A Review of

Five Leadership Models

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Abstract

This paper lays out the main principles of each of the five models of Authentic, Situational, Servant, Holistic and Charismatic Leadership, briefly reviews their empirical effectiveness before analyzing the ontogeny and emergence of the leadership skills in a leader according to each one of the five leadership models. In the conclusion, a personally preferred leadership model will be suggested and justified based on the research and values of the discussed leadership models.

*Keywords:* Leadership, Effectiveness, Authentic, Situational, Servant, Holistic, Charismatic

A Review of Five Leadership Models

Before initiating the discussion about the various leadership models, leadership as a concept needs to be clarified and defined. In their articles, Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004), Day (2001), and Velser and McCauley (2003) propose an emerging concept and understanding of leadership development; it is an ongoing and collective process that is facilitated by the organization’s capacity and support. However, Velser and McCauley (2003) distinguish leadership development from leader development. Leader development occurs on an individual level and is similar to personal development in that leader development focuses on developing an individual’s capacity to learn from experience as well as add meaning to the learned experience to be intergraded into the practice of leading an organization (Velser & McCauley, 2003, p. 22). As opposed to leader development, leadership development occurs on an organizational level and applies to and beyond the entire organization, which focuses on the development of leadership capacity to create useful and meaningful connections with stakeholders and other outside resources. The effects of leadership create an economic and competitive advantage for an organization and thus go beyond measurable outcomes of leadership (Velser & McCauley, 2003, p.22). Hernez-Broom and Hughes (2004) add further emphasis to difference between leader and leadership development, that is, the concept of leadership development is not simply defined by the leader’s activities but by its collective capacities of each organizational member. Because these leadership capacities are contextual and encompass all aspects of the organization, they are relationship-oriented; for an effective leadership process to occur, a positive relationship between the leader and his followers as well as other external connections should be established (Broom & Hughes, 2004).

Simply put, leadership development is an ongoing and holistic process that occurs in the entire organization whereas leader development focuses on improving and developing the capacities of the leader only. This is an important distinction because it implies that the effectiveness of leadership is not a top-down and unidirectional process but rather a bottom-up emergent bidirectional process that relies on the interaction between the leader and his followers. How this perspective affects the success of leadership will be evident in the following sections of this paper.

**Authentic Leadership Model**

An authentic leader is a leader who is aware of his or her values and also acts and leads accordingly. By staying true to one’s own values, the leader is demonstrating a sense of authenticity and genuine behavior, which increases his or her credibility as well as earns the trust of his or her followers (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). The model of Authentic Leadership (AL) consists of four empirically tested and valid constructs that distinguish AL from other leadership models. These four constructs are self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). An authentic leader with high self-awareness understands his or her strengths and weaknesses and is aware of one’s impact on others via interaction and behavior. Self-awareness also means that the leader gains knowledge about one’s self through the interaction with others and through a meaning-making process that contributes to the way one views oneself. Relational transparency means that the leader is willing to communicate openly about his or her feelings and thoughts to his followers. Balanced processing refers to the approach of using objective data to make final decisions. Lastly, because the authentic leader has a need to lead and act in accordance with to one’s own values and morals, the internalized moral perspective allows the leader to self-regulate one’s behavior by resisting societal and group pressures (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Hence, authentic leaders exhibit the need to understand their own leadership behavior to excel in the area of leadership through self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalized moral perspective (George, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Moreover, it is the effectiveness of Authentic Leadership (AL) in organizational settings that is of high importance. Stander, de Beer and Stander (2015) investigated the application of Authentic Leadership in the public health care sector in South Africa testing multiple hypotheses. Their findings showed that employees earned trust towards the organization through AL, which increased work engagement despite a challenging work environment. However, it is important to add that Stander, de Beer and Stander’s (2015) study showed an indirect link between AL and work engagement via trust (Stander et al., 2015). Thus, in Stander et al.’s (2015) study AL served as a facilitator that promotes trust and optimism in employees towards the organization, which increases work engagement.

On a cultural level, because the public health care sector in South Africa tends to be a highly stressful and demanding work environment, Stander et al. (2015) recommend that leaders apply AL as a method to promote a culture of trust and optimism through open communication. Considering the difference between leader and leadership in the introduction of this paper, that is, leadership is defined by collaborative and collective interaction processes between the leader and his followers, a leader should initiate open and authentic communication by expressing thoughts and feelings as well as genuine concern for employees to promote authentic and equal communication among employees. The leadership that would result from mutually authentic behavior would ultimately stimulate the emergence of authentic organizational behavior within the entire organization (Stander, de Beer, & Stander, 2015).

