

# Analysis of The Traditional Leadership Theories: A Review of Contemporary Leadership Approaches and Management Effectiveness

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## Abstract

Leadership theories and philosophical thoughts have evolved rapidly over time due to its significance and influence in shaping and re-shaping global institutions which serves as a catalyst to economic development. The complexity of leadership necessitates that leaders must have the mastery leadership aligned with the context in which their organizations operate to achieve over-arching goals with agility and efficiency. Recent studies proposed a dynamic view about leadership and noted that a leader assumes and relinquishes position of authority based on the situation which is a significant departure from traditional perceptions. This paper analyses the contemporary leadership theories and approaches that attempt to define an effective leadership different from the traditional perspectives. However, the researcher proposed that effective leadership is a function of the leader's knowledge and capacity to understand the situational parameters and fostering the right scale of leadership mix to solve problems. This therefore is an attempt to advance knowledge on the contemporary leadership mix and theories that could provide actionable insights for effective leadership practices in an organization.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Leadership Theories, Effective Leadership, Traditional Leadership.

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## 1. Introduction

Leadership has been an integral element of the human experience ever since people formed groups to survive environmental threats, work cooperatively to achieve goals beyond the capabilities of individuals and establish families and various social groups to satisfy their affiliation needs. Basic forms of leadership have existed in human societies ever since the first family, clan, village, or other organised groups emerged (Allio, 2013; Celarent, 2014). Heroic leaders like Caesar, Napoleon, Nelson, Mao Zedong, and others who led individually inspired the first leadership theories (Bennett & Murakami, 2016). The notion that there can be one supreme leader for everyone is unrealistic in modern society.

Research on leadership shows that its dimensions, definitions, and quantitative and qualitative models have evolved (Bennis, 2013; Latham, 2014). Researchers are yet to agree that a single leadership theory is superior to the others (Allio, 2013; Bennett, 2009), even though many theories have been developed and are in practice. Middlehurst (2008) notes that leadership ideas can be understood in relation to their historical context. As the concept of leadership continues to evolve, it has been observed that the universally recognised definition of leadership remains elusive. According to Burns (1978), leadership is "one of the most researched and ambiguous phenomena" since so many factors and disciplines of study need to go into defining it. Hunt et al. (2019) note that there is no universal approach to describing or assessing leadership qualities. The literature on leadership shows that various theories have been developed and revised over time; nevertheless, none of these theories is universally applicable because their effectiveness depends on the context in which they are used (Hershey & Blanchard, 1969; McCleskey, 2014). Recent studies seek to determine the skills, behaviours, qualities, and contexts in which effective leadership can exist to influence and motivate in group settings (Green, 2014). Although the models used to analyse leadership styles may evolve, the underlying principles of effective leadership have remained constant (Kozlow, 2014). Through an in-depth review and assessment of existing literature, this research seeks to advance our understanding of leadership concepts and theories while providing individuals in leadership roles with actionable insights and suggestions for honing their leadership skills. This study does not seek to create a universal definition or theory of leadership; rather, it analyses the current state of leadership studies and the various approaches to defining effective leadership from the late nineteenth century to the present day and beyond.

## 2. Defining Leadership

Leadership is a multifaceted concept; different authors and scholars have defined it differently. It is generally recognised that there is no single, comprehensive definition of leadership, but rather that definitions will vary depending on the research objectives (Stanca, 2021). Accordingly, Bass and Avolio (1997) argue that it is difficult to provide a single, comprehensive definition of leadership since the literature and studies on the topic

are so diverse, and there is no generally agreed-upon definition. Many have attempted to define leadership, with some emphasising its role as an act of influence, while others have focused on its nature as a process or on the personal qualities and features of those in leadership positions. House (1976) defines leadership as "the ability of a person to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the success and effectiveness of the organisations they are part of." Tannenbaum et al. (1961) defined leadership as the interpersonal influence demonstrated in a situation and directed, using communication, towards achieving a specialised goal(s). Hersey & Blanchard (1988) stated that leadership influences people to pursue group goals willingly. Stogdill (1950) defines leadership as "an influencing process aimed at goal achievement," emphasising leading a group of individuals to achieve a pre-determined goal. Yukl (2006) states that it is the "process of influencing others towards a common goal by helping them see clearly what has to be done and how it can be accomplished." In addition, Northouse (2010) defines leadership as "the process by which an individual influences a group of individuals to accomplish a common objective."

These definitions imply that leadership comprises several fundamental elements. Among them are the following: (a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influencing others, (c) leadership occurs within the context of a group, (d) leadership involves achieving objectives, and (e) leaders and their followers share these goals. Leadership as a process emphasises the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers. It indicates that formal position power is unnecessary for a person to function as a leader within a group. According to Avolio (2004), leadership is not a position but a process comprising how an individual or group influences others towards a specific goal or objective. Consequently, individuals can simultaneously play leadership and follower roles based on their circumstances, interests, and expertise.

Leadership is about influence (Barnes, 2003) defines influence as the ability to persuade or affect others based on prestige, affluence, skills, or status. It is impossible to be a leader without having influence. The core of influence recognises what drives employees' commitment and capitalises on that insight to increase performance and positive outcomes. Leadership requires exerting a positive influence over followers to maximise output and secure the long-term success of organisations through adopting different leadership styles tailored to the specific requirements of their organisations.

