

Concerns and Criticisms of Leadership Development Programs Since the Mid of Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

This paper analyses some of the Leadership Development Programs developed since the mid of nineteenth century. The concerns and criticism of least preferred coworker (LPC) Leadership Development Program as suggested by Fiedler, Leader Match Concept (LMC) Leadership Development Program developed by Fiedler and Chemers, Authentic leadership development program developed by Avolio, Transformational Leadership and the Full Range Leadership Development Programs developed by Bass and Avolio has been explored in this paper. This paper discusses about the fundamental notions and measurement of different leadership styles along with validity of its theory. This paper finds that which leadership development program shall best fit to train CEO's and top level management.

Keywords: Leadership Development Program, least preferred coworker, authentic leadership, Transformational Leadership and the Full Range Leadership

Introduction

Leadership is one of the most important aspects of management which has been given a lot of importance since the mid of nineteenth century and has been accelerated in the twenty first century. It is because of the leadership; an organization fails or steers into success. It also helps in maximizing efficiency of an organization. It is better for the organizations to develop the leader among themselves within the employees as compared to hire a leader from outside who has little knowledge about the organization. Therefore a need arose to build up "Leadership Development Program" for the executives in the organizations. Many Leadership Development Programs were developed by different researchers. The aim of this paper is explore the concerns and criticisms of such Leadership Development Programs.

Leadership

Leadership has many definitions because it is looked as having different sets of assumptions or from within different paradigms (Slater 1995). Based on three decades of leadership research, Howard (2005) defined leadership as the process of communication (verbal and non-verbal) that involves coaching, motivating/inspiring, directing/guiding, and supporting/counseling others. Yukl (2010) defined leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (p. 8).

Success and failures of any firm depends upon the leader. A careful review of literature dealing with leadership clearly indicates that long-term success of an organization depends upon its approach to leadership development (Holt, 2011). According to (Holt, 2011) many firms like AIG, Freddie Mac, Fanny May and Bear Sterns, have failed not because of their failures in finance part but rather due to failure in leadership whereas on the contrary many of the firms like Johnson & Johnson, Starbucks and McDonalds have succeeded because of their leaders (Holt, 2011). Therefore to become successful leaders there is an increasing pressure to improve Leadership Development Programs in an organization and provide emerging leaders with the training. For becoming successful leaders, Hickman (1998) identified certain characteristics. They are (a) Setting and providing direction during tempestuous times; (b) managing change without compromising on customer's service and quality; (c) provide resources and look for new associations and agreements; (d) harness diversity; (e) stimulate an intellect of positivity among the supporters; and (f) demonstrate that they are a leader of the leaders. Being a self-achiever is a common characteristic of effective leaders (Weick, 2001).

Now let us understand the different types of leadership theories.

Fiedler's Contingency theory

Fiedler's Contingency theory was developed by Fred Fiedler in the year 1964. Fiedler's theory is a situational and is one of the earliest theories which undoubtedly enunciate how to develop leaders. Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership depends on two factors: (1) the degree to which the situation gives the leader control and influence—that is, the likelihood that the leader can successfully accomplish the job and (2) the leader's basic motivation—that is, whether the leader's self-esteem depends primarily on accomplishing the task or on having close supportive relations with others (Fiedler, 1967, p. 29). Fiedler fundamental concept theory of leadership was based on the fact that leaders are either primarily task motivated or relationship motivated, which forms the basis for a leadership

style. Fiedler believed that in order to be effective, a leader must learn to change or mold the situation in order to make a match between their leadership style and the degree of control with the situation at hand.

Fundamental Notions and measurement of leadership style

Fiedler leader's style is measured by measuring a trait called the least preferred coworker (LPC) scale. This scale comprises of 18 items. Leaders are asked to consider their past and present coworkers, and then they are asked to select any one of their coworker with whom he could work the least. This coworker is rated based on the set of opposing characteristics whether he is gloomy or cheerful. Low score of LPC was obtained when the leader cared less about the relationship and preferred more towards the task accomplishment. High LPC was obtained by those leaders who scored more on relationship with the coworkers. Fiedler leader's style had three aspects- Task structure, Power position and Leader-member exchange.

According to this theory, the situation is most favorable for the leader when relations are good with the coworkers, task is highly structured, and power position is strong. According to Yukl (2010) the least favorable position for the leader is when the relation with the coworker is poor, task is unstructured, and power position is weak.

Leadership Development Program using the Leader Match Concept

Leadership Development Program that can be used to develop leaders is Fiedler and Chemers's (1984) Leader Match Concept (LMC). LMC is a self-study training manual that contains details to identify their leadership styles, respond to situational factors for effective leadership, teaches individuals to identify and diagnose their leadership situation.