Although it appears as if authenticity to follow one’s values and be true to oneself is a fixed trait, Authentic Leadership can be developed by leaders themselves or with the help of a coach. Yasinski (2014) argues that an authentic leader needs to develop courage for the ability to withstand social and external pressures while remaining loyal to his followers. If courage is not present and needs to be developed, a transformation from within is required, which can be facilitated through the help of coaching (Yasinski, 2014, p.37). For example, Gatling (2014) showed in his study that business coaches using the principles of AL promote personal and professional growth as well as goal attainment in their client leaders (Gatling, 2014).

Interestingly, self-awareness in particular predicts coaching effectiveness because high levels of self-awareness allow the coach to regulate his or her behavior to improve coaching methods and practice. Being aware of the impact one has on one’s clients also helps the coach to understand his or her client’s concerns and needs. Similarly, knowing how one’s behavior impacts the environment, self-awareness is likely to increase ethical behavior as well (Gatling, 2014). Thus, self-awareness can be interpreted as a self-reflective feedback mechanism from which the authentic coach or leader draws one’s behavioral information to be aware but also to reflect on it.

Before closing on the model of Authentic Leadership (AL), the nature of the construct of authenticity had been explored by social psychologists in previous studies. For example, social psychologist Kernis (2003) found that authenticity is closely related to higher self-esteem and life satisfaction. This explains why the authentic leader is willing to openly share his thoughts and feelings with his or her followers and to learn about as well as improve his leadership practices based on the feedback from others.

**Situational Leadership Model**

Another model of leadership is the Situational Model of Leadership. Although it is a popular and widely used model in organizations, it has not been studied as extensively, providing less conclusive and empirically supported effectiveness (Butler & Reese, 1991; Luo & Liu, 2014). Unlike Authentic Leadership, Situational Leadership Model (SLM) places emphasis on adjustment to the level of employee readiness to accomplish certain tasks, which depends on the willingness and competency of the employee. Thus, because each employee differs in his or her willingness and competency to execute certain tasks, the leader ought to adjust his or her leadership style as practice to the employee’s readiness and willingness to take on a specific task (Bedford & Gehlert, 2013, p.58). The Situational Leadership Model is organized into three situational components that are comprised of the level of task direction by the leader, the relationship between the leader and follower, and the follower’s task competency and confidence (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). Task direction and leader/follower relationship are two factors that can be represented in four different relationships with each other; high directive behavior and low supportive/relationship behavior (S1), high direction and high support (S2), low directive behavior but high support (S3), and low directive behavior and low relationship/support (S4) (Hersey et al., 2001).

**Effectiveness of Situational Leadership**

From an empirical standpoint, SLM’s effectiveness tends to be inconsistent and varies from study to study (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). For example, in an experimental study to improve learning, Hersey, Angelini and Carakushansky (1982) demonstrated that the experimental group learned significantly better and more when the instructor implemented training by following the four stages of the Situational Leadership Model as opposed to the control group that did not receive training . In this study the group’s instructor first employed a highly directive leadership approach before reducing the level of task guidance to adjust to the increasing confidence levels of the learning managers (Hersey et al., 1982).

However, a study by Butler and Reese (1991) revealed that not all leadership adjustment approaches to employee readiness were effective. They investigated the hypothesis of S2 leadership style as being the most effective one because it employs a highly directive but also a highly supportive leadership approach (Hall & Donnell, 1979 as cited in Butler & Reese, 1991). The only leading approach that proved effective in Butler and Reese’s study was the S1 approach that is highly directive but less supportive. The sales employees performed better under a high directional leadership style with less support. In fact, their results indicated that sales performance under the S2 style, which is a high relationship and high task style, was significantly lower than sales performance under the S1 style.

Generally, because empirical effectiveness of SLM as well as the validity of its assessment tool LEAD (Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description) are inconsistent and inconclusive (Graeff, 1983; Butler & Reese, 1991), organizations should apply SLM with caution while considering other leadership models before choosing SLM. Finally, as far as leadership development is concerned, a leader, whose followers have a need for higher direction but can thrive without ongoing support, can employ the principles of the Situational Model of Leadership.

**Servant Leadership Model**

A more ethical and value-oriented Leadership Model is Servant Leadership. The Servant Leadership Model was developed by the experienced organizational manager Robert Greenleaf in 1977 (as cited in Bass & Bass, 2008). Greenleaf (1977) proposed that effective leaders should overcome their own egos by addressing the needs of their followers. As implied in the name of Servant Leadership, the needs of the leader’s followers are more important than the leader’s needs and thus the leader serves his followers to help them to achieve success and fulfill personal as well as professional needs. From a servant leadership perspective, followers grow professionally if they are empowered by the servant leader to lead as well and acquire servant-oriented behaviors in interaction with others. More importantly, servant leader should not be confused with steward leaders because a steward leader’s purpose is to satisfy internal and external parties by considering the needs of his followers as well as of other stakeholders. The servant leader, however, focuses exclusively on the needs of his followers to minimize obstacles in their professional and personal growth process (Bass et al., 2008).

