Transformational leadership

Coaching Baseball as Applied to Transactional Leadership Theory, Leader-Member Exchange Theory, and the Psychodynamic ApproachMBA 631 ??" Leadership21 February 2011Table of Contents

IntroductionThere are over 1, 600 college baseball programs throughout the country.

Within those teams there are over 48, 000 participants (Howdeshell, 2011). This means there are over 1, 600 coaches, not including assistant coaches, which are responsible for molding young men into mature adults. The following discussion explores the relationship between college baseball coaches and the players as applied to transformational leadership theory, leader-member exchange theory (LMX theory), and the psychodynamic approach.

The three theories take on different perspectives of leading. While transformational leadership focuses on the leaders or the followers separately through their needs and how to influence them to reach their fullest potential, the LMX theory focuses on the relationships and interactions between the leader and followers with many one-on-one relationships that make up a collective team-to-leader relationship. The Psychodynamic approach involves the leader understanding his/her own personality as well

as the personality of the followers (Northouse, 2011). Transformational LeadershipBefore defining transformational leadership, it is important to understand what transactional leadership is. ??? Transactional leaders aim to maintain the status quo by rewarding subordinates??™ efforts and commitment (De Hoogh, 2005).??? Transactional leaders take more a laissez-faire approach. They avoid making decision, and they only participate if goals or standards are not met.

If not, they actively take corrective action. Research shows that transactional leadership is most likely to appear in more steady environments and in more stable situations. The focus of the members is obeying rules and regulations and not focused on bringing about change in the organization (De Hoogh, 2005). Transactional leadership would not be a good style as a baseball coach. Teams are in constant desire to change. The name of the game is to win more. Maintaining the status quo is not a way to bring about change for a baseball team (De Hoogh, 2005). Successful coaches are constantly bringing in new and better players to build the team??™s strength and to work toward a vision.

The theory of transformational leadership is ??? the process of engaging with others to create a connection that increases motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower(s) (Northouse, 2011).??? Whether it be the follower or the leader, there is a process of change that takes place. The change is influenced by the leader to the subordinates in order to accomplish a goal that is out of the norm. The leader heightens the concentration and awareness of the followers through charismatic inspiration, connecting with their emotions, and interesting them on an intellectual level.

It has been found through studies, that ??? transformational leaders have better relationships with their followers and make more of a contribution to the organization that do those who are only transactional (Northouse, 2011).??? CharismaAs a coach of a baseball team, attaining charisma in the eyes of the players is imperative in being an effective transformational leader. The coach must embed a vision within the players.

It could be a vision of how successful the season will be, or it could be a vision of how much the program grows and becomes more successful in a specific time frame. Regardless of what those visions are, the players must believe their coach has a positive vision for them to strive for through hard work. In other words, it is a mission, and the players have a great deal of trust and confidence in the coach that the mission can be attained. This will instill pride in them and excite them (De Hoogh, 2005). Connecting IndividuallySuccessful transformational leader coaches can identify with each player on a personal level. They place close attention to and assess the specific needs of each individual (Barling, 1996). The leader can become a mentor to those that need the extra attention, and, through assessment of each individual??™s needs, it allows for deeper conversation bringing about more effective change (Jay, 2002).

It is important for a coach to be distinctive and clear of each player??™s strengths and weaknesses. The assessments should be given in a supportive manner in order to avoid hostility or resistance (Barling, 1996). However, a coach should not downplay the seriousness of incorrect actions. Players??™ actions off the field are just as important as their actions on the field. As

stated previously, charisma is the most important aspect of successful transformational leadership.

The successfulness of the coach is not simply evaluated by the impact of the players??™ attitudes on the field, but their attitudes off the field are also evaluated (Barling, 1996). Coaching is not only about winning that sport, but winning the game of life. Through mentoring, the players can develop and grow to be better adults. Each player will have his/her unique differences and needs, some more than others. A successful transformational leader, however, is able to differentiate between them and help each one of them (Jay, 2002). Intellectual StimulationA third factor that successful transformational leaders/coaches encompass is intellectual stimulation for their followers.

??? Intellectual stimulating leaders are willing and able to show their followers new ways of looking at old problems, to teach them to see difficulties as problems to be solved, and to emphasize rational solutions (Jay, 2002).??? When it comes to baseball, there are many problems various kind of adversity that must be overcome. For example, a team may be overmatched against their opponent, but if a coach challenges and stimulates the players to overcome the adversity thrown their way they find new ways to win.

Another example could be a team with thinned depth in the lineup due to injuries. It could bring the morale down if players begin to believe they cannot be as successful without certain people, but if a coach truly believes the back-up players can step up and fill the shoes of the injured, thus

instilling the same confidence in the team. Adversity can be overmatched through intellectual stimulation and solving problems with new and creative solutions (Jay, 2002).