Leadership occurs within a group. This implies that leadership is a collaborative process that influences a team working towards a common objective. Wolman (1956) defined leadership as "a relationship between one or more individuals within the context of a social unit known as a group. In this relationship, the leader(s) initiate, stimulate, and sometimes even determine and control the followers' activities."

Leadership also involves achieving goals. The primary responsibility of leaders is to achieve the goals of the organisation. Thus, leadership entails guiding a group towards completing a task or attaining a goal through various ethically sound means (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011). Successful leaders anticipate, adapt, seize opportunities, and inspire high levels of performance and productivity in their followers. Consequently, leadership occurs in contexts where individuals work towards a common goal.

Leaders and followers share objectives. Leadership entails leaders collaborating with their followers to accomplish shared goals. Establishing shared objectives for leaders and followers to collaborate is difficult but rewarding. Leaders willing to invest time and effort in determining appropriate goals will achieve these objectives more effectively and easily if they collaborate with their followers. In general, objectives imposed by a leader are more difficult and less effective to attain than those developed collectively.

Therefore, leadership inspires followers to work together for a common goal, guiding the group towards greater cohesiveness and effectiveness. Effective leaders envision the future of their organisations, formulate strategies for achieving them, and then communicate their goals with their teams (Prewitt et al., 2011). In my view, leadership is the capacity of a leader to run with the vision he created for his followers and the organisation and safely anchor that vision to actualise the organisational goals and vision (Konyefa-Dickson, 2023). Leadership depends on influence, the process by which people are inspired to work towards collective goals voluntarily through intrinsic motivation.

### 3. Leadership Theories

Leadership theories are the views and research of philosophers, experts, and academics describing the distinctive features of successful leaders (Yukl, 2019). The concept of leadership has been the subject of extensive study and analysis, resulting in various theoretical frameworks and approaches. There are various theories about what makes a good leader, with some focusing on natural talents, others on behaviours, and others on the significance of interpersonal relationships. Leadership theories evolve alongside the ever-shifting global landscape. It was not until the 20th century that researchers began using scientific methods to investigate leadership (Chemers, 1997). Throughout the evolution of leadership, the practice of leadership has been influenced by the following major leadership theories, which will be reviewed in this section: Great Man Theory (the mid to late 1800s); Trait Theory (1910s–1940s); Behavioural Theory (1950s – 1970s); Contingency Theory (1960s–1990s); Contemporary Theory (the 1970s onwards); Emerging theories.

### 3.1 Great Man Theory

Attempts were made in the earliest studies of leadership to identify the qualities that distinguished famous historical figures from the rest of society (Stogdill, 1974). Popular in the nineteenth century, this theory emphasises that leadership is a natural characteristic. The Great Man Theory proposes that successful leaders possess traits that set them apart from the average person. Fundamentally, people believe leaders are born and not made (Kolb et al., 1971). This theory proposes that great leaders are heroic and mythical figures who can assume leadership roles when necessary. Cherry (2010) noted that the term "Great Man" was adopted due to the consensus that men are more naturally suited to leadership roles, especially those in the military. Famous historical people, including Plato, Caesar, Gandhi, Lincoln, Napoleon, and Lao Tzu, were often used as examples. It was believed that these individuals could shape historical events due to their natural leadership qualities. This theoretical stance is regarded as the original and most generally believed concept of successful leadership.

However, the Great Man Theory's main drawbacks were that it failed to account for the complexity of leadership and that not all individuals who possessed leadership traits were successful leaders. As a result, researchers began to explore the traits shared by successful leaders across different eras, eventually leading to the development of the trait theory of leadership.

### 3.2 Trait Theory

Trait theory evolved from the Great Man theory. Chemers (1997) noted that the trait theory of leadership was the most prominent model of the early 20th century. The trait theory attempted to identify successful leaders' personal, psychological, and physical traits and classify the traits that distinguish leaders from followers. This theory was based on the premise that some individuals are endowed with traits that distinguish them as natural leaders (Yukl, 2006). Leaders were believed to be born with certain personalities and exceptional qualities that set them apart from the rest of the population. Successful leaders were considered to have traits such as high levels of energy, intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, self-discipline, social skills, appearance, knowledge, dominance, dependability, persistence, responsibility, self-motivation, desire for control, ambition, and cognitive abilities (Mann, 1959; Northouse 2015; Yukl 2011). Therefore, studies of leadership during the period centred on the inherent qualities of successful leaders.

Using a trait assessment, individuals can better understand their leadership style and where they fit within the organisational structure. The trait approach is used for self-awareness and development. Leaders may gain insight into their strengths, areas for improvement, and how others see them by conducting a trait analysis (Northouse, 2019). According to trait theory, organisations will function more effectively if their leaders fit certain personality traits. The current use of psychometric tools in recruitment processes is a practical application of the principles of trait theory (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). These tools are used to improve individual performance and team cohesiveness by highlighting important personality traits.