To extend the philosophy of the servant leadership model further, the servant leader may go as far as to engage in self-sacrificial behaviors characterized by the willingness to refrain from immediate rewards and personal needs for the sake of the followers’ happiness and well-being. Choi and Mai-Dalton (1999) explored the effects of self-sacrifice within the practice of leadership and assessed the followers’ perspective of the self-sacrificial president and of the non-sacrificial president. Their results showed that not only did the followers of the self-sacrificing president have significantly more respect and more positive views of their leader than followers of the non-sacrificial leader, but also they were also more likely to model the self-sacrificial behavior of their leader (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1999). In fact, much of the research on the effects of Servant Leadership integrates Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (Liden, Liao & Meuser, 2015; Selladurai & Carraher 2014), which posits that behaviors are modeled and learned through social interaction or observation. Therefore, servant leadership behavior is passed on by the servant leader to his followers who model his behavior. In other words, servant leadership is a learned and modelled leadership style as it is acquired through socio-cognitive processes (Bandura, 1977).

**Effectiveness of Servant Leadership**

As already stated, the Situational Leadership Model is not consistently effective in the context of sales performance (Butler & Reese, 1991). In contrast to Situational Leadership, the effectiveness of Servant Leadership is frequently supported by research (Jones, 2012). Liden, Liao and Meueser’s (2014) study on the effects of servant leadership in the serving culture showed that restaurant employees are significantly more satisfied with the leadership performance of their servant leader and are likely to exhibit servant behaviors of their leader towards the customers. The serving behavior of the leader increased a sense of belongingness as well as identification with the group among employees. The restaurant’s servant-oriented culture within the group extended to customers who were considered part of the in-group and were served according to the values of the Servant Leadership Model (Liden et al., 2014). Unlike Situational Leadership, Servant Leadership might be more effective in improving customer service in servant cultures, such as sales, restaurant and other service areas. In addition to its effectiveness, servant leadership corresponds with the view that leadership development is a collaborative and emerging process that impacts the entire organization.

**Holistic View of Leadership**

An emerging model of leadership is the holistic view that takes multiple aspects into consideration to propose the leader of the 21st century (McFarland & Senn, Childress, 1994; Schein, 1995). The challenges of the 21st century leadership lie in the complexity of organizational functioning. According to Schein (1996), the dynamic and changing life cycle of organizations demands four leadership roles that will help the futuristic leader manage the complexity and dynamics of organizations. Schein proposes the animator role of the leader who is expected to transmit energy and enthusiasm in order to revive energy and motivation in his followers. The second role is the leader’s ability to build the organizational culture by hiring employees with similar ways of thinking, educating his followers with his way of thinking and by exhibiting behaviors that are in alignment with the cultural values and characteristics of the culture being created. Within this builder role, the leader is a role model and builds by leading by example. The third role of the leader is as the sustainer of the culture, which means that the success of the culture is maintained if change and growth are promoted. In other words, certain leadership elements that were contributing to success at the initial stages of the organization might become ineffective at the maturing stages of the organizations. Thus leaders may need to adjust their leadership to the evolving identity of the organization. Schein suggests that judgement and wisdom are leadership qualities that promote an adaptive and beneficial evolution process of the organization. The fourth and last role of leader is the leader is the role of a change agent.

From a psychological perspective, leaders need to possess the emotional stability to create a safe environment for their followers during the change process in order to reduce anxiety and resistance to change. Instead of changing an organization abruptly through formal programs, Schein recommends introducing new elements subtly by adding them to the organizational identity. Specifically, existing mental models can be broadened and complemented by additional elements instead of replaced to reduce radical and dramatic change along with anxiety. He also points out that in difficult times organizations should focus on individual strengths to curb weaknesses that might present an obstacle (Schein, 1996).

To complement the holistic view of leadership roles, two additional roles of the 21st century leader were proposed by McFarland, Senn and Childress (1994) in their study that included one hundred 21st century leaders. Leadership is not about being the individual at the top of the hierarchy and controlling subordinates but it is about stimulating humanistic values and ways of practice, and leadership is substantially different from management. Because the holistic view of leadership embraces complexity as part of organizational functioning which is understood in terms of complex systems, Peter Senge (2000) proposed the concept of the learning organization which employs problem solving based on systems thinking (Senge, Heifetz & Torbert, 2000). In brief, within systems thinking, it is stressed that the complexity of the interaction among multiple contributing situational factors makes it difficult to control the antecedents and outcomes of a situation, making problem solving less direct and more versatile (Senge et al., 2000, p. 64).

