

Leadership Styles

The mystery of why one leader's style is more effective than another's is unsolved. Leadership style consists of a leader's general personality, demeanor, and communication patterns in guiding others toward reaching organizational or personal goals. Leadership style research has been dominated by self-report perceptions of subordinates about their leader's behavior patterns in decision making, interpersonal relations, planning, instructional leadership, and management efficiency. Among widely used instruments to assess leadership style are the organizational climate description questionnaire (OCDQ), leadership behavior description questionnaire (LBDQ), and the organizational health inventory (OHI). These instruments gather faculty and staff perceptions of the leadership style of the principal and other organizational dynamics in a school organization. The results of these perceptions have been helpful to principals who may see themselves as democratic, inclusive leaders, while the data reveal an authoritarian, aloof bureaucrat. A principal may organize for and believe in site-based decision making, but subordinates' perceptions may reveal that the principal "owns" the site and makes all decisions. The literature reveals little empirical research about why some leadership styles in certain situations are triumphant successes and others are dismal failures. Observers have pondered why some successful leaders use a consistent style in all situations and others use a more situational style. Research is silent in analyzing leadership styles across schools, school leaders, and situations, but there is general consensus that some leaders are better than others in reading the environment and adjusting their style to address issues.

Categories of leadership styles have increased in the postmodern literature. Among the more recent categories are charismatic leadership, social justice leadership, gender and race leadership, moral leadership, and spiritual leadership. The four rather global categories of leadership styles chosen for this entry, however, are authoritarian, participative, transactional, or transformational.

Authoritarian leaders employ coercive tactics to enforce rules, use Machiavellian cunning to manipulate people and decision making, and reward loyalty over merit. Control is the primary management strategy employed by authoritarian leaders. This form of leadership emphasizes objectivity in the workplace, tends to be impervious to human problems, is insensitive to race and gender, and displays little emotion or affection toward employees. Douglas McGregor's Theory X becomes the authoritarian's motif, believing that people must be forced to work, closely supervised, and rewarded or punished based on individual productivity. They believe in a top-down, line-and-staff organizational chart with clear levels of authority and reporting processes. Fred Fiedler found that authoritarian leaders can be viewed as successful in certain task situations—allowing for the extremes of consideration and ruthlessness, depending on the situation.

School boards looking for a "take charge" superintendent encourage authoritarian leadership types. When the focus is primarily on high stakes test scores and a board of education's mandate to "right the ship," authoritarian leadership will rule and will be rewarded throughout the entire school district. Research is silent in analyzing leadership styles across school leaders and situations, but there is a general consensus that some leaders are better than others in reading the environment and adjusting their style to address issues. Regardless of more recent democratic leadership styles, scientific management and the ghost of Frederick Taylor continue to prevail in many schools across America. Excessive accountability demands by legislators, school boards, and communities can lead to top-down authoritarian environments.

Participative leaders strive to move away from the authoritarian boss-led mode of leadership to the human side of the enterprise espoused in the 1930s by Mary Parker Follett, Elton Mayo, Frederick Roethlisberger, and others. They found that productivity and human relationships were closely linked, and opened inquiry into informal structures and social systems. Follett's vision guided her to challenge the grip of scientific management on early twentieth-century industry. She believed managers should treat workers with dignity and change the workplace from strict authoritarian control over workers to a more collegial team concept. Chester I. Barnard in 1938 viewed successful organizations as humans working together to reach goals rather than impersonal structures to force productivity. These and other pioneers espousing participative leadership viewed organizations as social systems in which people's social needs were the most important factors in motivating workers to higher productivity. Later, Douglas McGregor, Rosabeth Kanter, Tom Sergiovanni, Terry Deal, and many others stressed shared decision making and group participation in building productive organizations centered on people and their needs. These writers greatly influenced the creation of site-based decision making in public education. Without a sitebased approach to problem solving, organizations become tightly controlled by rules and policies that are not conducive to effective teamwork. When the communication pattern is top to bottom and ruled by the chain of command, teams become guided missiles for management. These missiles are told when to fire, how to fly, and where to strike. If the team missiles hit the wrong target, management blames the teams for the failures. Participative leadership, however, leads to delegation and communication about goals, processes of goal accomplishment, respect for diversity in team members, and a collective effort to seek quality in each task and final product. This collaborative process brings a family atmosphere to the workplace and creates respect for the contributions by each member. The X generation believes in the participative leadership style, provided they have the support and opportunities from upper management to contribute to and influence team outcomes.

