Leadership in organizations

© National College for School Leadership 2003 1 Leadership in Organizations Gary Yukl 2001, Prentice Hall Gary Yukl is Professor of Management and Leadership at the State University of New York in Albany, and a board member of the Leadership Quarterly journal. He is a well-known scholar and author on leadership. Leadership in Organizations was first published in 1981.

This fifth edition was published in 2002, and the formerly 19 chapters have been consolidated into 15 (which includes a new chapter on ethical leadership and diversity). This has been done in order to accommodate a 15-week course. Each chapter covers a particular aspect of leadership research study, with a concluding summary and questions for further discussion. Key terms are highlighted, and there is at least one case study at the end of each chapter. The book is accompanied by an instructor's manual which is used in conjunction with the case studies and also contains exercises and role-playing activities.

The 508 pages of Leadership in Organizations include an extensive references section. Leadership in Organizations has a specific focus on managerial leadership in large organisations and is an attempt at bridging the gulf between academics and management practitioners. However, as each chapter begins with a list of learning objectives, the bias appears to tend towards a more academic audience (particularly students of the subject), rather than towards practising managers. The author covers a broad survey of theory and research of leadership in formal organisations of the last 50 years, and though Yukl states that the book " focuses on the 20 per cent of literature that appeared to be the most relevant and

informative", he has provided an in-depth and comprehensive analysis and appraisal of that literature in a clear and moderately accessible language. From the first, introductory, chapter about the nature of leadership, Yukl writes what is essentially an academic text, but with a larity accessible to a practising manager with a serious interest in the subject area. The research approaches are broadly outlined in terms of the characteristics of a leader, a follower, and the situation.

The research theories have been classified into the five approaches of trait, behaviour, power-influence, situational and integrative, which are further conceptualised as intra-individual, dyadic, group and organisational processes. Yukl looks at each of the research theories on the basis of a continuum covering the following distinctions: leader- versus follower-centred, descriptive versus prescriptive, and universal versus contingency (situational). The focus throughout is on leadership in large organisations, which means that many of the research areas studied include the leadership roles undertaken by those in managerial positions © National College for School Leadership 2003 2 in all levels of an organisation and not just those at the top of the organisation. The nature and roles of managerial work are covered in Chapter 2. Effective leadership, participation and empowerment Extensive research has been undertaken on leadership behaviour since the 1950s.

This has divided into three areas: task-oriented, relation-oriented and participative leadership. The thousands of studies undertaken over this 50-year period, mostly through questionnaires, has given rise to a number of taxonomies which Yukl proposes might be refined into the three jointly inter-

reacting categories of task-, relations- and change-oriented behaviours. On looking at the fields of study covering participative leadership, delegation and empowerment, the author again examines the research and looks closely at the Vroom-Yetton model of participative leadership developed in the 1970s. This helps managers identify decision procedures in different situations.

Throughout the book, Yukl evaluates this research and provides examples, tables, models and case studies. From this, a series of guidelines are formulated, to which the practising manager can refer for practical advice. Yukl observes that much of the research over the last 50 years has involved dyadic (one individual to another specific individual) relationships between a leader and a follower. Within this context, he goes on to look at a number of follower-based theories including: leader-member exchange (LMX), leader attributions about subordinates, follower attributes and implicit theories, follower contributions to effective leadership, and social learning theory (self-management). All of this emphasises the importance of the follower role to a leader.

Within the 10 guidelines the author proposes for becoming an effective follower, he suggests specific phrases which might be used in a given situation; for example, in a situation where a follower might disagree with a proposed action by a leader: " You know I respect what you are trying to accomplish, and I hope you won't mind if I express some honest concerns about this proposal". Yukl states at three points within the text that " influence is the essence of leadership". This is covered in Chapter 6, which concerns power and influence. Here different types of power are studied,

though the focus is on the French and Raven taxonomy of five types of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, expert and referent. Guidelines are proposed for using legitimate authority, reward authority and coercive power.

Yukl even describes the tone of voice a leader might use, which (along with his suggested phrases) could be perceived by the reader as prescriptive. Power, influence, contingency theories, traits and skills How power is won or lost, and how much power a leader should have, are also discussed, as are the traits and skills approach to leadership in Chapter 7. Possibly the most researched area of leadership is the traits approach, and here the findings of the most relevant aspects of personality for effective leadership are summarised and integrated, including the " big five" personality traits (surgency, conscientiousness, agreeableness, adjustment and intelligence). Personality traits are considered especially relevant to successful leadership, and those highlighted as the most pertinent include energy levels and stress tolerance, self-confidence, internal control orientation, emotional maturity and integrity. The study of a number of theories is also applied in Chapter 8, which considers how leader traits or behaviours are related to indicators of leadership effectiveness in different situations. Five principal contingency theories are summarised and reviewed.

