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Leadership theory: past,present and future

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Over the years, leadership has been studied extensively in various contexts and theoretical foundations. In some cases, leadership has been described as a process, but most theories and research on leadership look at a person to gain understanding (Bernard, 1926; Blake, Shepard and Mouton, 1964; Drath and Palus, 1994; Fiedler, 1967; and House and Mitchell, 1974). Leadership is typically defined by the traits, qualities, and behaviours of a leader. The study of leadership has spanned across cultures, decades, and theoretical beliefs. A summary of what is known and understood about leadership is important to conducting further research on team leadership.

History of leadership theory and research. In a comprehensive review of leadership theories (Stogdill, 1974), several different categories were identified that capture the essence of the study of leadership in the twentieth century. The first trend dealt with the attributes of great leaders. Leadership was explained by the internal qualities with which a person is born (Bernard, 1926). The thought was that if the traits that differentiated leaders from followers could be identified, successful leaders could be quickly assessed and put into positions of leadership. Personality, physical, and mental characteristics were examined. This research was based on the idea that leaders were born, not made, and the key to success was simply in identifying those people who were born to be great leaders. Though much research was done to identify the traits, no clear answer was found with regard to what traits consistently were associated with great leadership. One flaw with this line of thought was in ignoring the situational and environmental factors that play a role in a leader's level of effectiveness.

A second major thrust looked at leader behaviours in an attempt to determine what successful leaders do, not how they look to others (Halpin and Winer, 1957; Hemphill and Coons, 1957). These studies began to look at leaders in the context of the organization, identifying the behaviours leaders exhibit that increase the effectiveness of the company. The well-known and documented Michigan and Ohio State leadership studies took this approach. Two primary, independent factors were identified by these studies: consideration and initiation of structure. Research was simultaneously being conducted in other universities and similar results were found. The impact of this work was in part the notion that leadership was not necessarily an inborn trait, but instead effective leadership methods could be taught to employees (Saal and Knight, 1988). These researchers were making progress in identifying what behaviours differentiated leaders from followers so that the behaviours could be taught. Another impact of this line of work dealt with the broadening

of management's focus to include both people-oriented activities along with task-oriented activities.

Furthering this work, Blake, Shepard, and Mouton (1964) also developed a two-factor model of leadership behavior similar to that found at Ohio State and Michigan. They called the factors "concern for people" and "concern for output." They later added a third variable, that of flexibility. According to these studies, managers exhibit behaviours that fall into the two primary categories (task or people). Depending on which category was shown most frequently, a leader could be placed along each of the two continua. The outcome of this research was primarily descriptive and helped categorize leaders based on their behavior.

A third approach to answering the question about the best way to lead dealt with the interaction between the leader's traits, the leader's behaviours, and the situation in which the leader exists. These contingency theories make the assumption that the effects of one variable on leadership are contingent on other variables. This concept was a major insight at the time, because it opened the door for the possibility that leadership could be different in every situation (Saal and Knight, 1988). With this idea a more realistic view of leadership emerged, allowing for the complexity and situational specificity of overall effectiveness. Several different contingencies were identified and studied, but it is unrealistic to assume that any one theory is more or less valid or useful than another.

One such theory considered two variables in defining leader effectiveness: leadership style and the degree to which the leader's situation is favourable for influence (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedler's concept of situational favourability, or the ease of influencing followers, was defined as the combination of leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Measuring each as high or low, Fiedler came up with eight classifications of situational favourability. He then developed a questionnaire to measure leader style, called the Least Preferred Co-worker scale. Through his research, he found that certain leadership styles were more effective in certain situations. Although in general this theory is questionably applicable due to its relative simplicity, it initiated discussion and research about matching a leader with a situation that would be most conducive to that leader's style.

Yet another contingency theory deals with an analysis of the people who are led by leaders. The importance of the followers in leadership emerged (House and Mitchell, 1974), and leadership was seen as an interaction between the goals of the followers and the leader. The path-goal theory suggests that leaders are primarily responsible for helping followers develop behaviours that will enable them to reach their goals or desired outcomes. Variables that impact the most effective leader behavior include the nature of the task (whether it is intrinsically or extrinsically satisfying), autonomy levels of the followers, and follower motivation. A somewhat limited view of leadership was developed by Vroom and Yetton (1973). The Vroom-Yetton theory described what leaders should do given certain circumstances with regard to the level of involvement of followers in making decisions. Following a decision tree that asks about the

need for participation, a conclusion can be drawn about how the leader should go about making the decision to be most effective.