Professor and researcher on leadership and organisations Melvin Stogdill analysed leadership works, and 1948 argued that the trait-based leadership theory was flawed. Stogdill (1948) proposed that leaders' attributes vary depending on the circumstances; leadership traits were no longer characterised exclusively, and not everyone who possesses these traits becomes a successful leader. He concluded that no single set of traits is necessary to become a successful leader, but rather that the leader's personality type needs to be related to the group's characteristics, actions, and goals. Therefore, leadership must be conceptualised in terms of the interaction of variables that are in a state of constant change and evolution. This conclusion has been regarded as the end of Trait Theory as the dominant leadership theory. To determine effective leadership, behavioural and contingency leadership theories were subsequently developed.

### 3.3 The Behavioural Theory

In the middle of the twentieth century, the behavioural leadership theory emerged. In the 1950s, researchers realised that trait theory was insufficient to explain leadership success, and they shifted their attention to leaders' behaviour characteristics. The behavioural theory, which developed from trait theories, posits that leaders are mostly made rather than naturally endowed and that certain behaviours can be learned to ensure effective leadership (Johns & Moser, 1989; Denison et al., 1995). It acknowledges that leadership is a skill that can be taught and that different leaders have different preferred leadership styles based on their natural orientations towards their employees, their work, and the outcome (Likert, 1961). Numerous studies were conducted in the 1950s and 1960s by academics at Ohio State and the University of Michigan to determine the optimal ways in which leaders could integrate their task and relationship behaviours to increase the satisfaction and productivity of their followers (House & Bartz, 1979; Northouse, 2019). The researchers behind the research aimed to develop a theory of leadership that could be applied across contexts and explain leaders' successes. Contradictory and ambiguous findings emerged from this massive literature review (Yukl, 2003). Nonetheless, both groups of researchers demonstrated that effective leadership requires a balance between a relationship-centred approach to

employees' requirements and a production-centred approach to accomplishing tasks (Ivancevich et al. 1977).

Different behavioural patterns have been categorised as styles due to research in this area (Johns & Moser, 1989). Blake and Mouton (1964) argued that leaders should strike a balance between two factors when deciding the style of leadership to employ: concern for people (the degree to which the manager cares about the well-being of the people they directly supervise) and concern for production (the degree to which the manager places importance on results and task accomplishment). The Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton (1980) is a prominent example of this approach in management training (Blake & Mouton, 1980). The grid is useful because it helps leaders become more self-aware about their leadership style, improving their ability to communicate with subordinates. Behavioural theory is a framework for broadly examining leadership as an activity with a task and relationship component (Northouse, 2019) rather than a refined theory that gives a neatly arranged set of prescriptions for effective leadership behaviour. The theory reminds leaders that their actions and interactions affect others around them. In contemporary society, this theory is expressed by the plethora of leadership-training programmes that aim to foster the growth of leadership abilities and behaviours, lending credence to the premise that leadership is largely learned.

The behavioural theories of leadership represented an advancement in researchers' efforts to distance themselves from unsupported earlier theories, which were conducted in isolation, without taking followership into account (Malakyan, 2014). However, behavioural theory research has not sufficiently demonstrated how leaders' actions are related to performance outcomes, including morale, work satisfaction, and productivity (Bryman, 1992; Northouse, 2019). The only significant finding regarding leadership behaviours is that empathetic leaders have satisfied followers (Yukl, 2003). The behavioural approach has failed to identify universal leadership behaviours. In addition, the behaviour studies ignored the leader's context and environment. Martin et al. (2012) observed that the effectiveness of a leader's actions in a cross-functional team depends on the context and that leaders may need to adopt various styles to achieve their team's objectives.

### 3.4 Contingency (Situational) Theory

The contingency or situational leadership theory posits that there is no universal approach to leadership; instead, successful leadership depends on situational factors that can vary over time (Yukl, 2009). The theory emphasises the significance of contextual factors that influence leadership processes. Greenleaf (1977) argues that contingency theories refute the notion that there is a singular optimal way of leading/organising and that a leadership style effective in certain environments may be ineffective in others. The theory attempts to clarify why a leader who excels in one setting may falter in another, especially if the setting is new or the variables have changed. This theory is based on the notion that multiple situations call for various approaches to leadership (Northouse, 2019). From this perspective, the qualities of a good leader include the ability to adapt one's approach in response to the specifics of every given situation.

Fred Fiedler and colleagues developed one of the earliest contingency leadership theories (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). Since there is no universally optimal method for carrying out leadership duties, Fiedler's contingency model (Wren, 1979) proposes that different leadership behaviours can be effective depending on contextual factors. Singh et al. (1979) identify situational favorability and leadership style as the two central concepts of Fiedler's theory. According to Fiedler & Chemers (1974, p. 73), "the leadership situation is an arena in which the leader seeks to satisfy his own as well as the organisation's goals," and "the motivational system of the leader and the degree to which the leader has control and influence" are crucial to the success of any group. This theory argues that there is no optimal set of leadership traits or behaviours and emphasises the significance of context in effective leadership. Fiedler argues that leaders should be placed in roles that play to their strengths because leadership styles are fixed. However, contingency theory focuses not on the leader adjusting to the situation but on matching the leader's style with a suitable context (Gupta, 2009). That is to say, a leader's success depends on the degree to which their leadership style is suited to the context.