The research findings and methodologies are examined, and models, tables and guidelines for their application enhance the chapter. There is much use of psychology and sociology in many of the research studies. © National College for School Leadership 2003 3The five contingency theories are: Fiedler's least-preferred co-worker (LPC) theory, Evans's path-goal theory,

Kerr and Jermier's leadership substitutes theory, multiple-linkage models (leadership and group effectiveness), and Fiedler et al's cognitive resources theory. In his general evaluation of the theories, Yukl criticises the research for being lacking in measures and weak on research design. He also comments that " most managers are too busy in any situation to stop and analyse it with a model". However, they do provide sufficient guidance to help a manager identify leadership requirements.

Along with the study of traits, behaviours and contingency approaches, much of the research of the last 50 years has focussed on the study of " heroic" leaders. Chapter 9 covers this when considering charismatic and transformational leadership. Researchers have used the terms ' charismatic' and ' transformational' interchangeably. However, Yukl describes them as distinct but overlapping terms. Again, the major theories are evaluated and guidelines proposed. In summary, charismatic leaders are deemed to have a tremendous influence on organisations, but they may be negative as well as positive.

Transformational leaders make followers aware of the importance and value of the work as well as encouraging them to think beyond self-interest. These theories are, however, largely based on a dyadic level of analysis. Change One of the most important and difficult leadership responsibilities is leading change. Chapter 10 discusses the change processes, and places an emphasis on cultural change. The creation and establishment of a clear and compelling vision is useful to guide the organisation through change, and the pre-requisite set of guidelines is included for formulating a vision.

Guidelines are also proffered for implementing change for political or organisational or people-oriented actions. Throughout the change process, the role of the leader is key. Teamwork Teamwork, group decisions and leadership by executives are considered in Chapters 11 and 12. The use of teams and decision groups in organisations is a growing phenomenon. The leadership required for building and facilitating team learning and decision-making are considered.

Yukl describes and discusses the merits of functional teams, cross-functional teams, self-managed work teams (semi-autonomous work groups), self-defining teams and virtual teams. Guidelines propose effective team building to increase cohesiveness, mutual cooperation, and identification with the group. They also put forward leader-centred and group- centred approaches for leading meetings. Research into leadership from the 1950s until the 1980s was mostly concerned with middle managers.

Theorists turned their attention to top managers from the 1980s, but there is controversy in leadership literature regarding whether executives have much impact on the effectiveness of an organisation. Chapter 12 looks at strategic leadership and top management, and considers external and internal constraints, the degree of discretion a leader has, the bias of attributions and the effectiveness of executive teams. Research shows that chief executives have most impact in a crisis, and the monitoring of the environment by executives is considered essential in the formulation of organisational strategy. Leadership development Chapter 13 reviews leadership development and the key facilitating conditions for it. Three forms of

leadership development are identified: formal training, developmental activities and self-help activities.

Leadership training programmes are discussed, as are the design of the courses, many of which concentrate on a particular theory, for example leader-member exchange (LMX). The author points out the much-vaunted statement that effective skills for leadership are mostly learned from experience and not from training programmes. With this in mind, work-based developmental activities are considered, and the presence of a strong learning culture in an organisation goes a long way to supporting leadership development. Ethical leadership and diversityThe penultimate chapter covers ethical leadership and diversity. Again, " influence as the essence of leadership" is quoted, as is Gini: " The issue is not whether leaders will use power, but will they use it wisely and well".

Thus, ethical leadership encourages ethical behaviour as well as initiating efforts to stop unethical practices. Sex-based discrimination in the selection and promotion of leaders continues to be a problem in organisations. Research in this area is limited, as it is in leadership in different cultures. The bulk of the research comes from the United States, Canada and Western Europe. It is acknowledged here that, with the rapid pace of globalisation, cross-cultural leadership is an important topic for research. We are introduced to the GLOBE project, which is taking steps in this direction, studying leadership in 62 countries representing all major regions of the world.

The project is ongoing and involves 170 social scientists and management scholars. Conclusion The book concludes with an overview and integration in Chapter 15. The major findings in leadership are summarised. Controversies about research are considered, and summarised as relying too much on weak research methods.

Most theories involve a prediction model identifying traits, skills and behaviours and fitting these into the leadership process, which, in turn, involves criteria and situation variables. Yukl suggests that what is missing are the mediating variables necessary to explain leadership influence on individuals, group processes and organisational effectiveness. Yukl finishes with a list of 10 of the most important leadership functions for enhancing collective work in teams and organisations. Discussion Leadership in Organizations concerns itself with looking at the complex field of research in the field of leadership in large organisations. This is a well researched and well thought-out text, and anyone with a serious interest in the subject would benefit from having read the book. The format provides a clear understanding of the learning requirements, with the case studies and questions at the end of every chapter stimulating the reader into asking yet more questions, thus creating a greater awareness of leadership in a management context.

Gary Yukl provides a comprehensive review of techniques, citing examples and guidelines throughout. Though some might find the style over-directive, others will benefit from the clear path that Yukl points up.