Other leadership theories emerged out of this work, including the vertical dyad linkage theory, also known as the leader-member exchange theory (Graen, 1976). This theory explains the nature of the relationship between leaders and followers and how this relationship impacts the leadership process. Graen categorized employees into two groups: the in-group and the out-group. The relationship between the leader and each group is different, thus affecting the type of work members of each group are given. Research has generally supported this theory, and its value deals with the investigation of each follower's relationship with the leader as opposed to a general or average leadership style.

The broad and varied body of work on leadership, therefore, suggests that there are many appropriate ways to lead or styles of leadership. Contingency theories differ from and build on the trait and behavior theories, as the philosophy that one best way to lead evolved into a complex analysis of the leader and the situation. For optimal success, both the leader style and situation can be evaluated, along with characteristics of the followers. Then, either the leader can be appointed to an appropriate situation given his/her style of leadership, the leader can exhibit different behaviours, or the situation can be altered to best match the leader.

As leadership research has grown and expanded, an even broader look at leadership has emerged: a focus on the organizational culture (Schein, 1985). For leaders to be effective, according to this view, issues related to the culture must be clearly identified. For example, one aspect of a culture is change. Leaders must be able to adapt to change, depending on the culture, as the environment shifts and develops. In one study it was found that organizations that have tried to resist change in the external environment have experienced more difficulties than organizations that have responded positively to change (Baron, 1995).

As a different example of the importance of culture, culture management is another important aspect of leadership. Culture management deals with the ability of leaders to know and understand what the organizational culture is, modifying that culture to meet the needs of the organization as it progresses. Baron (1995) found in his research that organizations that have tried to proactively exploit new opportunities in the environment experienced successful culture change. Additionally, Baron found that the rise of the professional manager over the past several decades suggests that increasing and different management and leadership skills are high on the agenda for effective culture management. In other words, additional skills are needed in today's leaders so that they will be able to manage the organizational culture. Part of the culture change found in this research consisted of a drive for greater flexibility and the development of employee empowerment and autonomy. Leaders are also involved in managing the culture by establishing an explicit strategic direction, communicating that direction, and defining the organizational vision and values. This line of research, however, has not

identified a model for different styles of leadership given different cultural factors. The application of these ideas is difficult, in part due to the organizational specificity of culture and the difficulty in defining culture. One conclusion that can be drawn is that leaders need to work within the culture to be most successful.

Leadership and motivation. The leadership research and theories reviewed above depend heavily on the study of motivation, suggesting that leadership is less a specific set of behaviours than it is creating an environment in which people are motivated to produce and move in the direction of the leader. In other words, leaders may need to concern themselves less with the actual behaviours they exhibit and attend more to the situation within which work is done. By creating the right environment, one in which people want to be involved and feel committed to their work, leaders are able to influence and direct the activities of others. This perspective requires an emphasis on the people being led as opposed to the leader. A review of some of the major theories of motivation can help provide a better understanding of how a leader might create such an environment.

A well-known motivation theory is that of Herzberg (1964). Through his research, Herzberg differentiated between elements in the work place that led to employee satisfaction and elements that led to employee dissatisfaction, such that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are thought of as two different continua instead of two ends of the same continuum. Those elements that cause satisfaction can be thought of as motivators, because employees are motivated to achieve them. The other set of elements Herzberg labelled hygiene factors, because they are necessary to keep employees from being dissatisfied. This theory ties to leadership, because leaders may be interested in reducing dissatisfaction and increasing satisfaction to develop an environment more conducive to employee satisfaction and perhaps performance.

Other motivation theories also apply to leadership in terms of offering arguments for what leaders need to do to influence others' behavior. For example, need theories suggest that people have needs for certain results or outcomes, and they are driven to behave in ways that will satisfy these needs (Alderfer, 1969; Maslow, 1943; Murray, 1938). Maslow proposed a need hierarchy in which certain needs are more basic than others and people are motivated to satisfy them (for example, physiological and safety needs), before they will feel a drive to satisfy higher-order needs (belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization). Alderfer (1969) built on this work, suggesting that there may be only three needs (existence needs, relatedness needs, and growth needs) in a hierarchy of concreteness. He theorized that people could move up and down the hierarchy, and people may be motivated by multiple needs at any one time. Another related theory is Murray's (1938) manifest needs theory. This theory suggests that people experience a wide variety of needs (for example, need for achievement, need for power, and need for affiliation), and everyone may not experience the same needs. The appropriate environmental conditions activate certain needs. Relating this to leadership, work typically satisfies some needs,

and the question is whether leaders can develop an environment that helps meet people's more advanced or immediate needs.