The situational leadership theory, which Hersey and Blanchard developed in 1982 and used "styles" of leadership consistent with the task-versus-people approach, is one of the most widely used contingent theories. This theory posits that the success of a leader depends on several factors, including the degree to which followers accept or reject the leader and the capability and motivation of the followers to complete a specific task (Kolzow, 2014). The situational approach emphasises the importance of leaders adapting their style to the skills and dedication of their teams. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) divide leadership styles into four categories: directing, counselling, delegating, and supporting. This theory posits that each leadership style can be effective, depending on the level of development of the individual or the group being led.

**Directing:** The leader uses fewer supporting behaviours and emphasises communication that leads to success. Leadership in this mode entails laying out specific guidelines for how followers should accomplish objectives and supervising their progress while they do so.

**Coaching:** The leader's communication is geared towards fulfilling the social and emotional requirements of the group's members. The leader in this approach actively involves themselves in the group's work by requesting

and responding to suggestions.

**Supporting:** The leader's priority is not solely on the result; rather, they use supportive behaviours that showcase the expertise of team members. This style's hallmarks are listening, praising, engaging, and giving feedback.

**Delegating:** The leader provides less input on the objective and social support, thereby enhancing the confidence and motivation of the followers. The delegating leader reduces their involvement in planning, detail management, and goal clarification.

The situational theory offers guidance on improving leadership abilities across various organisational contexts and objectives. Given the scope of situation theory, it can be used by organisations of any kind, at any level, and for any purpose. Situational leadership theory can be used by the CEO of a large firm in their interactions with the board of directors, middle managers to guide staff meetings, and department heads to map out organisational structure shifts (Northouse, 2019). Like situational theory, contingency theory posits that no single optimal leadership style exists. The main distinction is that proponents of the situational theory emphasise the need for leaders to adapt their leadership styles to the specific context in which they find themselves. In contrast, the contingency theory proposes that if leaders want to be more effective, they should change their working environment rather than their leadership style.

### 3.5 Path-Goal Theory

Contingency theory provided the theoretical foundation for the Path-Goal leadership theory developed by Robert House in 1971 (King, 1990). It outlines that the leadership style selected should be contingent upon a perfect equilibrium between behaviour, needs, and context. According to Northouse (2019), the path-goal theory explores how leaders inspire their teams to reach common goals. It is based on the expectancy theory of motivation, in which employees believe they will be rewarded for achieving a goal set by their employer and that the reward will be valuable. Leaders may inspire their followers to act by setting clear objectives, outlining a path forward, reducing roadblocks, and offering constant support (Northouse, 2019). By considering subordinate behaviours and contextual circumstances, the path-goal theory ensures that a leader chooses an appropriate leadership style and emphasises motivational factors.

Path-Goal theory identifies four distinct leadership styles: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership.

**Directive leadership:** The leader explains the performance objective and provides detailed guidelines for subordinates to follow to achieve it.

**Supportive leadership:** The leader shows genuine interest in the welfare of their subordinates. This involves being cordial with subordinates and considerate of their needs.

**Participative leadership:** The leader consults with subordinates regarding work, task objectives, and strategies for achieving objectives. Before making decisions, this leadership style involves exchanging information and consulting with subordinates.

**Achievement-oriented leadership:** The leader emphasises the accomplishment of challenging tasks and the significance of outstanding performance, and they are confident that subordinates will perform well.

Traditional leadership theories include trait approaches, behavioural approaches, situational theories, and contingency theories, as discussed in the preceding section on the principles of leadership theories. Among the traditional theories, empirical research indicates that the two most prominent traditional theories are contingency and situational theories (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000).

## 4 Contemporary Theories

Even though this article travels through the evolution of leadership theories from the 19th to the 20th century, several theories are left unaddressed. Nevertheless, that does not make them any less important. There is a growing demand for leadership theories that can adapt to and thrive in today's context of constant disruption brought on by rapid technological innovations, expanding globalisation, and other factors. This marked a departure from the aforementioned traditional theories of leadership, which considered leadership a hierarchical, top-down influencing process (Van Seters & Field, 1990) and drew clear lines between leaders and followers. Instead, researchers began to investigate the relationships between the leader, the followers, the situation, and the system as a whole, with a focus on the underlying leadership abilities of the followers.

Several theories of contemporary leadership have been significant in developing this line of thought or have made distinctive contributions. These theories highlight leadership's relational and collaborative aspects. The following is not exhaustive, nor can it portray the complexity and comprehensiveness of these theories.

### 4.1 The Transactional Theory

The transactional leadership theory assumes that a transaction between a leader and followers is mutually beneficial. Burns (1978) theorised, in describing transactional leadership, that leaders derive their influence from

understanding and satisfying the needs and motivations of their followers. A transactional relationship will occur if the leader's motivations and needs are understood and fulfilled. Bass (1990) characterised transactional leadership as the exchange of benefits. Consequently, a transactional leader engages in the process of exchanging rewards for effort with employees (Burns, 1978). The leader contributes value by guiding the group towards desirable outcomes. In exchange, its followers accord the leader status and the authority, influence, and prestige accompanying it. In a transactional leadership relationship, resources (which can be anything of value to the leader and the follower, not just money) are exchanged for one another. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) defined transactional leadership as substituting a particular goal for another to improve organisational efficiency. The transactional leader is more of a manager than a leader, and they concentrate on completing tasks, giving direct instructions, and closely monitoring productivity. Bass (1990) asserted that transactional leadership behaviour encompassed two dimensions: a) contingent reward and b) management by exception.

