

# Leadership, Motivation and Excellence



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***Abstract.** In our paper we will try to compare the based or traditional theories with some new ideas like those of Burns (1978) and some philosophical underpinnings will be analyzed. It should be kept in mind that our main goal is to insure that the reader understands the applications of this work to the real world of organizations and management. The special unique relationships, interactions, and roadblocks presented by the similarities and complementary nature of the kinship of leadership and motivation will emerge as we go along. Keep in mind that our practical approach merges the two throughout the paper.*

**Key words:** needs; leader; behavior; recognition; performance.



Usually, papers like this start off with a “textbook” definition of leadership. The authors here would be the first to refer the readers to a study of the question: “What is Leadership” by the great Stogdill (1974) and, later, the voluminous works of Bass & Stogdill (1982) as well as the individual Bass (1960, 1965) efforts which explain the answer to this haunting question in long and thoughtful discourse. We will leave to our readers to develop their own concept of leadership as they study this paper.

Likewise, motivation will be covered here as well. Motivation, though sometimes a slippery concept, is usually more finitely defined since the basic research seems to remain with the psychologists as opposed to the applied academicians such as has occurred with leadership. The answers to a definition of motivation in its applied context lie in answers to questions like:

- (1) How is behavior energized?
- (2) How is behavior directed?
- (3) How is behavior maintained?

There are a number of researchers who developed theories of motivation. The interested reader will desire to delve further into works of Adams (1961) and the theory of equity, Kelly (1971) and attribution theory, Herzberg (1966) and his hygiene theory, Maslow (1943) and his needs hierarchy theory, Latham & Kinne (1974) and their training-motivation theory, Locke (1968) and the expectancy theories, McGregor (1960) and his Theory X/Theory Y, Alderfer (1972) and the relatedness interaction models, McClelland (1976) and the achievement motivation theory, plus McClelland & Burnsham (1976) and the Power Motivation Theory, plus others.

## 1. Philosophies, Definitions, and the Theories

Most people throughout the world have had difficulty applying leadership theory, and, to some degree, this is why leadership in organizations remains a dynamic phenomenon. The many possible ways of thinking about leadership overwhelm and confuse some interested readers. Rather than attempting to master one approach or another, we will review a number of these ideas though not very much in detail nor depth. The interested reader may do this by going to the original references listed above and go to whatever depths desired. The reader is urged not to be overly concerned when it becomes obvious that the solutions espoused by one line of thinking is entirely different from others.

Even though we will avoid laying out definitions the reader must grasp some kind of basic assumptions that have guided various successful leaders in history. The student will then need to grasp some kind of basic assumptions that have guided various successful leaders in history. The interested reader will then need to grasp more all-encompassing notions in order to be a successful manager in the future, or in his organization.

At the risk of becoming overly definitional, many think of a *philosophy* as a study of “things” that underly thought and action. The “things,” sometimes called “principles,” have changed over the years. Thinking about several approaches should help the student gain a personal insight. This insight should be integrated and someday will become a personal mode, or even philosophy, of leadership and motivation.

### *The McGregor Ideas*

Let us look first at the famous “Theory X and Theory Y” espoused just after World War II by Douglas McGregor and explained very thoroughly in his 1960 book. Actually many call Douglas McGregor’s output a “Philosophy,” and we will hue to that concept as well. McGregor studies numerous organizations in the 20’s, 30’s, and 40’s and he outlined the way he perceived these entities to be operating motivation and leadership-wise. He saw how decision-making and the decision-making authority worked in them and then he wrote out this view. He called his idea of how the USA of the day motivated and he called the background or philosophy of how this was: Theory X. We are calling it a philosophy and not a theory as it is

really a set of beliefs about the nature of work and of people who do this work.

As the interested reader will ascertain, McGregor’s work is set or “has its foundation” in the classic writings of Maslow (1943). Very similar to Maslow, McGregor was highly interested in what it was that motivated the workforce toward greater personal development and improved performance. McGregor argued that traditional – that is, what he had observed – leader and motivator behavior was inappropriate since it was based on his “Theory X” and he said the real assumptions of Theory X were in grave doubt. The assumptions of McGregor’s Theory X follow (McGregor, 1960):

- (1) Employees are inherently lazy and will avoid work and efforts unless they are forced to do it.
- (2) Employees have no ambition nor desire for responsibility. On the other hand, they prefer to be directed, bossed, and controlled.
- (3) Employees have no motivation to achieve organizational goals.

