision to followers in order for effectiveness to occur (Humphrey, 2002). It is the leader’s responsibility to employ communication that encourages an on-going awareness of integrity-based decision-making in daily activity (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). A "Shared Vision" is also identified as one of the five practices necessary to attain extraordinary leadership results (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Involving followers in the development of a shared vision will also aid in the strategic implementation process (Pearce, Conger, & Locke 2008). It is essential that the vision created does not limit follower’s creativity or is so narrowly focused and restrictive that ideas and strategies fail to evolve as situational changes occur (Shipman & Mumford, 2011).

Competency

Competency is the ability to apply internal skills or knowledge-based resources effectively (De Pree, 1997; Fairholm, 1998; Greenleaf, 1977). While competency can be considered a leadership trait, it is an essential element in leader decision-making skills, it is a fundamental component of expertise and it plays an important role when considering a leader’s ability to adapt (Wright & Goodstein, 2007). Since leadership decisions often require significant research, competence in the decision process is an essential building block for effective and sustainable leadership (Hannah & Avolio, 2011). It must be noted that leader competency in the Framework is not limited to specific knowledge or skills; it also refers to attitudes, perceptions, and emotions related to both self and situation (Antonacopoulous & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Studies have identified competencies for effective leadership directly related to personality traits, motives, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills (Boyatzis, 1982). Emotional Intelligence becomes a key component in competency (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013) as studies have shown that 85% of the difference between exemplar and average performers in senior leadership positions is attributed to competency ability. However, many leaders are only vaguely aware of the value

of their personal competencies or the competencies they lack (Barney, 1995: Duncan, Ginter, &Swayne, 1998). More than 90% of CEO failures occurred because of inabilities to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships and build teams (Charan & Colvin, 1999). Subsequent findings still showed that emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills remained the biggest downfall of CEOs (Chief Executive, 2012). Findings such as these reinforce the premise that leader competency must go beyond just understanding the underlying factors of personal behavior. This research also suggests that leaders must understand human behavior in general, the behaviors of followers and the impact of their personal behavior on others (Kets de Vries, 2006). Competency requires a level of understanding of behavior as it relates to self as well as the behavior of others across a variety of situations (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007; Goffee & Jones, 2005) in order to be effective.

It is important to also note that competence, as used in the context of the Thinking Framework, refers to not only the personal competencies of leaders and followers, but also to the development of competencies within the organization. Leader awareness of factors that include spirituality, emotional intelligence and values provides a critical arena for assessing an organization's competencies. The identification of an organization's core competencies is extremely important to the senior leadership of an organization (Bain &Company, 2015) as competency has been identified as the most critical factor for achieving competitive advantage (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Competency therefore includes technical and financial ability as well as highly honed communication skills. Leader effectiveness will be impacted by the ability to communicate messages to employees, suppliers, buyers and potential investors along with the ability to listen and respond to all internal and external stakeholders. Leaders must also possess the competencies for assessing organizational traits, such as human capital needs and abilities, awareness of the organization's unique culture and the level of relationships with external stakeholders in order to effectively implement strategic change.

A leader's effectiveness is directly affected by their awareness of the environment and an understanding of the values of the competencies required in particular situations, both at the operational and the interpersonal level. The leadership competencies needed by organizations will change from situation to situation. The reality is that some leaders are better than others in specific situations and some organizations have better source competencies or support structures. However, leaders must be aware of their own personal competencies and be able to quickly grasp the competencies required in a situation. After that, the ability to acquire needed competencies and deploy existing competencies is critical. Knowing what is needed to reach the vision and live the purpose is the realm of strategic competency. Without strategic competency, the leader may get the job of the moment done but be incapable of creating sustained success (Simon, Hitt, Arregle & Cambell, 2010).