Contingent Reward is a positive and interactive process in which followers are rewarded for achieving certain goals set by their leaders. Compliance is increased within transactional leadership because it "appeals to the wants and needs of followers." (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Managers who rely on performance-based pay must be able to steer their teams to success. Key examples of contingent rewards include performance-based material rewards, direction-setting, reciprocity, and team confidence.

Management by Exception (Active) is when a leader provides corrective criticism or employs negative reinforcement. "This form of leadership does not motivate employees to exceed expected results; however, if the goal is met, the system has worked, everyone is satisfied, and business continues as usual" (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Leaders with "active" Management-by-Exception behaviours monitor the performance of their subordinates and take corrective action when deviations from the established standards occur. The leadership style lacks confidence, initiative, and an openness to other perspectives.

Management by Exception (Passive) is a form of transactional leadership in which "leaders avoid specifying agreement and fail to provide goals and standards to be achieved by staff" (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Leaders that take this approach often wait for problems to arise before taking corrective measures. When leaders only correct followers when they make mistakes, the dynamic between them is unfavourable (Barbuto & Brown, 2000).

#### **4.2 Laissez-faire leadership (Non Leadership style)**

When using this leadership approach, the leader gets involved only when things go wrong or the team is not progressing. The laissez-faire leader abdicates responsibilities, delays decisions, provides no feedback, and exerts minimal effort to assist followers in meeting their needs (Northouse, 2019). The laissez-faire leader avoids accepting responsibilities, is absent when required, fails to follow up on requests for assistance, does not provide direction or guidance, and refrains from expressing opinions on significant issues. Leaders that adopt a "laissez-faire" approach often delegate most decision-making to their subordinates. A leader with a laissez-faire approach assumes that followers are self-driven and can be trusted to achieve set goals with minimal oversight. Despite its negative reputation, (Yang, 2015) argues that leaders can strategically choose to defer to their followers' abilities by adopting a laissez-faire leadership style. This allows followers to feel more in control of their lives and reduces dependency. The leader would then deliberately employ laissez-faire leadership by giving their followers increased authority.

#### **4.3 The Transformational Theory**

Transformational leadership is based on the premise that people will follow an inspiring and motivating leader. The transformational theory broadens the concept of leadership to include giving and receiving rewards and paying close attention to the requirements and the development of one's followers (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is the process by which an individual engages with others and establishes a connection that increases motivation and morale in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2019). This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motivations of followers and endeavours to assist them in reaching their maximum potential. The origins of transformational leadership can be traced to the work of James McGregor Burns (1978), who is widely regarded as the founder of modern leadership theory (Bass, 1990).

Burns (1978) asserts that leaders can influence their followers by taking on a teaching role. He also contends that leadership's brilliance rests in how leaders understand and act on their ideals and motives and those of their followers. Leaders are most effective when they assist their followers in becoming leaders. In other words, transformational leaders consistently promote the evolution of leaders inside the organisation, resulting in actual change (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader is the product of extensive and continuous learning and networking. They motivate employees by investing in relationships with them and modelling ethical behaviour. The ultimate objective is to "transform" the followers into a unified group with the same vision and mission (Kolzow, 2014). This leadership approach inspires team members to give their all and work together for the common good.

Bass and Avolio (1990) identify four characteristics of transformational leadership: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and idealised influence. The Four I's, as they are referred to, are crucial to transformational leadership.

**Inspirational motivation:** This element occurs using persuasive and communicative approaches to influence. Leadership provides people with purpose and challenge, motivating and encouraging them to do their best. Leaders should model this conduct by setting an example of high standards for their teams and encouraging people to reach those goals through meaningful work and challenging assignments (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This leader is proactive in preventing errors, but when they occur, they are viewed as an opportunity for learning rather than a reason for punishment or criticism (Bass, 1990). Inspirational motivation entails clearly and effectively communicating the vision and displaying optimism and drive while developing a compelling vision (Papa, 2012). Providing employees with a common goal and a challenge through one behaviour is the basis of inspirational motivation (McCleskey, 2014).

**Intellectual stimulation:** This factor emphasises creativity and innovation. Transformational leaders provide intellectual stimulation for their followers, prompting them to question their own beliefs, assumptions, and values as well as the leader's, which may be obsolete or ineffective in addressing contemporary issues (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Elkins & Keller, 2013; Sundi, 2013; Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003). Transformative leaders seek new information and intellectual stimulation regularly; as a result, they can better impart that information to their teams and elicit innovative problem-solving approaches from their employees (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Bass, 2006). Leaders that can challenge their followers' thinking might inspire greater productivity and job satisfaction (Bass, 1990; Avolio et al., 1991).