(4) Employees are motivated only by physiological and safety needs (Note: These are directly from Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs.”)

The above assumptions form a foundation for a philosophy that can be very dehumanizing to others. It can even dehumanize the leader him or herself. McGregor posited that Theory X assumptions were already obsolete and that employees would perform better if treated with a very different set of assumptions that he then called Theory Y.

Now, let us look at McGregor’s second set of ideas or philosophy called Theory Y. the Theory Y assumptions laid out by McGregor are:

- (1) Employees find work as natural as play if the organization situation is conducive. The workforce appears repugnant to work only because past work experiences have been unsatisfactory.
- (2) Employees can be motivated by higher-order needs such as ego, autonomy, and self-actualization. Here we see some Freudian as well as Maslow’s backgrounds.
- (3) Employees seek responsibility since it allows them to satisfy higher order needs. Again, we have a foundation from the great Maslow intertwined in McGregor’s Theory Y.

As can be ascertained, autocratic philosophy is at the root of Theory X. The leader initiates the structure and places the overweening focus on operations and not on the people. In Theory Y, we find democratic philosophy in which leaders believe the best about employees. Here the leader

treats employees more as people at work in organizations (Organizational Behavior!!!) rather than as workers who just also happens to be people.

Even today, we can see McGregor's great work as a big breakthrough in the identification of basic operating assumptions of leaders and the impact those assumptions can have on morale and organizational effectiveness. Much development has taken place in the years since McGregor's work and we will look to some of that as we progress.

### *Theory Z of Ouichi*

Ouichi, in 1981, prepared and presented a very clear set of operating assumptions that were followed by most academicians and some business people like a religion. With late 1990's changes in fortune of Japan, Ouichi's work is less popular. However, a key here is that his assumptions are complementary to the research conducted in the USA for forty years. In fact, his assumptions are:

(1) Offer people long-term employment, a positive "family" of co-workers and leaders, and clear objectives, and they will stick around, do a good job, and have a sense of pride in the work done.

(2) Offer people a "piece of the pie" when it comes to making decisions that will affect their work, and they will understand and support the decisions more often and more wholeheartedly.

(3) Expect people to take individual responsibility for their own performances as an important part of a bigger team, and they will fulfill that expectation.

(4) Evaluate people over the long term rather than frequently because this gives them the opportunity to develop, based upon their inner sense of integrity.

(5) Build trust and integrity into all interactions between managerial and non-managerial personnel to develop a sense of the importance of individual contributions to the group effort.

(6) Maintain few levels of authority in the organization and emphasize work groups to get jobs done because this maximizes an individual's sense of belonging to his or her group and to the organization as a whole. It also increases individual and group accountability and performance.

(7) Use informed rules and regulations, with formalized measures of performance to further encourage individual workers to internalize personal responsibility for achieving group and organizational objectives.

Theory Z takes the focus off the individual and puts each person in the context of the group, the

organization, and the culture in which he or she is living. This gives the individual a sense of value and importance based upon the accomplishment of the overall organization, and takes some of the stress off each individual in each moment to perform all out. In Japan, this created personal and corporate determination to succeed at functioning in groups to reach departmental, organizational, and even national cultural goals.

Enemies of Theory Z ideas claim that it does not work outside the Orient. They point out that it is no good for the USA nor Europe. The cultural differences between Japan and other nations of the Western world are just too much, according to these critics (Biggs, 1982). Some of these have been, on the other hand, followed with great success in USA firms that are small and large.

It is strange and ironic that Europe and the USA, originally driven by Judeo-Christian historical and cultural roots, have found or could find values of cooperation, support, loyalty, family-type closeness, intimacy, and caring so foreign to their recently developed ways of leading businesses and organizations. Individual accomplishment, competition with others, confrontation between labor and management, and an emphasis on self in general have come to the forefront since the 1950's. One reason was likely to be that the reward system was skewed to individual performance and was not connected very well to group achievement.

### *Theory R: A "Relational" Value of Person Theory*

Alderson (1985) proposed an interesting and unique set of assumptions into the area of the leadership philosophies. He gave it the name Theory R. The guiding assumptions are as follows:

(1) That all people need affirmation, a sense of dignity or appreciation, and need respect which mean that they need recognition of their intrinsic value, and that their work is a valued contribution in the workplace. This is not a unique are to the home but is needed a work and in volunteer situations as well.

(2) That the building of a person's sense of self-esteem through meeting the foregoing three key needs – they are [a] love, [b] dignity, and [c] respect. The synonyms commonly used in academe are [a] "affirmation", [b] "appreciation," and [c] "recognition" – will have a positive impact on worker morale, quality of work, and productivity.