Integrity

The commitment and courage to ensure actions are based on honesty and truthfulness, (Covey, 1996; Fairholm, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Pollard, 1996; Rinehart, 1998; Winston, 1999). Integrity is defined as the consistency between words and actions or adherence to an overall code from one's identity and self-concept (Bauman, 2013). Integrity is derived from inner character (Bass & Bass, 2008) and is among the core strengths in making leaders virtuous from the inside out (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and an essential dimension for ethical leadership (Kalshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2011). The increased need for integrity in leadership is evidenced by the inclusion of integrity in the developing stream of research on authentic leadership (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; George et al, 2007; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003) wherein leaders are prescribed to be moral, ethical and optimistic and true to themselves (Brown, Trevi, & Harrison, 2005). Integrity is therefore necessary in authentic leadership in order to be genuine and self-aware for putting the organizational mission and goals ahead of personal interests. Servant leadership which is premised on serving the followers and is a strong predictor of follower commitment and organizational performance will also require the need for personal integrity in order to truly serve others (Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008; Russell & Stone, 2002).

All of the competencies in the world will not serve an enterprise or a leader if integrity is lacking. Integrity means much more than simply being honest and truthful; it requires the courage to ensure that

actions truly match words and that commitment is made. In essence it means that you "walk the talk" and make a commitment to moral values (Bauman, 2013). It has become a leadership requisite to assure that a social context exists within the organization to assure the existence of a compelling organizational norm based on ethical behavior (Thomas, Schermerhorn, & Dienhart, 2004). It also refers to a focus on the organization's unwavering belief in ethical behavior and its willingness to eliminate any activities, processes, or individuals that do not serve that purpose or work against that purpose in interactions or relationships.

Integrity is based on being able to identify the right thing to do in a situation; the foundation for such ability is a clear understanding of what it is that you believe. Kouzes and Posner (2003) discovered that the most admired leaders were those who stood for something, had strongly held beliefs on matters of principle and projected a moral compass that guided their decisions that affected others. Their personal value structure became the foundation of their credibility and served as a guide for what they did and how they did it. The personal value structure that leaders build is likewise the foundation of integrity and allows them to act ethically and consistently while gaining the trust of others. As organizations can lose stakeholder trust for a variety of reasons related to integrity, the maintenance of organizational trust (integrity) becomes one of the most important factors in leadership.

Passion

Passion is defined as full commitment to and enthusiasm for an endeavor and has been identified as the charisma to influence and encourage inspiration in others. One of the central elements in entrepreneurial success is the passion the leader transfers to everyone associated with the start-up (Cardon, 2008). Transformational leaders challenge their followers through their passion to intentionally inspire others (Searle & Hanrahan, 2011). Most individuals, teams and organizations that achieve greatness rely on the vast waves of motivational power that are released when passion is tapped and continually renewed. Without passion**,** or full commitment to and enthusiasm for an endeavor, wholehearted effort may be lacking.

Followers expect many things from a leader. One of those things is the ability to "see" the future, or at least some part of the future. The leader must clearly see what needs to be accomplished. In order to be effective the leader must widely share that vision, and to share it, the leader must communicate to others the vision's meaning and purpose. That sense of meaning and purpose must come from within (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The leader must believe in the vision and have the passion to pursue it before he or she can hope to inspire others to seek the same thing. There is significant research that supports the contention that accurately identifying emotion in others is an important element in the leader's ability to inspire and build relationships (Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002). Being able to identify follower's emotions and then appropriately respond becomes an even more important element in the building of leader-follower relationships (George, 2000).

Passion can be found as an expression of strong emotional feelings that can be communicated and is often referred to as motivation (Houlfort, Philippe, Vallerand, & Ménard, 2013). Therefore, passion and motivation are distinct but related concepts. Motivation or passion is not something that can be put into others. Motivation or passion is already inside of every individual and needs the right conditions or actions for it to be unleashed (Vallerand, 2012). As research has found that the ability to communicate in an appropriate emotional manner is often identified in individuals that tend to be extraverted (Judge& Bono, 2000) leaders must be able to make their passion contagious through directed actions. Being proactively extraverted and being able to identify emotions in others and react appropriately to spur motivation are identifiers of leaders that tend to be transformational (Rubin, Munz, & Bommer, 2005). Passion is a critical element of leadership because of its importance in motivating self and others (Vallerand, 2012).