Additional motivation theories include expectancy theory, equity theory, goal setting, and reinforcement. Each of these has implications for the approach leaders take to dealing with their followers. Expectancy theory proposes that people engage in particular behaviours based on the probability that the behavior will be followed by a certain outcome and the value of that outcome (Vroom, 1964). As leaders understand what people value, they can impact people's actions by defining what behaviours will produce desired outcomes. Equity theories suggest that people are motivated to balance their input/output ratio with others' input/output ratio (Adams, 1965). This indicates a delicate balance based on individual perceptions that may or may not accurately represent reality. Goal setting theory takes a somewhat different approach, suggesting that people are motivated to achieve goals, and their intentions drive their behavior (Locke, 1968). Performance goals, therefore, set by either leaders or individuals themselves contribute to determining what behaviours will be exhibited. Finally, reinforcement theory stems from a behaviourist viewpoint and states that behavior is controlled by its consequences (Skinner, 1959). Leaders are certainly in a position to provide either positive or negative consequences to followers, and reinforcement theory has had a significant impact on developing effective leadership style.

Motivation is not seen as the only element involved in eliciting certain behaviours from followers or employees; knowledge and abilities certainly play a role as well. However, the motivation theories add to the body of leadership work because of the emphasis on the followers themselves and what causes them to act, instead of focusing on the leaders and their traits, behaviours, or situations. Leadership, then, is not only the process and activity of the person who is in a leadership position, but also encompasses the environment this leader creates and how this leader responds to the surroundings, as well as the particular skills and activities of the people being led.

Recent leadership theories. Using motivational theories as support, additional leadership theories have emerged over the past ten to fifteen years. This is represented by the comparison of transactional versus transformational leadership, for example. Transactional leadership stems from more traditional views of workers and organizations, and it involves the position power of the leader to use followers for task completion (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership, however, searches for ways to help motivate followers by satisfying higher-order needs and more fully engaging them in the process of the work (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders can initiate and cope with change, and they can create something new out of the old. In this way, these leaders personally evolve while also helping their followers and organizations evolve. They build strong relationships with others while supporting and encouraging each individual's development.

A more recent definition of leadership from Gardner (1990, p. 38) holds that "leadership is the accomplishment of group purpose, which is furthered not

only by effective leaders but also by innovators, entrepreneurs, and thinkers; by the availability of resources; by questions of value and social cohesion.” By this definition, then, leadership can be thought of as an even broader phenomenon. Gardner begins to challenge the idea that leadership exists within a single designated person and a situation. Instead, he positions leadership as moving toward and achieving a group goal, not necessarily because of the work of one skilled individual (i.e. the leader) but because of the work of multiple members of the group. Not only does leadership require someone who helps set the direction and move the group forward while serving as a resource, but it involves the contributions of other great thinkers and doers, access to the right resources, and the social composition of the group.

Manz and Sims also offer a revised, integrative perspective on leadership. Using the term “SuperLeadership,” they challenge the traditional paradigm of leadership as one person doing something to other people (Manz and Sims, 1991). Instead, they suggest that another model exists for leadership today: “the most appropriate leader is one who can lead others to lead themselves” (p. 18). With this view, leadership exists within each individual, and it is not confined to the limits of formally appointed leaders. They suggest that, for leaders to be most successful, they need to facilitate each individual in the process of leading himself or herself. Leaders become great by unleashing the potential and abilities of followers, consequently having the knowledge of many people instead of relying solely on their own skills and abilities.

Is there a clear, single profile that exists for a great leader? Most likely there is not. Based on the reviewed theories, there is not a consistent definition of a successful leader or one best understanding of what causes people to act as they do at work. This helps explain why leadership is one of the most widely studied phenomena (in addition to the perception that leadership is an important topic), yet there seem to be no clear answers. So why do people keep studying leadership? Because there seem to be some differentiating factors that can be assessed, trained, and developed that contribute to making great leaders great. There are differences among individuals in leadership effectiveness, and researchers strive to identify, quantify, and predict such differences. Although it is hard to define and capture, the belief clearly prevails that interventions will help develop and improve leadership in today’s organizations. Some work has been done to understand what makes good leaders successful with the intent of developing better leadership in organizations. Such qualities are discussed next.