(3) That reconciliation, not confrontation, in leader-follower relations will help to create the needed sense of mutual respect, dignity, and

unconditional concern for one another as humans.

(4) That relationships between leaders and followers are the keys to productivity, morale, and quality concerns.

(5) That people have the desire to work hard and take pride in what they accomplish.

(6) That when people are placed in an environment sensitive to the “Value of the Person,” they will be cooperative, creative, and productive.

(7) That treating people “right” is the right thing to do, and that is the reason enough to actively value people.

At first glance, these ideas of Alderson (1985) seem too simplistic to have much credence in the “real” complex world. But at least when Alderson himself employed them, they worked in an excellent manner. He reports on employing them at a Pennsylvania foundry and found something that both management and labor could agree upon. Every man and woman in the foundry had something in common!! *They wanted to be valued.*

Two years after the “Value of the Person” approach was implemented, the plant went from a six million dollar (\$6,000,000.00) loss to an equal sized profit. Employment rose from 300 to 1,000. Grievances dropped from 600 per year to just one. Absenteeism dropped from 20 percent to 1 percent. Production quality went from low to high. Productivity was up 64 percent. These dramatic changes demand our attention. Sproul, 1980, gives an additional description and summary of Alderson’s intervention at the foundry.

Thus, we see a dramatic shift in the evolution of the guiding assumptions of leadership theories from the autocratic sweatshops of old to the humanistic Theory Y, to the Value of People ideas of Theory R. There is more to see. Next, we will be doing some comparisons of the traditional ideas with new insights into the nature of transformational leadership.

## 2. Looking at the Definitions and Categories

Leadership has been defined in many ways by many people, of varying perspectives over the years. Indeed, there are so many definitions that vagueness and confusion seem to prevail in the many minds about the whole issue. It is not surprising then that many leaders question their roles, their effectiveness, even their importance, and are questioned by those around them. Below the reader will notice a summary of many different definitions of leadership, most of which are

traditional by nature. Some do lead towards the more transformative and then give a specific definition of the transforming leadership. The interested reader should peruse the great works of Stogdill (1974) and the fine follow-on by Bass (1982). These that follow are but snippets of the great Stogdill’s and Bass’s efforts to typify leadership and to set up categories for the plethora and confusion in the literature. The authors are attempting to extremely simplify the categories as follows:

- (1) A potpourri of definitions
- (2) Determining group structure
- (3) Coupling leader behavior to groups needs
- (4) Keeping one step ahead of the group
- (5) Innovation in accomplishment of the task
- (6) Achieving the most with the least friction
- (7) Inducing compliance, respect, and cooperation
- (8) Goal-directed communication that gets positive results
- (9) Serving others and meeting their needs
- (10) Persuading others to accept a particular view or strategy
- (11) Exercising positive power to get desired results
- (12) Making the most of individual differences to reach goals
- (13) Being perceived as legitimate, expert, and/or trustworthy.

As can be seen by the range of definitional approaches above, there are considerable differences among these various views of leadership. Many fail to search for alternative views to their detriment. The lack of a working definition of leadership can be a problem for someone who wants to develop leadership potential and become more effective in achieving goals.

In contrast, the reader will see a focused definition of leadership that can assist him in developing a more integrated and applicable understanding of leadership and its more transformative nature.

*Transforming Leadership Defined.* Transforming leadership is vision, planning communications, and creative action that has a positive unifying effect on a group of people around a set of clear values and beliefs, to accomplish a clear set of measurable goals. This transforming approach simultaneously impacts the personal development and corporate productivity of all involved.

The above definitional paragraph is based on the works of Burns (1974) and Bass (1985).

The transforming leader also transforms self and the nature of leadership itself into a continuing process of learning to lead better. Therefore, everything is affected by a transforming, developing leader who is, by definition, an active agent of positive *motivation* and *change*. The environment is affected. The organizers are affected. Groups and teams are affected. Interpersonal interchanges are affected. The character of leadership becomes more mature throughout the organization. Other leaders are developed. Furthermore, the leader's understanding of leadership and motivation are developed in the process. It is not meant to say that a transforming leader is some *super* person, but the subtle, ripple effect of this positive leadership can affect all parts of an organization and all the people in it. As a spin-off, their families at home can be passively affected, and this can even impact the tone of the communities in which people live.