Intimacy

Intimacy is the ability to connect and have insight into our relationship with others, (Covey, 1996; De Pree, 1997; Fairholm, 1998; Greenleaf, 1977). Intimacy refers to deep and direct interactions with and concern for others (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Shaw 1997) essential for the development of mutual intimacy as a precursor to trust (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). The dimension of intimacy is our ability to connect and have insights into our relationships with others, keeping us from damaging critical relationships. Intimacy is also the essence of self-understanding. An intimate understanding of what is happening in your life, work and environment—what some call experience (Kouzes & Posner, 2002)—is crucial to developing the intimate relationships between leaders and followers necessary for effective leadership to occur. The courage to take responsibility in tough situations and to confront and be confronted by those with whom you have relationships also defines the level of intimacy in those relationships. An effective leader that understands the implication of intimacy should also address the concept of spirituality; the spirituality that exists in all people (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Finding out what these values are in followers and identifying personal values of spirituality are components of intimacy that must not be overlooked. The spiritual leadership that is envisioned in intimacy is based on the realization that all people are connected at some level (Autry, 2001); that spiritual leadership is based on a vision of achieving something of value that requires the input from mind, body and soul and that spiritual leadership is based on absolute honesty that allows us to look at reality, both externally and internally without the need to alter that vision for any reason (Van Praag, 2004). This ethical and values-based approach to leadership correlates to the need people have to find meaning in their work (Fry, 2003). Therefore the intimacy in the Thinking Framework includes understanding the relationship between spirituality and work. Leaders must grasp the values that are congruent with organizational, team and individual values that will lead to the individual's sense of connection and completeness (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003).

Leaders and followers can maximize their effectiveness only if mutual intimacy is present. It is very difficult for a leader to develop the kind of relationships necessary with followers if there is not a sense of mutuality (Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013). This sense will develop when a leader is willing to share what they stand for with followers, including their values, strengths, weaknesses and vision. This however requires the need to understand self first and a willingness to understand the values respected by followers. Expressing this kind of intimacy often takes courage, but the result is a team with mutuality of purpose, an awareness of the strengths that are available to compensate for the weakness and compassion for the weaknesses of others (Northouse, 2016). Ultimately, this intimacy leads to a sense of mutual values created between the leader and follower when both parties have a greater understanding of self. It is very important that the leader grasps this concept and employs it in the development of followers.

Courage

Courage had been defined as doing what is required when facing challenges beyond individual or collective fears or doubts. (Greenleaf, 1980; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Sanders, 1994) and therefore a moral quality in character-based leadership that relates to the betterment of society and organizations (Wright & Quick, 2011). Courage, as bravery, integrity, perseverance and zest, was also identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004) as one of the six core virtues for leaders and noted by individuals (followers) as a desirable trait for high-level leaders (Nichols & Cottrell, 2014). Courage has also been identified as a requisite factor for pioneering and leading others into new ventures (Ulrich, 1996) and is essential for leaders to serve as an initiator within organizations (Bennis, 1997; Ford, 1991). Courageous leaders must claim the power to act, risk and initiate (Koestenbaum, 2002) as the courage to face current reality is a foundational tenant of effective leadership (Staub, 2002).

Courage can take the form of small decisions made regarding relatively inconsequential acts or be necessary for taking great risks. Courage is therefore the making of rational decisions in the face of adversity, no matter how great or small the level of that adversity. Making the "right" decision for self becomes an act of courage; the courageous leader is willing to act on his/her beliefs. Leaders must also have the willingness to admit errors made due to poor judgment. In order to act with courage, leaders

must willingly question their ways of being and acting, make sense of life's experiences and take steps to act responsible and ethically (Cunliffe, 2009). Leading authentically by creating and upholding ethical behavioral standards is also a means to impact the moral courage of followers (Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011).