Characteristics of a successful leader. Given the volumes of work written on leadership, several hypotheses have been made about what makes a leader successful. For example, measures of personality have been shown to correlate with ratings of leadership effectiveness (Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, 1994). Specifically, these authors suggest that the big-five model of personality structure that is commonly accepted provides a common language that encompasses the personality factors found to relate to leadership. The big-five model holds that personality, as observed by others, can be described by five broad dimensions (surgency, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional

stability, and intellect). Using this common terminology, research on leadership can be integrated more easily. Stogdill (1974) and Bentz (1990) found significant correlations between multiple measures of leadership effectiveness (ratings by others, advancement, and pay) and surgency, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. These findings may be due to a wide variety of reasons, however, because the relationship has not been found to be causal. This line of research can be linked to trait theories of leadership, suggesting that personal qualities, such as dimensions of personality, are somehow related to effectiveness as a leader. Although significant results have been found, the application of this research to leadership development is limited due to the relatively stable nature of personality within individuals over time.

Other empirical work determining what makes a leader successful is disappointingly slim, in part because measures of effectiveness are very difficult to identify and isolate (Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, 1994). Some general attributes have been identified and agreed upon to some extent; for example, Bennis (1989) described leaders as people who know what they want and why they want it, and have the skills to communicate that to others in a way that gains their support. In a recent review by Lippas (1996, p. 14), she states that “the leadership focus of knowing what you want and when you want it distinguishes exceptional from average leaders.” Yet other approaches look to the productivity of the followers to measure leadership effectiveness (Fiedler, 1967; House, Spangler, and Woycke, 1991). Productivity, however, has consistently been difficult to use as a variable in field research due to the multitude of variables that impact it.

Although not much research exists on why leaders fail, it appears that leadership success depends on a combination of both exhibiting positive behaviours (as mentioned above) and also not exhibiting negative or derailing behaviours (Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, 1994). Some of these negative behaviours include arrogance, untrustworthiness, moodiness, insensitivity, compulsiveness, and abrasiveness (Bentz, 1990). These characteristics are more difficult to quickly identify in an assessment process, because they may or may not exist in the presence of the big-five personality traits. It appears, however, that if they emerge, regardless of the extent to which the leader demonstrates positive leadership behaviours, the leader will be less effective and potentially will fail if the behaviours are not changed.

Given the repeated and recent emphasis on identifying attributes and behaviours associated with successful leadership (Lippas, 1996; Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, 1994; Wilson, George, and Wellins, 1994), it appears that to date the objective of defining successful leadership has not been satisfactorily accomplished. Perhaps a different angle can be taken that will add insight to the search for understanding about leadership.

A call for change. Current leadership models have been designed for the “typical American worker”: a white male with a high school education working in manufacturing (Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan, 1994). Projections repeatedly suggest, however, that this “typical” worker is rapidly changing. In the future,

the economy will continue to shift more toward service and away from manufacturing, the workforce will become older and more ethnically diverse, and competition for highly educated, talented people will increase. Keeping people is also a growing challenge, because today's workers are considerably different than they were in the past with regard to their demands for challenging, meaningful work and expectations for more responsibility and autonomy (Wilson, et al., 1994). Companies are experiencing these changes today, and the nature of work is significantly different than it was a decade or two ago. Organizations will also rely on innovation and creativity more heavily in the future than they have before (Wilson, *et al.*, 1994).

Because of the massive changes taking place in the workforce, the nature of work, and the structure of most organizations, it is important to re-evaluate the concept of leadership in this context. Characteristics that made leaders successful 15 or 20 years ago may or may not be the same characteristics needed today. For example, an explosion has occurred in the amount of knowledge that exists today. In fact, "one of the greatest changes in our business world is the transformation of an industrial-based economy into an information-based economy" (Wilson, *et al.*, 1994, p. 18). Therefore, capitalizing on the talents and intellectual potential of employees is increasingly important for organizational success (Wriston, 1990). Another major shift deals with the need to increase speed and efficiency. Not only in taking ideas to market, but also in responding quickly to changes internally and externally, organizations are being forced to move faster (Stalk and Hout, 1990). Closely related, the push for continuous improvement mentioned earlier requires a different mindset and skill set for leaders today.