Following are the steps for the Leader Match as per Fiedler and Chemers's (1984)

The first step is to evaluate Leadership Style using the LPC scale. Second step is to evaluate Leadership Situation using self-report questionnaires in the Leader Match book, evaluate Leader-Member Relations, and understand about task structure, power position and computing situational control. The third step is to match Leadership style with the situation. According to Fiedler and Chemers's(1984), following are the leadership style that matches with the situation: 1. First Task motivated i.e. low Least Preferred Coworkers leaders perform best in situations of high control or low control. 2. Relationship-motivated i.e. high on Least Preferred Coworkers leaders perform best in situations of moderate control. 3. Moderate Least Preferred Coworkers leaders may tend to be perceived as isolated, less concerned about what others think, however more open to the environment. Such leaders enjoy situations in which there is high control, and don't perform as well in situations of low control (Fiedler & Chemers, 1984, p. 25).

Validity of Fiedler's Theory

Various validity test about Fiedler's Leader Match program has been conducted and was supported and confirmed by different researchers in a number of studies (e.g., Leister, Borden, & Fiedler, 1977; Csoka & Bons, 1978; Fiedler & Mahar, 1979). The research conducted by Strube and Garcia (1981) and Burke and Day (1986) also validates Fiedler's theory.

Concerns and Criticisms

Though many researchers have supported the theory and Fiedler's Leader Match Program, but certain researchers like Mitchell et al. (1970) argue that this program contain certain flaws. This theory was again revised by Fiedler himself and came out with the modified concept - Cognitive Resource Theory, according to which the performance of a leader is determined by the interaction between a leader's intelligence and experience, type of leader behavior, and aspects of the leadership situation, which include interpersonal stress and the nature of the group's task. This does not mean that Fiedler's Leader Match program is to be rejected but Cognitive Resource Theory has more contents than the Leader Match program.

Conclusion about the theory and what it tells about leadership development

A lot of support for Fiedler's theory and Fiedler's Leader Match program cannot be ignored and sidelined. Many issues can still be addressed in Fiedler's Leader Match program because much of the research took place in the military setting and the problem of relying on moderate LPC individuals to choose their appropriate grouping can yield misclassified actions. The reason that Fiedler came out with Cognitive Resource Theory was that some aspects of Leadership were missing in the original theory.

Transformational Leadership and the Full Range Leadership Model

What the Theory Proposes about Leadership

Bass & Avolio, (1995) developed an instrument called Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure transformational leadership style. They developed a comprehensive instrument that approaches to measure the

concepts of transformational practices. Transformational leadership is a “process that changes and transforms people” (Northouse, 2007). MLQ measures the Leadership styles of himself as per how he / she rates and also assess the leadership styles with regard to feedback as given by the Rater through the Rater Form. According to (Shamir et al., 1998), many reviews and revisions of MLQ instruments have taken place, but all the revisions comprised of subscales and used 5 point Likert scale. MLQ gathers feedback through 360 – Degree feedback method. The three outcome measures of Transformational and MLQ examines four main core elements, which are idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Avolio, B. J., Bass, B. M., & Jung, D. I., 1999) the details are discussed in the preceding paragraph.

Idealized influence: There are evidences that prove that stress and burn out are less evoked by idealized influence (Seltzer et al., 1989). In Idealized influence, expression of self- interest and determination is exhibited by the leader (House, 1977). One of the important feature is that the leader gains trust of the followers, get respect beyond the normal (Sashkin&Sashkin, 2003; Yukl, 1999). The item addressing “Idealized Influence” might include- “Talks about their most important values and beliefs” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

Intellectual Stimulation: Transformational leaders other important core element is creating intellectual stimulation. Leaders give much importance to encourage subordinates for accomplishing the tasks by experimenting new things of common concerns (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). An environmental perspective is also seen for evaluating environmental opportunities by the transformational leaders (Conger & Kanungo, 1994). The item addressing “Intellectual Stimulation” might include- “Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

Inspirational motivation: Transformational leaders have the ability to align organizational goals by challenging follower’s organizational tasks (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders prepare the followers by imbuing great enthusiasm and articulating enthusiasm in them (Alimo -Metcalf & Alban-Metcalf, 2005; Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transformational leaders articulate vision, provide clear planning, incorporate well defined strategy and raise self – esteem of the followers (Hackman, 1986; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Raelin, 1989). Transformational leaders have the ability to demonstrate their commitment that may force subordinates to follow the organizational goals (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). The item addressing “Inspirational motivation” might include- “Talks optimistically about the future” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

Individualized consideration: Leadership developmental means improving the skills of the followers (Yukl, 1999). Transformational leaders also focus of completion of task Bass & Riggio, (2006). Transformational leaders provide support to their followers by giving respect to their followers for promoting changes in an organization (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006).