**Effectiveness of Holistic Leadership**

According to the holistic view, because change is inevitable, using linear problem solving or simplistic methods is no longer effective; successful organizations employ holistic methods to solve or manage problems by considering factors that are outside their observations. The ramifications of the holistic view of leadership lead to organizations that are better prepared to solve problems holistically by considering the interconnectedness of external networks, different voiced views and opinions, and by embracing complexity as a whole (Barker & Camarata, 1998). Specifically, in a Middle-Eastern study by Nejad, Abbaszadeh, Hassani and Bernousi (2012), cooperation and teamwork among various faculty members of different disciplines increased when they applied systems thinking. Specifically, the knowledge of the faculty members was synthesized during problem solving, and the amount of entrepreneurship increased because systems thinking encourages multi linear approaches to problem solving through the interconnection of different knowledge and views stemming from a variety of academic fields. In summary, the holistic leader’s role is not limited to exclusively leading the organization internally but it extends to various roles that facilitate complex problem solving and successful implementation of and adaptation to change.

**Ontogeny of holistic leadership.**

The holistic view is perspective-based because it focuses on construction of realities and meaning-making which are cognitive processes that occur through dynamic interaction between the individual and his environment (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). In fact, this view is not limited to specific individuals with special leadership traits because it is inherent in the perspective a leader acquires and develops. To acquire the holistic view of complexity science, the leader can learn about complexity and promote complexity and systems thinking in his organization through exercises by making use of the Complexity Starter Kit that was developed by Webb, Lettice, & Lemon in 2006. Webb offer a method that facilitates complex thinking through participating in an ‘Experience Game’ in which participants have to solve a problem and reach a compromise. The main feature of this game is that participants will be engaged in the process of sense-making and sharing their views with other participants throughout the game.

Another technique of developing holistic leadership is through hiring a third-party organization development professional who brings a complexity and constructivist perspective into the organization. Based on their case study, Ray and Goppelt (2011) suggest that leaders should hire organization development practitioners because OD practitioners are more likely to balance their role of the participant as well as the role of the outside observer whereas a leader is a close member of the organization and inseparable from organizational history and his organizational experiences. In regards to change implementation, OD practitioners can facilitate and implement methods that promote systems and complexity thinking through sense-making narratives by becoming an outside observer of group processes. They offer less fragmented methods that naturally lead to conversations indicative of sense and meaning-making processes.

**Charismatic Leadership**

Originally proposed within the context of religion, sociologist Max Weber in 1947 identified the extraordinary trait of charisma which influential and gifted leaders possess to energize and activate their followers (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 50). Although it is clear that charismatic leadership is leadership based on a personal trait that a leader happens to possess, Weber (1947, as cited in House, 1977) did not explicitly specify the set of psychological traits of a charismatic leader. Following the lack of definition, House expanded his theory by adding specific personality and leadership traits that would be representative of charismatic leadership when validated through several measures and assessments. Therefore, House suggested that a highly charismatic leader has a high need to influence others, has strong and firm believe in himself and his values, has the ability to arouse a high need for achievement in his followers and has the ability to demonstrate competency through articulation of potential accomplishments rather than actually occurred accomplishments (House, 1977). Conger and Kanungo (1994, p. 442) explicitly pointed to charismatic leader’s ability to envision and inspire his followers and facilitate commitment by conveying the impression that the followers and the mission followed are extraordinary.

Furthermore, charismatic leadership is correlated with transformational leadership and is a significant component of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, as cited in Bass et al., 2008, p. 50) because both models share similar if not the same leadership constructs of intellectual arousal in the leader’s followers, evoked inspiration and follower consideration (House & Shamir, 1993, as cited in Bass et al., 2008). In other words, individuals who score high on transformational leadership are more likely to also score high on charismatic leadership (Judge, Woolf, Hurst, & Livingston, 2006).