**Individualised consideration:** Consideration of employees as valuable assets to the company is key to this aspect of transformative leadership. Coaching, mentoring, and instructing are all ways in which leaders who care about their employees and who can help their employees develop needed workplace behaviours can help shape the careers of those who look up to them (Kirkbride, 2006; Hoffman & Frofst, 2006; Sarros & Santora, 2001). The basic principles of individualised consideration include reassuring, caring, and coaching individuals and an open and consultative approach. Successful business leaders are known for removing internal barriers that prevent workers from realising their full potential (Bass, 1990; Avolio et al., 1991).

**Idealised influence:** In this aspect of transformational leadership, leaders are role models for their followers through their actions. The leader is willing to take risks to attain organisational or personal goals but embraces ethical and moral conduct (Gomes, 2014), and the followers recognise the leader's outstanding qualities, perseverance, and commitment. Avolio et al. (1991) argue that idealised influence integrates the other three elements with a strong emotional connection to the leader's identity. As a result, the leader earns the admiration and trust of followers, who strive to model themselves after the leader.

In addition, Hooper and Potter (1997) expand the concept of transformational leadership by identifying seven critical characteristics of "transcendent leaders" who can elicit the emotional support of their followers and, in turn, effectively transcend change. i) Establishing guidelines ii) Leading by example iii) Communication iv) Alignment v) Bringing out the best in people vi) The leader as a change agent vii) Decision-making under pressure and in the face of uncertainty.

#### **4.4 Servant Leadership Theory**

Servant leadership is a theory in which leaders prioritise serving their followers over amassing power for themselves. Greenleaf (1977) viewed servant leadership as a leadership style and a lifestyle. According to Greenleaf (1994, p. 6), "the servant leader is first and foremost a servant... It begins with the innate desire to serve, to assist first. Then, by deliberate choice, one aspires to lead". Servant leadership aims to incorporate ethics, virtues, and morality for the benefit of the group, the success of the organisation, and the happiness of those who follow the leader (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Greenleaf (1994) identifies twelve competencies for servant leadership: inspiring and having a vision, building trust, effective oral communication, attentive listening, self-reflection, empathy and tolerance, intuition, focus on the future, openness to the unknown, persuasion, a systematic approach, and conceptual brilliance. However, from the traditional perspective of a servant, only having a service mentality is insufficient to make one a servant leader. According to Hall (1991), a servant leader tries to help others succeed. In servant leadership, individuals put aside their interests for the group's greater good. How servant leaders exercise their authority, and the people they consult with before making crucial decisions sets them apart from other types of leaders (Kolzow, 2014).

### **5. Emerging leadership theories**

#### **5.1 Authentic Leadership**

In response to the current economic and political climate, authentic leadership is an emerging leadership theory that provides a 'moral compass' to combat the effects of unethical management, promote social responsibility, and ensure the welfare and development of employees (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2014). The theory, which is the

basis for all effective leadership styles, has received much attention from academics and professionals over the past 15 years. Authentic leadership is an act of self-expression that arises from being genuine to oneself instead of pursuing status, prestige, or other personal benefits (Shamira & Eilam, 2005). Luthans and Avolio (2003) define authentic leadership as "a process that draws on both positive psychological capacity and a highly developed organisational context," leading to increased self-awareness and better self-regulation for leaders and followers. Walumbwa et al. (2008) defined authentic leadership as a set of behaviours exhibited by a leader that are rooted in and nurtured by the leader's own exemplary qualities and ethical standards. According to Duignan (2014), an authentic leader is trustworthy and consistent in their actions and words.

Furthermore, Walumba et al. (2008) stated that confidence, optimism, hope, and resiliency enhance authentic leadership. Hassan & Ahmed (2011) noted that genuine leaders are essential to an organisation's long-term success and effectiveness. The transparency, high integrity, and dedication to core principles of authentic leaders foster a positive environment for teamwork and collaboration. This leads to positive results such as employee engagement, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. However, the connection between authenticity and effective leadership remains unclear despite its importance and value to successful leadership. Although authentic leadership seems appealing at first glance, there is still much to learn about its efficacy, the conditions under which it thrives, and its ability to foster positive change (Northouse, 2019). More research is needed to determine if authentic leaders can successfully lead millennials and generation z. Authentic leadership may not work as well with today's followers because of the generation's emphasis on autonomy, commitment to work-life balance, and preference for intrinsic incentives (Anderson et al., 2017).

## 5.2 Strategic Leadership Theory

Strategic leadership aims to foster a shared vision and sense of direction, facilitating collaboration with key internal and external stakeholders in achieving high performance (House & Aditya, 1997). Ireland & Hitt (1999) define it as a "unique set of capabilities" that includes planning, envisioning, remaining adaptable, thinking strategically, and encouraging staff to develop creative solutions to problems resulting in high performance. According to Shoemaker and Krupp (2015), strategic leadership requires the ability to assimilate and learn new information and ideas and the flexibility to respond to the ever-changing conditions of the external environment effectively. Leaders with these skills can make constant, tactical changes to the organisation, adapting to a changing and unpredictable environment. It is essential to have strategic leadership in highly complex, uncertain, and rapidly evolving environments (Davies and Davies, 2004). In such a scenario, a strategic leader must analyse the environment and develop a strategic plan for the future.