Most definitely, there are some additional, different skills and behaviours needed today, because of the changes mentioned above, along with the increasing movement toward creating a team-based environment. As put by Lappas (1996, p. 15), "identification and definition of attributes and behaviours associated with leadership in the public and private sectors are essential to the success of this nation." Prior research and theory on leadership, while it provides a strong foundation and basis to work from, is not enough to fully understand what makes leaders successful in today's environment. Leadership has proven to be an area that changes over time as organizations and individuals change, and therefore needs to be continually studied so that assessment and training processes are appropriate for the current leadership context.

Leadership as a process. The most current theory on leadership looks at leadership as a process in which leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers, but as members of a community of practice (Drath and Palus, 1994). A community of practice is defined as "people united in a common enterprise who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking, and ways of doing things" (p. 4). This definition may be thought of as a variation of organizational culture. These authors believe that the vast majority of leadership theories and research has been based on the idea that leadership

involves a leader and a group of followers, and dominance, motivation, and influence are the primary vehicles of leadership. As reviewed above, this has been a primary focus of research to date. Building on and modifying this view, Drath and Palus (1994) propose a theory of leadership as a process. Instead of focusing on a leader and followers, they suggest studying the social process that happens with groups of people who are engaged in an activity together. With this view, leadership is not so much defined as the characteristics of a leader, but instead leadership is the process of coordinating efforts and moving together as a group. This group may include a leader, *per se*, but the dynamics are dramatically different than traditional leadership theories have suggested. People, therefore, do not need to be motivated and dominated. Instead, everyone involved in the activity is assumed to play an active role in leadership.

The work of Manz and Sims reviewed earlier supports this notion of leadership as a process, as they focus on self-leadership within each individual more than the behaviours and actions of a few select people designated as formal leaders in an organization (Manz and Sims, 1989). In fact, the conceptualization of leadership as a process in which everyone actively participates may be a culmination of the research to date. As theories turned toward looking at the environment of leaders (for example, Fiedler, 1967), the relationship between leaders and followers (House and Mitchell, 1974), and even the organizational culture (Schein, 1985), researchers have been acknowledging the highly complex, interdependent nature of leadership. These theories have laid the groundwork for examining leadership as a process, taking the emphasis away from an individual.

Combined with these theories, organizations have been changing in terms of structure and organization. As the environment becomes more competitive, more service oriented, and more ambiguous, older perspectives about leading organizations are not as appropriate. The attitude of "business as usual" has led organizations to disaster in many situations (Wilson, *et al.*, 1994). Instead, organizations today are faced with continuing changes in technology, environmental conditions, and internal processes that require flexibility, continuous learning, and utilization of all available resources. The entire workforce, from front-line employee to CEO, is being called upon more and more to provide ideas, make decisions, and respond to change. These changes require an equally drastic change in how the leadership of organizations is assessed, conducted, and learned.

Drath and Palus (1994) base their somewhat revolutionary views on the aforementioned leadership theories, along with the work of Bruner (1986) and Kegan (1982). Looking at how people make sense of the world, these authors suggest that all members of an organization continually construct knowledge of themselves and the world around them. In constructing views of the world, people working together in an organization need to develop socially understood interpretations, so they can be effective as a group. This is the foundation from which people interpret, anticipate, and plan. By the nature of this definition, leadership requires participation from everyone so that all members are

engaged in creating meaning and acting on that meaning (Drath and Palus, 1994).

Perhaps this is the most appropriate way to view leadership in organizations that largely consist of work teams. In these situations, some authors have questioned the need for leaders and bosses as management is eliminated and teams have taken on significant decision-making responsibility (Bednarek, 1990; Dumaine, 1990). Although these concerns have been raised in the popular press more than by those developing team-based theory, the issue of organizations completely void of managers or formal leaders deserves some attention. There seems to be a large disconnect between the idea of teams and the absence of leadership. Certainly, as organizations become flatter and teams of employees are empowered with more decision-making responsibility, the need for traditional supervisors is rapidly decreasing (Fisher, 1993). Because many of the responsibilities typically held by supervisors and managers are gradually being turned over to team members (for example, scheduling work, making assignments, and evaluating performance against goals or standards), people holding these positions have questioned their role and purpose in the organization. However, this does not mean that people who were leaders in traditional hierarchical organizations are no longer needed.