The item addressing “Individualized consideration” might include- “Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

Transactional leadership styles included are - 1) extra effort; 2) effectiveness; and 3) satisfaction with leader.

The item addressing “extra effort” might include- “Heightens my desire to succeed” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

The item addressing “effectiveness” might include- “Is effective in meeting organizational requirements” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

The item addressing “satisfaction” might include- “Works with me in a satisfactory way” and is marked on the Likert scale from 0 to 4 on “Not at all, once in a while, sometimes, fairly often and frequently, if not always.

Den Hartog et al., (1997) conducted a study and established three factor solutions. The first was (leadership – which is a one factor solution, (active and passive leadership) which is a two factor solution, and a three factor solution that were compatible with the intended design. They found that transformational leadership was highly correlated (0.99) with an inspirational instrument and alpha obtained was 0.95. Results obtained by (Tracey & Hinkin, 1998) also supported the principal constructs.

Comment: The Multi Factor Leadership Questionnaire is largely pertinent to a broader range of conditions, moreover MLQ has the ability to inspire and stimulate others actions and also at any level there is responsibility to influence the actions of others. MLQ can be applied to, supervisors, managers or CEO's.

Discussions: MLQ is used as global measure of transformational leadership. According to Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996). MLQ has been found to be validated considering series of researches done in social sciences. Several studies (Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996; Berson & Avolio, 2004; Kirkbride, 2006; Mannheim & Halamish, 2008) have assessed the validity of MLQ. According to Yukl (2010) most of the studies found support for the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership as broad categories, but in some cases only after eliminating many weak items or entire subscales. In order to survey leadership factors (MLQ) is

developed in order to survey Leader styles. The new version MLQ 5X (1) has been developed in in the year 2011 that measures the leadership styles. Tests of the theory's predictions by Brown and Keeping (2005) found that transformational behaviors were all highly correlated with subordinate liking of the leader, and explained most of the effect of transformational leadership on outcomes. Therefore if followers/subordinates demonstrate a liking toward the leader, the leader has an increased likelihood of follower commitment and support, which are necessary to lead.

Research on Transformational Theory and its Implementation

Transformational leadership theory has been successfully used and tested to develop transformational leaders. For example, Crookall (1989) in Bass and Riggio, 2006, p. 159, successfully conducted a controlled field experiment and found that "performances of both trained samples improved, in comparison to the other three groups of supervisors, those who were trained in transformational leadership did fine or were better at improving productivity, attendance, and citizenship behavior among the inmates; they also won more respect from the inmates". In a large Canadian bank, training for twenty bank managers was conducted by Barling, Weber and Kelloway (1996) and found that "subordinates of trained leaders reported significantly more positive perceptions of leaders, and higher organizational commitment". Berson & Avolio(2004) study also provided support for transformational leadership development. Kirkbride (2006), a leadership consultant, wrote a paper on the Full Range Leadership model and discussed how transformational leadership style highly correlated with performance of the leader.

Conclusion about the theory and what it tells about leadership development

Barling, Weber and Kelloway (1996) recommend research with larger sample sizes, and they also recommend evaluating the effects of the training sooner than five months after the training. Avolio & Bass (2004) suggest that training sessions following the MLQ may improve participants attitudes and performance.

Authentic Leadership Theory

What the Theory Proposes about Leadership

In recent years, the idea of authentic leadership has received much attention (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Avolio& Gardner 2005; Avolio, 2007). Authentic leadership as described by Avolio (2005) means to "know oneself, to be consistent with oneself, and to have a positive and strength-based orientation toward one's development and the development of others". According to above definition by Avolio, authentic leaders know themselves, know their values, pursue actions that are consistent with their values, and are always seeking to develop themselves as well as develop others. According to Yukl (2010), "the effectiveness of authentic leadership comes through optimism, motivation, persistence, and clarity about objectives in the face of difficult challenges, obstacles, setbacks, and conflict with rivals or opponents" (p. 45). According to Avolio (2010), this theory is unique in that it focuses on leadership development, something he believes is missing in many leadership theories. Yukl (2010) states that developing authentic leaders takes time, and is not a simple process. Avolio (2010) suggested that leadership development is triggered by both positive and negative moments.