Several core competencies are required for strategic leadership. First, the strategic leader must demonstrate a tremendous cognitive capacity to analyse vast data. A strategic leader must be innovative and future-oriented to develop a strategy to improve the organisation's performance (Ireland & Hitt, 1999). A strategic leader's ability to plan, delegate, and monitor progress is crucial to the success of the strategy's execution. Most academics acknowledge that strategic leadership entails a set of fundamental procedures, including the following: setting an organisation's long-term objectives; identifying and capitalising on its unique strengths; developing and utilising its human and social resources; fostering a culture of long-term sustainability; placing a premium on moral principles; and designing and implementing control systems that do not stifle innovation while also guaranteeing stability (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Quigley & Graffin, 2017; Hagen et al., 1998). Also, the strategic leader must be flexible and adaptable to modify the strategic plan when necessary (Davies & Davies, 2004). However, other research has found that organisational and other environmental restrictions have a greater impact on performance than strategic leadership does, on average (Fitza, 2017; Mutia, 2015; Jansen et al., 2009; Joste & Fourie, 2009; Hambrick & Quigley, 2014). These methodological gaps may be attributable to the conceptualisation and measurement of strategic leadership and performance and these variables' potential moderating and mediating effects.

## 5.3 Team Leadership

Team leadership theory posits that leadership is a function of team supervision, in which the leader is responsible for doing whatever is necessary to ensure the team's success. Team leaders use this approach to engage in the leader mediation process by determining whether the team would benefit more from continued observation or more direct intervention and then selecting the course of action that best serves the team's interests (Northouse, 2019). Team leadership can be exercised by anybody with the goal of seeing that the team's needs are satisfied, which might vary depending on the team's stage of development (Zaccaro et al., 2001). Moregeson et al. (2010) identified transition and action phases. In the transitional phase, team leaders must concentrate on organisational skills. The group must have well-defined goals, objectives, strategies, plans, and processes. In the action phase, the leader must demonstrate monitoring, coordination, mentoring, communication, and the development of others. Skills, including motivation, team emotion, and conflict management, should always be demonstrated. The team leadership model is useful for analysing and enhancing a group's performance, much as it is for sports



teams. Sports coaches are role models for organisational team leaders because of their efforts to increase commitment, foster the growth of young players, share expertise, develop innovative approaches, and enhance team performance (Northouse, 2019). By evaluating their teams against predetermined benchmarks, leaders can pinpoint problem areas that require immediate attention.

A more comprehensive or participative style of leadership can be achieved through a team leadership approach based on the development of the strengths and allowable weaknesses of all of the roles, leading to increased teamwork, problem-solving, decision-making, and innovativeness, as well as improved work performance (Belbin, 1993). The framework is complicated even though it does not cover every possible leadership ability because it does not offer immediate solutions to the difficulties that may arise during a team leader's day. The only thing it does is point the leader in the proper direction and hint at the abilities required to address these intricate issues (Northouse, 2019). The leader in this paradigm is assumed to have strong group dynamics, decision-making, interpersonal communications, and conflict-resolution skills. Collaboration and team leader training should centre on team assessment and action to facilitate the growth of leadership abilities and efficiently implement team goals. Scholars are increasingly offering guidance on identifying and addressing areas of weakness in one's team leadership skills (Cobb, 2012; Levi, 2011; Morgeson et al., 2010; Salas et al., 2004).

#### **5.4 Shared Leadership**

Shared leadership places the team at the centre of leadership, making each member responsible. Bergman et al. (2012) define shared leadership as "having multiple people within a group assume leadership roles to increase the group's performance." Carson et al. (2007, p. 1218) defined shared leadership as "an emergent team attribute that develops from the distribution of leadership influence across several team members." According to Hiller et al. (2006), team members' engagement during the team-leading procedures is at the core of shared leadership, not a formal leader's function. It is important to note that scholars have emphasised that shared leadership is not a replacement for vertical leadership and that both types of team leadership should be studied together (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Denis et al., 2012; Carson et al., 2007). In shared leadership, team members take on leadership roles by influencing and directing one another as necessary. Team members with expertise in a certain area may take on a leadership role while playing a subordinate role in others (Carson et al., 2007; Manz et al., 2015; Meuser et al., 2016). Shared leadership spreads responsibility for making decisions rather than resting entirely with a single person. Decisions are made collaboratively, and information and strategic direction are shared.

#### **5.5 Complexity Leadership**

Today's businesses must adapt to an unstable, unpredictable, competitive, and chaotic information technology-based environment, and complexity leadership provides one alternative strategy. According to the research of Lichtenstein et al. (2006), complexity leadership is an interactive process that involves the creation of an administrative synergy shared by several complex powers in administration; the prompt resonance with competitive, uncertain conditions required by the new era; and the creation of a flexible, effective decision-making process rather than focusing on the organisation's members. The weaknesses of traditional theories of leadership rooted in bureaucracy and administration are precisely what complexity leadership aims to address. According to Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018), the complexity leadership theory framework stresses the importance of actions that can connect ideas, information, people, resources, and technology to increase the rate of uniqueness and innovation. Leadership in complexity theory results from a dynamic interplay between multiple factors, including administration, empowerment, and adaptation (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). As a result of rethinking traditional leadership roles in a disordered environment, complex-systems leaders may emerge.