Transforming leaders could be people who are administrators, managers, supervisors, educators, health maintenance organization leaders, medical professionals, counselors, clergy, criminal justice workers, parents, and others who might have the knowledge, skills, tools, and abilities to impact and develop both an organization and the people in it at the same time. This is the case when a father or mother (the transforming leaders) in a family (the organization) facilitate themselves and their children to grow by combining structure and nurturing behaviors. It is also the case when an executive structures an organization through long-range planning and policy development, and develops teams of people who grow toward increased morale and productivity. How many organizations do strategic planning to increase productivity? Most that are large and successful is the answer. Well, how many of these same organizations also do strategic planning and budgeting to increase quality of the work and interpersonal lives for the people who do the producing? Sadly, not nearly so many is the answer to that. Therefore, the reader can see the potential importance of defining leadership in terms of the people who are the producers rather than producers who happen to be people.

#### *Overview of Some Traditional*

Important aspects of leadership are contained in many of the traditional views of leadership. Some very important lessons can be learned by

identifying some of their limitations. Now that a review has been completed of definitions of leadership and we examined transformational leadership, it will be helpful to look at some bedrock theories that have served the study of leadership for a long time. For clarity, we will categorize the theories as we go.

#### *Biological-Personality Theories*

*a) The Great Man Theory.* In 1960, Jennings wrote and published a comprehensive survey and analysis of the "great man" theory of leadership. In summary, this somewhat early theory advances the idea that certain people are born stronger, more intelligent, and more able to lead. Heroes, royalty, and the more successful people in general were thought to have inborn talent and ability that enabled them to stand out from the masses and achieve unusual successes. This idea that born leaders had certain characteristics gave rise to the related trait theory of leadership studied and popularized in the USA in the 1920's and 1930's by Bernard (1926), Bingham (1927), and Tead (1929). For a good review of the above, see Kilbourne's 1959 work.

*b) Trait Theories:* These theories were sometimes intermixed with convenient rules and laws of the day to promote one group, race, class, or gender over another. However, much serious research was done and is summarized by Stogdill (1974).

#### *Environmental Theories*

*a) Leader-Behavior Theory.* This position suggests that circumstances themselves cause a great leader to rise to the occasion. Under the "right" conditions, a leader will emerge as if by nature's necessity or invention. As early as 1918, Bogardus was suggesting that the type of leadership that a group will develop or accept will be determined by the nature of the group and the problems it must solve. We certainly are heartened by many instances of leaders emerging at the least expected times in most unexpected forms. But, on the other hand, there have been many crises that have not resulted in a leader equal to the occasion.

*b) Personal-Situational Theory:* This theory is the first to propose a complex set of factors involved in the shaping and development of leadership, and is the first to be scrutinized by serious research efforts. Westburg (1931) proposed that the critical factors involved in leadership were

a combination of the affective, intellectual, and action traits of the individual as well as the specific conditions under which the individual operates. The idea here is that success in leadership is dependent upon a leader's ability to understand the followers and the surrounding environment and they react appropriately to those people and situations as they change. In this same area, Bennis (1961) recommended that theory on leadership should consider the measurement of rationality. That is, the impact of informal organization and interpersonal relations, the positive influence of benevolent autocracy because it structures relationships between superiors and subordinates job enlargement and employee centered supervision that permit individual self-development, and participative management with joint consultation that allow the integration of individual and organizational goals. Bennis further emphasized the importance of interpersonal dimension in determining the quality of the work life in an organization. Additionally, he stressed the value of the person in relation to productivity.

c) *Interaction-Expectation Theory*: In this theoretical orientation, leadership is the act of initiating structure supported by group members because such structure solves mutual problems, conforms or positively transforms group norms, and causes members to expect that success will come from following a leader of such initiative. Leadership, according to this theory, involves both initiating and fulfilling the expectations of followers. Leader credibility is based upon the ability to fulfill expectations generated by the leader (Homans, 1950).

