

Leadership



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What is leadership? According to Shockley-Zalabak (2009) Leadership is a process of guiding individuals, groups, and entire organization in establishing goals and sustaining action to support goals. What exactly is meant by leadership? There are literally hundreds of definitions about who a leader is and what is considered as leadership. Each definition may vary from one individual to another and may change from one situation to the other. For example we might call an individual a leader because of the persons' election to the presidency of an institution.

Other times we say he/she is not a leader because he/she does not exhibit leadership behaviors expected of the of a leader. In other words, we expected leadership from the legitimate position of the presidency, but when that president does not exhibit leadership behaviors, we say that the president is not a leader. According to Yukl, (2002). The definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no “ correct” definition. Leadership theories: Theories are most useful for influencing practice when they suggest new ways in which events and situations can be perceived.

Fresh insight may be provided by focusing attention on possible interrelationship that the practice has failed to notice, which can be further explored and tested through empirical research. If the result is a better understanding of practice, the theory –practice gap is significantly reduced for those concerned. (Hughes and Bush, 1991, p. 234). The trait theory This theory first surfaced in the writings of early Greeks and Romans and is prevalent today among those who believe that leadership cannot be developed.

This theory assumed that leaders have innate traits that made them effective, great leaders were considered to be born with the ability for leadership, so it is either you have leadership qualities or you don't. According to Shockley – zalabak (2009) theory of leadership, that leaders possessed innate traits that made them effective; is commonly referred to as the “great man” theory. Leadership traits theory is the idea that people are born with certain character traits or qualities and since traits are associated with proficient leadership, it assumes that if you could identify people with the correct traits, you will be able to identify leaders and people with leadership potential. It is considered that we are born naturally with traits as part of our personality; this theory in summary believes that leaders are born not made. Criticism: Researches were done to define traits or personality characteristics that best predict the effective leader. Lists of about eighty traits or characteristics were gotten but trait approach failed to define clearly a stable set of characteristics associated with effective leadership.

Even the concept of what is effective remains open to question. This theory does not provide a comprehensive explanation to how leaders interact with followers and meet the needs of specific circumstances. While truly others can be born leaders, it is incorrect to generalize by saying that leadership traits are inborn and unchangeable. It's true many of our dispositions and tendencies are influenced by our personalities and the way we are born. However, most people recognized that it is possible for someone to change their character trait for the worse.

Someone known for being honest can learn to be deceitful, the whole idea of saying someone was “corrupted” is based on the fact that people can learn

bad traits. If people can learn character traits and become different from the way they were born naturally traits can be learnt as well. A person who is prone to being dishonest can learn to be honest. A person who avoids risks can learn to take risk. It may not be easy, but it can be done. STYLE APPROACHES Leadership style approach focuses its attention on the leaders' behavior. Leadership style is the combination of traits, skills, and behaviors leaders use as they interact with followers: (Lussier, 2004) Though leadership style is based on leadership skills and leadership traits, leadership behaviors is the important component. This is said to be the third approach to leadership studies, a consistent pattern of behavior is what characterizes a leader. " In shifting the study of leadership to leaders' style or behaviors, the style approach expanded the study of leadership to various contexts" (North house, 2004).

According to Shockley- Zalabak (2009) style approach or theories attempt to identify and arrange the general approaches leaders use to achieve goals. These approaches are thought to be based on a leader's assumption about what motivates people to accomplish goals. This theory attempts to identify a range of general approaches leaders use to influence goal achievement. These approaches are theorized to be based on the leader's assumption about what motivates people to accomplish goals.

Particular approaches also reflect complex relationships among the personal characteristics of the leader. Top among the style theories is the autocratic-to-democratic continuum first proposed by Ralph White and Ronald Lippitt (1960). Autocratic style of leader is a leader who makes decisions with little influence from others Shockley- Zalabak (2009). The leader that exhibits this

behavior makes the decisions, gives orders to employees, and is constantly supervising his subordinate. This leader tells others what to do and usually enforces sanctions against those who chose not to comply. He views his followers as essential for goal achievement but usually feels little responsibility for employee needs and relationship Shockley- zalabak (2009). Criticism Research suggests that autocratically led groups produce more in quantity than democratically led groups, but that the quality output is better when more democracy is practiced. Generally with autocratic styles the led are not happy so they just do as they are told not because they have the interest of the institution at heart or because they enjoy working.

Democratic- Shockley-Zalabak (2009) states that this style of leaders is the one that involves followers in decision making. The leader that exhibits this behavior promotes shared decision, team work, and does not supervise his subordinates closely. He assumes followers are able to participate in decision making, they try to create a climate in which problem solving can take place while preserving interpersonal relationships. It is clear that these leadership styles are opposite's end of a continuum.

As such, it's easy to think that a leader's leadership style s follows between those ends. Criticism When a leader is democratic at times his other colleagues in leadership positions can look at him as a weakling and also the subordinates might take advantage and wants to be disrespectful. Laissez-faire style- Here the leader behaves as non-leader. Individuals and groups are expected to make their own decisions because of a hand-off approach from the leader. The laissez-faire leader is an example of non-leader. This leader expects groups and individuals to make their own decision.

He gives information only when asked by group members. Criticism The success of the group depends greatly on the abilities of the group and group members' willingness to work with little or no leadership. If the group members consist of people that need a push to do things they won't be able to achieve much. Impoverished management- According to Shockley-Zalabak (2009) this style is characterized by low concern for interpersonal relationships and task accomplishment. This leader makes few attempts to influence people towards task or goals.

He dislikes leadership responsibilities and lets others take the responsibility that rightfully belongs to the leader. This leader is usually uncomfortable with leadership and intellectually resists the need for it. Criticism These leaders may be primarily responsible for the failure of the group. Middle-of-the-road management- This is a style of leader who balances task and people's concerns; commonly referred to as compromised leadership or management. The leader negotiates and compromises to achieve workable agreements and directions for action Country club management-

This is a style of leaders who emphasizes interpersonal relationship at the expense of goal achievement the leader here wants to be liked and have group followers who feel supported by the leader. He provides an interpersonal relationship bond that is low on task emphasis and high in interpersonal support Criticism He may want a task accomplished but will not take steps to emphasize this element to others, if members are not highly task oriented; he ends up doing their work. Rather than insisting that the employees exhibit high standards of performance. These leaders may not develop the abilities of the people under them.

Team leadership: This is the theoretical ideal: team leaders exhibit high concern for both task and interpersonal relationships by emphasizing goal accomplishment while supporting people, it fosters a sense of “we” with high performance standards. This leadership share decision making and strives for problem solving designed to solve rather than postpone problem, it respects different point of view and value diversity as long as it contributes to the group effort. Criticism Team members who support one another but do not have enough ability or information to work on problems will not be able to produce a high-quality decision.