The key in organizational transformation to teams lies in the evolution of the role of leadership. More tightly integrated with the teams themselves, successful leaders take on new and different responsibilities, such as facilitation, coaching, and managing relations outside the group (Fisher, 1993). No matter how advanced the team is, there is still a need for leadership to enable the team to be optimally successful (Wilson, *et al.*, 1994). In fact, "teams probably need more coaching, guidance, and attention in their early stages than the same individual contributors would need in a traditional structure" (Wilson, *et al.*, 1994, p. 6). Leaders are in the best position to provide this support and direction. The method used in doing so, however, is drastically different. Through collaboration, openness, and the creation of shared meaning, leaders can elicit the commitment of others and guide the work process, allowing members to expand their skills and contributions to the organization more broadly (Hackman, 1987). Perhaps, then, viewing leadership as a process gives a framework within which this evolution of leadership responsibility can be examined further.

Integration of teams and leadership

"Teams" and "leadership" may arguably be two of the most frequently used terms in current management literature and discussion. They may also be two of the most misunderstood words, as there are almost as many definitions of each word as there are authors that write about them (Bass, 1981; Lappas, 1996). Combining the two words to create the concept of team leadership or leadership of teams remains a challenging, yet necessary, next step in the development of organizations and their structures. According to Millikin (1994, p. 3), "as more organizations are looking at self-managed work teams as a way of doing

business, questions arise about what leadership style is effective and where the locus of power is within modern organizations.” This locus of power shift suggests that leadership may be taking on a significantly different appearance in modern organizations than it has in the past days of scientific management, mass production, and command and control styles.

With the emergence of teams, especially self-directed teams, the question of leadership arises in a different context than it has traditionally been considered. Self-directed teams can be defined as “a group of employees who have day-to-day responsibility for managing themselves and the work they do with a minimum of direct supervision” (Fisher, 1993, p. 15). This term is typically used to describe teams in a highly empowered environment, and this may be considered a fairly advanced form of teams. The idea of leadership as a person may no longer be appropriate due to the highly collaborative, involved nature of the workforce. In the current environment, looking at leadership as a process may offer a better fit forhip in organizations, following the philosophy of Drath and Palus (1994). This is due in part to the shift organizations are taking in which team members hold significant responsibility over their work. When looking at self-directed teams, team members are by definition involved in the leadership of their work. Consequently, viewing leadership as contained within an individual outside the team significantly limits our understanding of what actually happens in the work process.

In addition to the nature of leadership, the description of formal leaders has become much more heterogeneous over time, adding to the complexity of the current leadership environment. A formal leader does not take the same shape or form in different organizations, different departments, or even in the same team over time. Although organizational hierarchies often show formal lines of authority and accountability from one individual to another, and a formal leader or manager is designated for any team, the role of that person within the team’s functioning varies widely (Ayres, 1992). More and more we are seeing that this formal leader is only minutely involved in the daily activities of the team. More often, the true leadership of the team, in terms of day-to-day activities, comes from other sources. In some situations, the leadership may be rotated among some or all of the team members over time. In other situations, each person may hold leadership responsibility for a certain aspect of the work. In yet other situations, informal leaders may simply emerge from within the boundaries of the team (Wilson, *et al.*, 1994).

Consequently, in team environments, researchers are having a difficult time identifying a leader in the team. The behaviours that represent leadership, for example setting direction or managing conflict, can be, and often are, exhibited by anyone and everyone in the group. Therefore, the focus of leadership research cannot be a specific person, even if that person is designated as the team leader, if a comprehensive understanding of the leadership process is expected. As individuals accept more responsibility for their work, they also take on a stronger role in leading their teams. To understand leadership in teams, then, the entire team must be studied. The leadership behaviours may

come from one person or multiple people within the team or external to it. According to Hackman (1987), as team members practice self-management, they take personal responsibility for outcomes, feel personally accountable, monitor and manage their own performance, and help others improve their performance. Given that empowered work teams exercise increased levels of self-management, the assumption can be drawn that these behaviours and activities can be observed in members of the team. As self-managing activities contribute to setting and pursuing the direction of the team, all members of a team have the potential to add to the leadership of the team. It is important to understand what leadership as a process consists of and the ramifications this has for the team's overall performance.

The line between leaders and followers in this environment becomes less clear and more flexible. Past research on leadership that has looked at the relationship between a leader and his or her followers, then, does not sufficiently or completely fit the current organizational structure. Leadership cannot be thought of in the neat packages of leaders and followers any more if people want to really understand what is going on inside their teams and organizations. There is a need for research that builds on the history and prior work done about leadership but also adapts this body of knowledge to fit today's environments. Consequently, a shift is needed in the way team leadership is studied, as well as the behaviours required for effectiveness.