Transactional leaders attempt to balance initiating structure in order to get things done with meeting the needs of the people while things are getting done. This type of leadership requires the integration of organizational goals and expectations with the needs of the people doing the work. This style of leadership is based in the dual organization where the bureaucratic side conflicts with the professional one. The GezelsGuba social systems model is widely known but abandoned in some recent textbooks. The model presents the two dimensions: idiographic (the needs of individuals) and nomothetic (the goals of the organization) and transactions between the two. This model depicts the dynamics of balancing the needs and productivity of the organization with the needs, personality, and dispositions of people doing the work. The workers may feel that the production goals of management are beyond the ability and energy of the workers. This dynamic is found in organizations of all kinds and is important for management to understand for morale and production reasons. Transactional leaders play the tit-for-tat game of rewarding employees as long as they are producing what management needs. James MacGregor Burns explains that transactional leaders motivate workers by offering rewards for what the leaders need done. According to Robert Owens, this popular form of leadership is an example of quid pro quo; leaders offer the lure of employment and security in return for collaboration and assistance, for example. Transactional leadership reflects the reality of the workplace and continues to be the predominant model in most organizations, including public schools.

Transformational leaders demonstrate the elixir of human understanding. If applied with integrity, transformational leadership can reform organizations in magic ways. Leaders using this style create an environment where every person is empowered to fulfill his or her highest needs and becomes a member of a productive learning community. Transformational leaders are servants to others and guide them in creating and embracing a vision for the organization that inspires and brings forth top performance and creates a belief system of integrity, a cause beyond oneself, diversity of thought, and inclusiveness for all races and gender. Subsumed in this style is moral leadership, leading with love, and spiritual leadership. Moral leadership is based on dignity and respect for the rights of others to selfdetermination within moral bounds of the organization. Rather than an arbitrary set of rules to follow, moral leadership is a covenant to do the right things for others and live that covenant in all human interactions. Schools living moral leadership focus on the generic child and

ensure that all staff members share in the belief that the school family must constantly work to inspire new and higher levels of trust and commitment to every child and each other in the school community.

Also linked to transformational leadership is leading with love. This leadership style reaches beyond leading with heart, soul, and morality and moves on to the concept of love in an attempt to reteach the lesson of history's great leaders. The most powerful leaders in history are remembered not for their positions, wealth, and number of publications or position but for their unconditional love for others. Leading with love revisits ideas that guide human kindness, social justice, and servant leadership and rediscovers ways to replace anger, mistrust, and hatred with love. This type of love is unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for the good of another. The Greeks used the work *agape* as the highest form of love. *Agape* is unselfish love, love of unlovable people, and love that overwhelms animosity in schools and other organizations.

Another important and emerging movement linked to transformational leadership is leadership for social justice. This postmodern position has heightened the urgency for research in educational administration to continue to reexamine its theories to ensure that no voices have been excluded and to direct efforts to guide superintendents, principals, and teachers in their efforts to guide schools toward greater inclusiveness, equity, and justice.

Perhaps the capstone of transformational leadership is spirituality. Deepak Chopra believes that leaders are the symbolic soul of the organizations they lead, that great leaders respond from the higher levels of spirit, and that leaders grow from the inside out. Others writers support the proposition that spiritual leadership calls for a power greater than mere human knowledge and experience. The spiritual and administrative sides are of equal importance when guiding a school or a school system dedicated to helping each student become a successful, ethical individual. Spiritual leaders assert that without a spiritual side, a leader lacks depth in understanding human motives and can destroy organizations and innocent lives. In addition, school administrators can be spiritual leaders and take charge of a given problem. Sometimes assertive and forceful leadership is the *only* strategy for school leaders. When students are not learning, teachers are not teaching, administrators are not administering, and support staff are not supporting, the superintendent and other administrators must take charge and create change in attitude, performance, and, if needed, personnel. Scholars write that spiritual leaders cannot allow children and youth to fail, nor can they stand idly by and ignore incompetence. To ignore children's failure and injustice and blame it on the child's background or family is spiritless leadership. Spiritual leadership is encouraging others to seek the highest vision, reaching for the highest human endeavors, and serving before being served. Writers concur that this is the most sought after form of the transformational leadership style.

A gradual shift from top-down authoritarian to transformational leadership is occurring in America's schools, but the need remains to conduct research that centers on research about leadership styles, staff morale, and student performance. Until definitive research can provide evidence that transformational leadership promoting equity, empowerment, morality, and love is the superior style for all schools and school districts, schools will continue to be a patchwork of authoritarian, participative, transactional, and transformational leadership styles.

—John R. Hoyle

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