Much of the extant literature on leadership all but ignores or minimizes the inclusion of courage as an area for leadership study (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Yet for the Thinking Framework, courage is the foundation upon which all of the other six dimensions stand. Courage means doing what is required and not what is comfortable. It is all too easy to lose our nerve and try to simply "manage" the business, co-workers or customers, or even personal lives. To lead effectively requires that individuals challenge their barrier and doubts to act with commitment. Without vitalizing "acts" of courage, leadership ultimately fails (Staub, 2002).

Framework in Action

Since the practice of leadership is an imprecise science and impacted by a multitude of variables, a systematic approach is helpful in addressing this complexity in decision making. The seven dimension of the framework as a prescribed approach to leadership allows practitioners and students to systematically assess leadership theory and tactics through the concept of fuzzy logic (Zadeh, 1965). Fuzzy logic, as a means for reasoning through vague, imprecise, noisy or missing information allows for a more quantitative approach to a qualitative or subjective scenario by assessing the situation on a binary basis (Yes or No) which is beneficial in decision making (Abdullah, 2013) for arriving at a definite conclusion. In understanding the fundamentals and relative effectiveness of a theory, the framework allows individuals to assess the particular theory in relation to each dimension. This thinking process gives individuals the ability to determine where each theory enhances or lacks in creating a holistic approach to addressing the particular leadership situation. Practitioners using the framework as a checklist will be able to develop a thinking pattern to focus on the dimensions and considerations necessary for decision making in effective leadership while assessing the impact of their own behaviors and actions.

The practice of fuzzy knowledge is also a practical approach for leadership decisions as it still allows for enough flexibility for the decision maker to modify the relative values of each factor relative to the specific decision (Malinin, 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

The seven dimensions of the Thinking Framework is a representation of what occurs in the process of leadership decision-making. One should note that purpose is surrounded by competency, integrity, intimacy and passion as these five dimensions make up the heart of leadership which must be built upon a firm foundation of courage or authenticity necessary to be effective as a leader (Ibarra, 2015). When these six dimensions are functioning well together the result is the seventh dimension of a directed vision. Vision that evolves in this way produces strategic decision-making and provides clarity of direction for effective leadership.

The seven dimensions were judiciously selected for having demonstrated significant impact in practice from direct use over 25 years in leadership consulting with over a thousand leaders from various organizational levels (Staub, 2001) relevant in extant leadership theory. Therefore, if leaders in any organizational position address each of these dimensions in the decision process, it will increase the likelihood that key facets necessary for effective leadership are utilized in the thought process subsequently improving leadership effectiveness. The framework also allows practitioners to employ any leadership theory or combination of theories in a directed and applicable way for determining a course of action. It is especially helpful for students by providing a common denominator as they compare, contrast and evaluate the various theories on leadership. When these dimensions are used consistently, the student or practitioner can expect to achieve a significantly greater grasp of what should be involved in leadership activity and should be better able to employ the available body of leadership theory in practice.

It is noted that no matter how fully a leader prepares for the challenges of leadership, on some occasions the uncontrollable elements of luck, chance and fortune may intercede. The Thinking Framework was created based on just seven central factors and the potential for bias exists in the selection and labeling of these factors even though they all had strong relevance throughout the evolution of leadership theory. It was also noted that many other variables can impact leadership situations and decision-making, however, creating a means to streamline the process can impact the odds of added success. The Thinking Framework contributes to the current literature by providing a framework for analyzing the application of the extant leadership theories and best practices and creates an opportunity for further longitudinal studies on leadership practice. The Framework while providing practical guidance for instructors, students and practitioners, also provides specific dimensions that can be examined in leadership studies and interventions. Future studies can develop evaluation frameworks for the relevant impact of each dimension as well as develop means or metrics for leader's self-assessment.

In sum, it is proposed that leadership is not just a position but rather a dynamic interactive process that requires many factors to be activated for effective results. Therefore a framework of seven factors was developed to provide a cognitive approach for assessing appropriate behavior and actions relevant to existing leadership situations and leadership theories which provides individuals a better means for understanding 'how' to lead.

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