According to Yukl (2010) there are various approaches to develop authentic leadership. One approach is to ask question to the respondents asking them to describe the events involving their Leaders and their role models and then explain why their behaviors may be perceived to be worth for simulation. Another approach is to let the subordinates analyze their own experiences and ordeals to better understand their values and strengths. A final approach is to "provide opportunities to experience trigger events in which the need to overcome difficult challenges and crises will help people learn about their individual and shared values, beliefs, and competencies" Yukl (2010, p. 426).

Validation of Authentic Leadership Theory and its implementation

One research was conducted by Turner and Mavin (2008) in the Northeast UK region, in which they gathered qualitative empirical data by conducting semi-structured interviews with 22 senior leaders using a life-history approach to generate findings on how individuals establish and sustain leadership. Findings suggest that the "data highlights elements of the authentic leadership theory. Senior leaders' life stories and in particular trigger events are significant to their approach as leaders" (p. 376).

Another research conducted by Shamir and Eilam (2005), working from ideason life stories by Bennis and Tomas (2002), Gardner (1995) and Tichy (1997), suggested that leaders achieve particular characteristics by creating, building, developing and revising life stories. Kegan (1982) argues that life stories allows leaders to act in ways that gives their actions a personal meaning, but Turner and Mavin (2008) argue that "rather than focusing upon traditional models and theories of how to be a leader, a more powerful approach to leadership development program is to enable leaders to reflect upon their own life stories and to enable aspiring leaders to share in others' life stories, so that they may also engage in meaning making of their leader approach and identity" (p. 388). This work contributes to the study and development of leadership in the sense that it offers a thoughtful methodology

to leadership development, and for leadership practice this allows established leaders to learn from the aspiring leaders, and for the aspiring leaders to learn from the life stories of the established leader.

Avolio et al. (2010) conducted a study which developed and tested the authentic leadership theory using five separate samples obtained from China, Kenya, and the United States. In one sample Avolio et al. distributed 610 instrument packets to employed individuals from 11 U.S. multinational companies operating in Kenya. Within this study the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was used. The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire assesses leader self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing. The results of the study found authentic leadership seemed to lead to higher follower job satisfaction and job performance. This study by Avolio et al. assists the study of authentic leaders because it shows that this theory is effective globally.

Concerns and Criticisms

Cooper et al. (2005) argue that interventions to develop authentic leaders, must be researched more to define, measure, and rigorously research this topic. Specifically, they argue that before designing strategies for authentic leadership development, scholars in this area need to give careful consideration to four critical issues: “(1) defining and measuring the construct, (2) determining the discriminant validity of the construct (which is to assess whether the theory is redundant with other similar theories), (3) identifying relevant construct outcomes, and (4) ascertaining whether authentic leadership can be taught” (p. 477). Cooper et al. also pose questions to consider while designing interventions. Those questions shall try to address the following: “(1) ensuring that the program, itself, is genuine, which refers to the idea that an authentic leadership development program is what it proposes to be: authentic. (2) determining ‘how trigger’ events can be replicated during training, (3) deciding whether ethical decision-making can be taught, and if these first three issues can be addressed, (4) determine who should participate in authentic leadership training” (pp. 483-484). Cooper et al. suggest that more work needs to be done before authentic leadership theory becomes generally accepted as a strong theory for development. We conclude about this theory that authentic leadership is all about being true to yourself and your core values for becoming an authentic leader.

Recommendation for Leadership Development

A blend from the Transformational Leadership and Authentic Leadership Theory shall best fit for the leadership development program. The purpose of this leadership program is to develop leaders who “can produce significant organizational change and results because this form of leadership fosters higher levels of intrinsic motivation, trust, commitment, and loyalty from followers” (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2009, p. 358). The purpose of conducting Leadership Development Program from an organization’s point of view is to get the return on investment. The other purpose of this program is to develop leaders who know themselves, are consistent with themselves, and have a “positive and strength-based orientation toward their development and development of others” (Avolio, 2005, p. 194).

Eventually this program is for those who are able to garner trust, commitment and loyalty from followers, and individuals whom they know themselves, behave consistently with their values, and are interested in the development of themselves and others. Developing an understanding of oneself is a vital component to the training program. If the trainee doesn’t develop this understanding, they will likely not be able to productively contribute to further sessions, because it’s important that each trainee be able to articulate their values to others.

Key points

The Multi Factor Leadership Questionnaire is largely pertinent to a broader range of conditions, moreover MLQ has the ability to inspire and stimulate others actions and also at any level there is responsibility to influence the actions of others. Moreover a blend from the Transformational Leadership and Authentic Leadership Theory shall best fit for the leadership development program which can be applied to train CEO’s and top level management.

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