**Effectiveness of Charismatic Leadership**

Empirically, charismatic-transformational leadership is shown to be more effective than contingent –rewards leadership styles and other leadership style that do not include charismatic-transformational traits (Bass et al., 2008, p. 51). However, because Bass and Avolio (1994, as cited in Judge et al., 2006) regard charisma as a component of transformational leadership, the effects charismatic leadership might differ from the effects of transformational leadership, which is an extended model with additional aspects. Moreover, Bass (1985, as cited in Judge et al., 2006, p. 205) stresses that charisma as a sole leadership trait might not suffice to adequately represent leadership effectives in a given situation. Consequently, charismatic leadership trait can be treated as a contributor to leadership and managerial performance in addition to other factors that comprise leadership. For example, Sosik (2005) studied the effects of values and charismatic leadership on managerial performance involving 600 employees. The results indicated that high-performing charismatic leaders were open to change and change-oriented values as opposed to charismatic leaders who held traditional values and were less focused on organizational change (Sosik, 2005, p. 238).

In light of Sosik’s (2005) research findings, it is important to note that the findings demonstrated that charismatic leadership alone is not accountable for managerial success but rather it is the type of personal values the charismatic leaders holds and uses in conveying his vision. For this reason, charismatic leadership could be interpreted as a facilitator of managerial success through value-based behavior with openness to change. In summary, the effectiveness of charismatic leadership is moderated and mediated by several factors (Judge, Fluegge, Woolf, Hurst, & Livingston, 2006, p. 207-209), making charismatic leadership’s empirically studied effectiveness difficult to define. Spreitzer, Perttula and Xin’s (2005, as cited in Judge et al., 2006) findings revealed a similar pattern of effectiveness of transformational leadership, namely the moderating effect of values on transformational leadership success. Specifically, the more traditional and hierarchical the leader was, the less effective and successful was his leadership performance (Spreitzer et al., 2005, as cited in Judge el al., 2006).

**Discussion of Preferred Leadership Models**

The strongest leadership models are the Servant and Authentic Leadership Models whose principles promote genuine and authentic leadership practice characterized by open communication, high self-awareness as well as loyalty to followers. It could be argued that Servant Leadership is likely to help the leader remain modest and less ego-oriented while leading to positive relationships between the leader and his or her followers. Empirically, it seems that both the Authentic and Servant Leadership Models are the most studied and most effective, and are ethically the strongest leadership models out of the reviewed five leadership models in this paper. Precisely, empirical studies demonstrate a direct link between organizational effectiveness and servant as well as authentic leadership (Jones, 2012; Liden, et al., 2014; Stander et al., 2015; Tonkin, 2013; Walumbwa, et al., 2008). Along with Authentic Leadership, the servant leader will excel at leading his followers by empowering them to become leaders themselves.

**Combining Multiple Leadership Approaches for Greater Success**

However, the best leadership practice results through the synthesis of several positive aspects from other leadership models to maximize effectiveness instead of limiting oneself to only one leadership model. For example, the holistic leadership model would also help a leader consider many aspects of a highly complex situation through high awareness of the complexity of an environment and situation. Having the ability and readiness to work in organizations driven by emerging complexity, the leader might be better prepared for leadership because complexity science approaches are reflective of the evolving postmodern era (Van Uden, Richardson, & Cilliers, 2001). Thus, leaders might be transitioning towards a holistic leadership model while still being able to maintain their original leadership style of Authentic and Servant Leadership.

In other words, the holistic view can be added to almost any leadership style that is compatible with non-linear thinking. For example, a servant leader could prioritize his or her followers’ needs and inspire them to lead while still being aware as well as make them aware of the high complexity of leadership they would be facing. The authentic and servant leader could explain many issues using systems thinking while also maintain the original leadership identity as a servant and authentic leader. In summary, the best leadership effects can be achieved if the leader is open to the many facets and strengths of several leadership models instead of being confined to only one. In addition, the practice of leadership should be collaborative and collective, facilitating reciprocal and bi directional communication because the leader can learn from his followers as well. There are many situational and environmental factors of which the leader might not be aware but which his followers are able to observe and share with the leader. Under these circumstances, it is very important that the leader is willing to listen to his followers and learn from their voiced opinions to comprehend their constructed reality and their process of meaning making.

**Less Effective Leadership Models**

The leadership models that do not appeal to me are Charismatic or Charismatic-transformational and Situational Leadership Models. Research results of these studied models tend to be less consistent and less convincing mainly because the components of transformational and charismatic leadership are yet to be clearly defined. This could be explained by the model’s less directive factors; charismatic leadership is neither inherently good nor bad because its reputation stems from the types of situations in which it is employed (Judge, et al., 2006). This core characteristic of charismatic leadership implies that because there are no suggested directive values by which the charismatic leader operates, it is a flexible and compatible model that can be practiced with other leadership styles, such as servant or authentic leadership styles. Finally, the effectiveness of situational leadership may vary from organization to organization, making the effectiveness Situational Leadership Model rather arbitrary (Butler and Reese, 1991; Graeff, 1983).

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