Administrative leadership is analogous to traditional, bureaucratic, and hierarchical leadership styles (Uhl-Bien et al. (2007). It involves creating a vision, implementing a plan, and delegating tasks (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2013). However, complexity leadership theory acknowledges the usefulness of these tactics for establishing controlled chaos (Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009), despite their more common association with establishing stable organisations. It aids businesses in developing creative approaches to meet the ever-evolving, unforeseen difficulties of today's competitive business climate (Conner, 1998; Jackson, 2015).

Enabling leadership functions between administrative and adaptive leadership, focusing on how leaders can create optimal conditions for solving problems, adaptability, and emerging knowledge (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). It entails arranging work groups to promote communication and teamwork among employees from different backgrounds. Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) define enabling leaders as adopting actions that improve the group's ability to interact with one another and adapt to its environment.

Adaptive (entrepreneurial) leadership is an interactive, dynamic process that produces meaningful results within a given social system. According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), adaptive change arises from the collision of preexisting but (apparently) conflicting ideas, knowledge, and technologies. Therefore, all heterogeneous

organisations that produce knowledge should seek adaptive dynamics and leadership. This might manifest as developing new insights and creative solutions by applying previously acquired information and skills.

The study of complex systems leadership seeks to identify the conditions under which meaningful, influential change can occur and the dynamics that provide novel, useful knowledge. According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), a key concept of complexity leadership is an assumption that all businesses must prioritise their operational and entrepreneurial systems. Entrepreneurial systems emphasise innovation, learning, and growth, while operational systems prioritise formality, uniformity, and commercial success (Best, 2014). The two can be integrated through complex leadership to improve the organisation's productivity, creativity, and innovative concepts.

### 5.6 Global Leadership Theory

As the world economy continues to become increasingly globalised, the importance of theories of global leadership, which have their origins in the cross-cultural leadership theories that arose after World War II, increases (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016). Global employers' need to create global methods, participate in global markets, and compete in the global business centre has increased the demand for leaders worldwide in recent decades (Black et al., 1999; Mendenhall et al., 2012). The theory of global leadership is based on studying cross-cultural communication and exchanging ideas (Adler, 1999). Global leaders can be found at all levels of an organisation, as Jokinen (2005) defines them as "anyone with global responsibility over any business activity." Mendenhall et al. (2017) assert that global leadership is a multidisciplinary outcome comprised of fundamental elements that prospective leaders in all fields of expertise must earn to comprehend globalisation's psychological, physiological, topographic, geopolitical, anthropological, and social effects.

Jokinen (2005) outlined three categories of global leadership competencies; core competencies include self-awareness, personal development, and creativity, the mental characteristics include optimism, self-control, social judgement, empathy, motivation to work globally, cognitive abilities, and openness to complexity and the behavioural competencies include interpersonal and networking skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness.

Global leaders develop a global mindset and the ability to appreciate diverse cultures to help them handle complexity (Sendelbach & McGrath, 2006). This includes understanding how to lead effectively in situations where cultural differences play a role, acting in those situations, and interacting with people from different cultures. To successfully influence people from other cultures towards a goal, global leaders must be sensitive to their followers' cultural contexts and avoid imposing their values and priorities on them (Goldsmith et al. 2003).

## 6. Conclusion

The field of leadership research is constantly evolving, as is our understanding of leadership. Leadership theories have evolved since the belief that great men were born rather than made. However, history has shown that leadership theory was morally insufficient, as was the case with Hitler, Napoleon, and others, thereby calling into question the validity of the Great Man theory. Although situational and contextual leadership focuses primarily on the leader, it highlights the importance of understanding group dynamics. While early studies focused on physical, intellectual, and behavioural characteristics that set leaders apart from followers, more recent studies have found few significant differences between the two groups. In the contemporary period that followed, attention shifted from studying individual leaders to examining the interplay and interconnectedness of leaders, followers, and their environments. The resulting theories include transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership.

In today's extremely competitive environment, organisations are expanding globally and facing numerous challenges in achieving their goals, with leaders playing a crucial role in achieving these objectives. In response to the new reality of organisations and businesses, new leadership theories have emerged, resulting in newer and more relevant definitions of leader, follower, and situation, such as authentic, strategic, shared, team, and complexity leadership, which focuses on the organisation. No theory can adequately explain every scenario or prepare every follower for challenges. Amabile et al. (2004) note that the leadership concept must adapt to the shifting dynamics of organisations based on factors such as the situation, context, culture, environment, policies and legislation, information overload, organisational complexity, and psycho-social developments. Therefore, the leadership approach adapted at any given moment should reflect the situation and the leader's preferred approach to addressing the challenge.

This research article on the analysis of leadership theories provides a sound foundation for acquiring a greater knowledge of organisational leadership and its application in today's business environment. It is recommended that the information presented in this article be used and expanded upon to conduct a more in-depth investigation of effective leadership theories and gain a deeper comprehension of the complex phenomena of organisational leadership through time.

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