Leader-Member Exchange Theory??? Leader-Member Exchange Theory conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered in the interactions between a leader and subordinates (Northouse, 2011).??? This theory differs from other theories in that focus in not solely on the leader or the follower, but the relationships and linkages between both. It can be seen as many vertical relationships between each player and the leader or coach (Business Publications). It can be perceived as being from the perspective of role theory (Northouse, 2011). ??? Role development results in differentiated role exchanges between the leader and subordinates within an organization (Case, 1998).??? Researchers believe that LMX theory can provide more accurate results of team performance than theories that examine traits or behaviors of individuals, such as transformational leadership theory (Chen, 2010).

However, in order to create better team cohesion, baseball coaches must strive to avoid building stronger relationships with some players over others. This creates ??? in-groups??? and ??? out-groups???. In baseball, the starters are perceived as the ??? in-group??? and non-starters the ??? out-group??? (Chen, 2010). In-Group and Out-GroupIn some situations, ??? in??? players are treated with higher confidence levels from the coach. These players actively participate in decision-making for the team, and they have open and affective communication with the coach. These players tend to be the ones that perform the most. It is hard for a coach not to be partial to these players

due to the fact they have the greatest deal of impact on the team in the sense of winning.

However, it is important for coaches to make all players feel like they are a part of the in-group. There have been studies that suggest that success and teams in which all members feel equal have a direct correlation. It shows that cohesion among the team results in better performance (Chen, 2010). As already stated, the in-group for a baseball team can be seen as the starters and the out-group the non-starters. In baseball, unlike other sports, there tends to be more groups with-in the team. In most college baseball teams there are two major groups within: pitchers and position players. Within those two groups there are subgroups. Within the pitching group there are starting pitchers and relief pitchers, and within the position player group there are starters and non-starters.

During time of lacking performance it is easy for a coach and players to begin forming in-groups and out-groups. Starting pitchers may begin to start blaming relief pitchers for not doing their job of finishing the game, or the contrary, relief pitchers could begin to blame starters for not setting the table. The same situation could be applied for the position players as well, whether it is lack of performance offensively or defensively, or lack of performance from players off the bench.

This is the situation where the problem of favoritism within the LMX theory as it applies to baseball could arise. ??? It is noted that when using the LMX leadership style, coaches must avoid a rift among the players, and not let team members feel they are outsiders as this undermines the cohesion of

the whole team (Chen, 2010).??? Every player, starter or non-starter, should feel certain that he/she is entrusted by the coach to raise the overall morale (Chen, 2010).

Graen and Uhl-Bien: Phases in Leadership MakingGraen and Uhl-Bien (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991) identify three phases in the life cycle of leadership relationship maturity. New players to a team seek to be accepted by the players and the coach. They strive to be part of the in-group. According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991 they go through a stranger phase, acquaintance phase, and a mature partnership. Stranger PhaseThis phase can be compared to the recruiting process for a baseball team at the collegiate level. Graen and Uhl-Bien explain that ??? within this part of the relationship leaders provide followers only with what they need to perform, and followers behave only as required (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991).??? The recruiter explains to the player what he should expect the player??™s role to be on the team. If the player makes a commitment to be part of the team, he/she is required to do the necessary paperwork for the school to be accepted and the player is expected to do what is required of the coach to be in the proper physical condition to better the team.

Also, at this point in the cycle, the motives of the player are self-centered instead of team-oriented (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991). Acquaintance PhaseAt this point in the cycle, the interactions between the coach and the player are still limited. It can be viewed as a testing stage. This stage is similar to the first fall season of a new college baseball player. The fall season is used for that player to broadcast his/her skills.

It is a time to prove oneself to the coach and the team. The relationships become more involved and the leadership is more effective. However, ??? the high degree of trust and loyalty necessary for truly effective leadership still has not been fully developed (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991).??? Mature Partnership PhaseIf a player makes it to this phase, he/she will have a high quality leader-member relationship between them and the coach. There has grown to be a great deal of trust between the two. It does not necessarily mean that player is a starter, but the coach and player trust each other in the job or duty that has been established. The coach is willing to accept, without feeling under minded, constructive criticism from the player. The criticism could be a range of ideas from ways to improve performance or ways to make the coach do his job better.

Also, ??? followers may rely on the leader to be available when needed for support, encouragement, or advice (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991).??? In the end, this partnership moves from transactional to transformational. That is moving past self-centered thought to team oriented thought. Psychodynamic ApproachSigmund Freud was born in Moravia in 1856. He was a strong influence in making the idea of the conscious versus the unconscious mind popular (Boeree, 2009).

The psychodynamic approach is conceptualized on personality. Personality is defined as ??? a consistent pattern of ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. It is affected by the environment, including people and characterized by tendencies or qualities (Northouse, 2011).??? In theory, personality types are not something that can be drastically changed. It is something that is embedded deep within the subconscious.