As organizations transition from a more traditional, hierarchical structure to a more team-based structure, the role and function of leadership is thought to change, as well (Nygren and Levine, 1995). This is exhibited in the previous review of more recent leadership theories, such as Manz and Sims (1989), as well as the conceptualization of leadership as a process. The "command and control" models of leadership do not fit these re-engineered and empowered organizations (especially for those people responsible for the front-line employees), and leaders who were successful in the past are not necessarily going to be successful in the future. As Fisher (1993) explains, individuals responsible for managing employees that are organized into self-managed teams need different leadership skills from those used by traditional managers. Not only is a transition in skills required, but the definition of a successful leader in a team environment is virtually non-existent. Significant changes in behavior are required, but what the new behaviours should be is very unclear. This absence of clarity is due to the lack of empirical studies to date questioning the behaviours involved in the process that lead to success (Nygren and Levine, 1995).

In understanding what is important for successful team leadership, a consideration of employee motivation in the context of today's organizations may be helpful. As mentioned earlier, motivation theory has been closely linked to leadership theory. The concept of motivation plays a key role in team-based organizations as well as team leadership, although it may be defined somewhat differently. According to Senge, Ross, Smith, Roberts, and Kleiner (1994), self-awareness and motivation toward a common goal are two factors essential for a

learning organization to exist, which they define as the most productive type of organization. Learning organizations may not currently exist as described by Senge, *et al.*, but the best organizations are pursuing the learning organization as a goal, continually working toward this state of development and growth. Each employee, not just the formal leaders, needs to be aware of their values, motives, and goals. They also need to commit to a common goal and feel ownership of that goal to be motivated to produce and move the organization forward. Such commitment and motivation will allow a broader spectrum of individuals to participate in leading the organization into the future.

Because every employee must be motivated and committed to reaching organizational goals, not just the leaders, leadership takes on a different form. No longer do formal leaders exist to monitor employee behavior and correct problems. Each employee is in charge of his or her work and responsible for the results of the team, determining what is most important and how work should be completed. Everyone, therefore, is charged with showing some leadership qualities. The front line “do-ers” are not given explicit, step-by-step instructions; instead, they decide on the specifics of their work themselves. Such empowerment is the beginning phase of developing a leadership process in which everyone can engage.

An interesting aspect of team leadership, as opposed to individual employee leadership, is that success does not seem dependent solely on applying the right behavior given the right situation, as the contingency theories suggest. As described above, the nature of work is changing, requiring much more innovation, creativity, and individual thought and initiative. The same is true for the work of leaders. Prescriptions, policies, and procedures no longer exist to help leaders decide what to do in what situation, if they ever did exist in reality. It is less likely today than in the past that leaders will face the same situations frequently enough that prescriptions would be of value. Given the increased complexity of work on so many levels (such as technological, interpersonal, and environmental), employees are required to apply their judgment to evaluate situations and make decisions instead of relying on established structure or routine.

Leaders are required to think and act differently, using innovation and personal values to help guide their actions, instead of following textbook solutions. Fully understanding the role of leaders requires looking at what happens within these individuals, not just observing their behavior (Nygren and Levine, 1995). It is suggested that tomorrow’s leaders may need to hold visions, values, assumptions, and paradigms that are in agreement with having a team-oriented, empowered workforce in order to be most successful. Without the vision and values that support the organizational structures of the future, people may not be equipped to make decisions in line with that structure. The absence of clear policies and recipes for behavior requires the use of personal judgment, and people base their judgment on their paradigms. For the decisions to be aligned with the organization, each member’s paradigms and assumptions

must also be aligned with those of the organization. Only when this exists will a leader act consistently in ways that support the team environment.

In part due to the intrinsic nature and qualities of successful team leadership, little research has been done characterizing this process. The lack of clear definition may also be due to the recency of the emergence of team leadership. It seems that team leadership can potentially take on a multitude of shapes and forms, adding a dimension of complexity that may not have existed in the past. This level of complexity and ambiguity opens the doors for a wide variety of studies to help further the understanding that currently exists. By combining the research of the past, current trends and methods, and practical experience with teams today, there is hope for making the process of team leadership consistent, modifiable, and valuable in organizations.

Manz and Sims (1989) have researched the changes in leadership as a result of team structures. They have defined a new management style that is essential for team-based organizations: SuperLeadership. Instead of one formal leader holding the power, this theory suggests that the locus of control is shifted over time from the leader to the team. Taking this idea a step further, they believe that employee self-leadership is a critical aspect of successful teams. Self-leadership is described as a set of strategies for leading oneself to higher work performance and effectiveness, taking on increasing amounts of responsibility internally.