*Humanistic Leadership Theories*. The theories of Argyris (1964), Blake and Mouton (1960), Likert (1967), and McGregor (1960) (McGregor's "X" and "Y" previously covered in our paper) are focused on the development of effective organizations through a "humanizing" process of structuring the work of living environment so that individuals can meet personal needs and organizational objectives at the same time. These theories attempt to balance the needs of the individual with the goals of the organization, but have been accused, at times, of sacrificing organizational bottom line results for the sake of realizing human values such as employee morale, worth of the individual, quality of work life, meaning and purpose in work, mutual trust, and

productivity based upon the internal motivation of workers. This approach can contribute much to our understanding of human needs in the workplace, and can cause us to be more cognizant of the "people" side enterprise, the importance and dignity of personal meaning and purpose of work. It has also revolutionized thinking about productivity and performance. Basically, it has clarified that people who like what they do while feeling respected and valued will perform better. The following is a look at some of the personalities who developed these theories:

1) *Argyris* pointed out the inevitable conflict between the individual and the organization. He posited that organizations are most effective when leaders provide avenues for organizational objectives. He also explained how most organizations overplay the rational and under-emphasize the emotional (1982). In his view, the best organizations recognize and process negative emotions until resolution – or compromise – is reached;

2) *Blake and Mouton* presented a grid to illustrate the relationship between concern for people and concern for production or the mission of the organization. They created one of the very first leadership-style assessment instruments, and formulated a theory that suggested that a leader who score high on both people and production concerns was most effective;

3) *Likert* suggested that leaders need, to seriously consider the values, expectations, and interpersonal skill competences of other with whom they work. The positive leader, as defined by Likert, is one who appreciates an employee's efforts and build self-esteem in others. Task and relationship factors are both important and interrelated. Likert's work on the leadership theory came in the twilight of a great career that focused mainly on the development of techniques for organizational research and the development of a renowned Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.

*Contingency Approaches to Leadership*. These approaches reflect important advances over the simplistic "one best way" methods-to-lead models. Contingency models suggest more complex diagnosis of the situation at hand as well as more complex leadership interventions. Situational or contingency approaches reflect the belief that there is a relationship between employees' satisfaction/performance and their environment. The basic

premise of these approaches is that if we understand the factors that impact employee morale and performance, and apply that understanding successfully, we can have more direct influence and control over morale and – some studies indicate – production.

a) *Fiedler*, in 1967, published a theory that he called “The Leadership Contingency Model,” which was to serve three main purposes:

(1) Supports the idea that effective leadership is situational in nature, that a leader has to attend to a wide range of situational variables to make a wise choice of leader behavior.

(2) Fiedler found that more-directive leaders were effective in certain situations and this finding was contrary to the philosophies of the 1950’s and 1960’s that were dominated by human relations professors.

(3) Fiedler also opened up the issue of leader versatility and the placement of a leader in a situation in which he or she can capitalize on his or her strengths, i.e., “engineer the environment to fit the manager.”

b) *House*, in 1971, brought forth the Path-Goal Model, which suggests that leader behaviors can influence worker performance and satisfaction. This approach suggests that the leader’s job is to increase the payoffs to workers for achieving work goals. The leader does this by clarifying the path to these goals, by reducing blockages that prevent workers from reaching the goals and by behaving in a way that will increase worker satisfaction while workers are achieving these goals. If workers feel that they are capable of doing a good job without direction from the boss, they will be dissatisfied with and resent directive leadership behavior. House’s model is important because it gives insight into some ways leaders can increase employee satisfaction.

c) *The Vroom-Yetton* model is yet another type of situational-contingency theory of leadership. They call it a “Decision-Making” Model. According to their theory, it is critical for the leader

to decide on how much participation subordinates should have when making decisions. The theorists provide guidelines for leaders to decide how much participation is appropriate in each situation. They stress the importance of decisions and information availability plus they show that acceptance of decisions by subordinates is an important issue in regard to their productivity.

d) *Hersey and Blanchard*, in 1982, brought forth a popularization of the situational approach. Even though the roots of this go back to the theory pioneers, it is far to mention the impact and importance of this work as a major voice in communicating to many leaders, and to the educators of leaders, the value of carefully considering the development level of a follower or group of followers. A concern for followers development is clearly voiced in this work and the Hersey-Blanchard approach is continuing to be influential in shaping thinking and training in leadership, flexibility for greater appropriateness, and, therefore, greater effectiveness in face-to-face situations.

### 3. Conclusions

Only a few people in a situation rise to the top for a number of complex reasons. Some of these succeed and some fail for a myriad of complex reasons. Theories of leadership are each limited. None of them are integrating and including many useful into one. Each theory has been based on interesting academic research and, somewhat limitingly, upon the predominant philosophical beliefs of a particular decade or era.

Theories of leadership are moving from the simple to the more complex as we move through time. There comes a time, however, when the richness can become clutter or when the complexity goes beyond what is applicable by average leader. This is the price we pay for more complex theories. They are more difficult to learn, more complicated in their applications, and require more sophisticated training methods.

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