The subconscious is the largest part of the mind and it includes such things as instincts and bad/buried memories (Boeree, 2009). An effective psychodynamic coach does not try to change personality, but, instead, can effectively connect with the personality of each player. The personality types as identified by Sigmund Freud can be applied to baseball coaches as well. Sigmund Freud and Personality TypesAccording to Freud, each person has a core personality that is born into them.

It is based on instinct. ??? However, values, attitudes, and beliefs are overlaid on that core personality (Freud, 1910).??? He identifies three personality types of people: erotic, obsessive, marketers, and narcissist. Erotic The erotic personality type can be described as being more concerned about being liked than being respected (Northouse, 2011). It is not likely that a successful baseball team is under the leadership of a erotic personality type coach.

It is important for a coach to be liked by the players, but that like should be attained first by gaining and demanding the respect of the players. It goes back to transformational leadership and leader-member exchange theory. A coach with charisma, having strong visions, a coach able to intellectually stimulate players, and a coach able to connects with emotions of players is likely to be well-liked by the team without having an erotic personality (Feldman, 2009). Obsessive Quite the opposite of the erotic type is the obsessive type. This type of person prefers finding ways to get better over being liked. This type of coach would be very insistent and dominating (Feldman, 2009).

This type of coach would have good morals and values and the want to do the right thing, but their primary concern is living up to the legacy or past performance of the team. It would be a high pressure atmosphere for the players. The coach would not be willing to hear suggestions from players on different ways to do things or criticism. ??? They know they are right and do not want to be questioned (Feldman, 2009).??? MarketersNetworking with other coaches effectively, whether it be with other college coaches or, more importantly, high school coaches, is an important personality type to aid in the success of the program. Through establishing healthy relationships by networking, coaches are able to recruit new talent more effectively. For instance, a college baseball coach that has healthy relationships with many high school baseball coaches is more likely to get the talent from that team to his/her team (Feldman, 2009). NarcissistMore in depth than simply narcissist is the productive narcissist.

A productive narcissist coach is much the same as a transformational leader. He/she is driven by vision and able to ingrain and push the players to accept that vision and work hard to achieve it. At times, this coach could be over competitive shown with anger and hostility toward the players. However, the willingness and yearning to win by the players can allow them to look past this attribute and view it as a necessary evil that has to be endured to reach the vision or the mission at hand (Boeree, 2009). ConclusionWhen coaching a baseball team is applied to transformational leadership, leader-member exchange theory, and psychodynamic theory it is easy to see the how well it relates.

The more than 1, 600 college baseball coaches in the United States are responsible for helping the over 48, 000 young adults to mature the right way, teach them how to establish relationships, and how to express their personalities so that their superiors can understand them. Through successful transformational leadership, a coach can effectively establish a clear vision within the players. The players can understand that through hard work the vision can be attained within a specific amount of time. This charisma is the most important aspect of a transformational leader. In addition, the coach is able to connect with each player??™s emotions.

By assessing and understanding each player??™s needs, the coach can bring about change in those that need extra help as a mentor. Stimulating the players intellectually can help them learn how to face problems and learn new ways of overcoming whatever adversity might be thrown their way. This applies to the game of baseball, but, most importantly, it applies to life itself. The LMX theory takes on a slightly different approach to leadership. While transformational leadership focuses on individuals, leader-member exchange theory focuses on relationships and interactions between leaders and followers. When assesses a baseball team, LMX theory can provide more accurate results. Coaches have to be aware and cautious as to not establish in-groups and out-groups among the team.

Instead, all players should feel like they are a part of the in-group whatever their role on the team may be. Graen and Uhl-Bien identify three steps in leadership making: stranger phase, acquaintance phase, and mature partnership phase. Many baseball players go through these three phases as they are making the transition from high school baseball to college baseball.

They are in the stranger phase as they are going through the recruiting process and completing the requirements. In the acquaintance phase they are trying to prove themselves to the coach and the team in the first baseball season.

When they make it to the mature partnership stage, they have gained the trust of the coach and the team and are actively participating. Lastly, the psychodynamic approach is based on personality. Sigmund Freud identifies four personality types in his model: erotic, obsessive, marketers, and narcissist. Erotic type coaches are not typically successful. They are concerned more about being liked by the players than gaining respect. On the contrary, obsessive coaches prefer improving over being liked.

These coaches tend to be dominant and aggressive. Marketers can be successful by building the program with an ability to successfully network with other coaches at the college or high school level. These relationship can make it easier to become a more successful program with better recruiting talent. A productive narcissist coach is driven by vision, much like a transformational leader. They can be over competitive, but it is with the intent to move toward the established vision.

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