The relationship between self-leadership and productivity has been studied to test these ideas. In 1994, Millikin hypothesized that teams with members who experienced high levels of self-leadership (in other words, people who took on more responsibility and showed leadership initiative) would be more productive than teams exhibiting less self-leadership. He found a positive relationship, indicating that higher levels of team self-leadership (measured as a combined total of individual measures of self-leadership) were related to increased levels of productivity in a manufacturing environment. This finding lends support to the theory of self-leadership as a more effective way to operate in a team-based organization.

Because traditional theories of leadership have been shown to be less than sufficient in understanding team-based organizations, a revised approach is called for. Building on Millikin's 1994 findings, self-leadership is an important component, as well as an understanding of the changing environment in which organizations are operating. The idea of leadership as a process, therefore, appears to provide a theory that connects teams and leadership by integrating the efforts of team members with the efforts of management and allowing responsiveness to change. Consistent with the ideas of SuperLeadership, individual team members are taking on more responsibility, more power, and more leadership qualities. The process of team leadership places more ownership and responsibility on all team members by definition. According to Drath and Palus (1994), leadership involves the entire group of people working together, which may be called the team. Such shared meaning then guides the

group's behavior and helps them work toward a common goal. The applications of this idea for practice are clear (Drath and Palus, 1994, p. 6):

Instead of focusing leadership development almost exclusively on training individuals to be leaders, we may, using this view, learn to develop leadership by improving everyone's ability to participate in the process of leadership. This would require research to help us understand what roles, behaviours, and capacities are involved in leadership as a social meaning-making process.

One approach may be to question teams about leadership behaviours and who in the team exhibits those behaviours. In this way, leadership is not assumed to reside in one individual member of the team, or someone outside the team. Due to most leadership theory, research to date has made this assumption. At the same time, it is not assumed to reside in every member of the team. Instead, leadership may be thought of as a component of organizational culture. Given the theory that leadership is a process, it is important to ask what that process looks like, so it can be refined and replicated.

Team leadership behaviours. The general concept of team leadership is not new, and several authors have written about potential behaviours that are important for effective leadership in team-based organizations. A review of this work provides a basis for developing and conducting empirical research on the concept. For example, Kozlowski, Gully, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1995) suggest a wide range of behaviours that are needed for leading teams. Their list includes developing shared knowledge among team members, acting as a mentor, instructing others, facilitating group processes, providing information, monitoring performance, promoting open communication, providing goals, and allocating resources efficiently. Dew (1995) identified several skills needed for democratic leadership: the ability to lead participative meetings, listening skills, the ability to handle conflict, measurement skills, group-centred decision-making skills, teaching skills, and team building skills. Temme (1995) reinforced the aspect of coaching by stating that team leaders need to create a high-expectations climate through coaching and developing others.

Other authors emphasize the boundary management and structural aspects of leadership. Frohman (1995) described the importance of the bridge between top management and teams, suggesting that leaders need to coordinate work, obtain support resources, and negotiate for time and availability of members. With regard to managing upward in the organization, Brown (1995) discusses the importance of the need for leaders to challenge others' ideas and decisions, creating an environment in which people are not afraid to take risks. Kolb (1995) adds that leaders must avoid compromising the team's objectives with political issues, they must stand behind the team and support it, and they need to be influential in getting outside constituencies to support the team's efforts.

Wilson and Wellins (1995) discuss both tactical and strategic skills that are required in today's team-based organizations. From a tactical perspective, they specify communication skills, performance management, analysis and judgment, coaching, and championing continuous improvement and empowerment. Strategic skills essential for leading in high-involvement

environments include leading through vision and values, building trust, facilitating learning, and building partnerships with other parts of the organization. In a study of the importance of various leadership qualities, Donnelly and Kezsbom (1994) found that managerial competence (not specifically defined) was found to be most important, followed by collaborative and analytical competence, and communication and interpersonal competence were found to be next most important.

As can be seen by this review, various perspectives have been taken in trying to define and characterize team leadership. Going back to two-factor theories, justification seems to exist for giving continued attention to both task-related and people-related behaviours, because neither one has been shown to be the primary determinant of leader success. At the same time, these authors indicate a stronger emphasis on influence and support, as opposed to directing and commanding behaviours that may have been successful for leaders in the past. From coaching and training to developing a learning environment to managing boundaries, these theories add support for a shift in what comprises effective leadership in empowered, team-based organizations.

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