

# DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 762

EA 004 346

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TITLE What Do We Know About Leadership?  
PUB DATE May 72  
NOTE 26p.  
  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS Adult Leaders; Behavior; \*Leadership; \*Leadership  
Qualities; \*Leadership Training; Literature Reviews;  
Management Development; Organizational Climate;  
\*Research Reviews (Publications); \*Theories

## ABSTRACT

Although many authors have spoken to the concept of leadership, basic predictive theory has eluded all who attempt to define it. This paper undertakes to conclude inductive principles suggested within published leadership literature of an experimental design. A thorough review of this intangible, leadership, was undertaken from papers indexed in the Education Index (1959-1969) and in Research in Education (1966-1969). A spectrum of these leadership theories is discussed. (Author)

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## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT LEADERSHIP?

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May 1972

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EA 004 346

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## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT LEADERSHIP?

### ABSTRACT

A modern concept of leadership is most difficult to entertain for any great length of time. Inevitably one becomes bogged down in such interminable questions as what constitutes leadership; is leadership personality or fate; what constitutes social change and progress? Many authors have spoken to this point but basic predictive theory has eluded all who attempt to define it. This paper undertakes to conclude inductive principles suggested within published leadership literature that is of an experimental design. A thorough review of this intangible, called leadership, was undertaken of papers indexed in The Education Index (1959-1969) and ERIC (1966-1969). It is most probable that conclusions from this literature are yet to be published within textbooks. For the sake of consistency, a spectrum of leadership theories will be discussed and in totality these varying points of view may improve our understanding of leadership.

### PART I. INTRODUCTION

"In leadership, performance depends upon what the man is, what the job is, and what the situation is."

-----Renato Taguin

Taguin's statement summarizes the present status of knowledge about leadership behavior. There is much information about characteristics of leaders (trait theory), about types of organizations (situational theory), about leadership styles and practices (behavioral theory), and about relationships of leaders to those whom he leads (functional theory). However, there is a failure of much of this information to translate into knowledge ----- knowledge being defined as information directly useful in specific areas of application. The statement also illuminates the fact that while

leadership behavior is a complex that may be studied in its psychological, sociological, or behavioral science aspect, individuals attain positions of leadership by varying routes and display manifold styles in those positions. Few researchers will disagree with the statement that no specific discipline holds the key to understanding leadership phenomena, whether leadership is treated as an "art" or a "science".

From the outset leadership should be considered as one of the two primary functions of the administrator. Management is the other function. The exercise of either function requires leadership behavior, however, the two functions make differing psychological demands on the administrator. The leadership function as stated by LITTLE\* requires "the capacity to 'live ahead' of his institution; to interpret his institution's needs to the public, and the public's needs to his institution; and to conceive and implement strategies for effecting changes required for his institution to fulfill its purpose." The management function requires "the capacity to arrange and operate his institution in a manner which elicits an efficient and effective effort of the total membership of his institution towards its purposes." The leadership function is often viewed as a stimulating, prodding and sometimes disruptive influence. Management on the other hand resembles a smoothing and stabilizing influence. The leadership function emphasizes creative planning, initiative, and future-facing boldness; management stresses efficiency and productivity through teamwork and consideration of others. Seldom are these two sets of capacities found in the same strength in the same individual. Often administrators, recognizing their own strengths or limitations, will assume one of these roles and supplement themselves by an

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\*Private communications with J. Kenneth Little, unpublished paper.

assistant who is effective in the other role. These introductory remarks should not lead to the inference that generalizable traits which discriminate between "leaders" and "managers" has been found. In fact, studies of traits of "leaders" have not been fruitful precisely because leadership exists only in the context of groups, their membership and their purpose. Therefore, let us turn first in this paper to the singularity of leadership, "what the leader is."

## PART II. WHAT THE LEADER IS

"The leader should keep an appropriate social distance, show no favorites, control his emotions, command respect, and be objective and fair. He must know what he is doing and where he wants to go."

-----Jack Gibb

A leader may be defined as one who commands or whose example motivates followers to do as indicated. A leader may command by reason of an office he holds and the authority invested in it; or he may lead by reason of his capacity to initiate plans and actions which by their merit command respect and elicit support among the members of his institution. Both types of leadership are important in any organization. The official or structural leader is necessary to establish accountability in the decision-making activities of the organization, but leadership in the decision-making process should arise at many points in the organization. In fact, it should be an objective of the official leaders to cultivate initiative and responsible decision-making in all parts of his organization, and to cultivate a free-flow of information from all parts of the organization to the point in the organization which is accountable for the type of decision to be made.

Attempts to describe and catalog the traits and characteristics of leaders have included biographical studies, psychological test and measurements, factor analysis, psycho-analytic techniques, simulation exercises, and the everyday observations from which conventional wisdom develops.

So far, efforts to put the selection of leaders on a scientific basis have not been highly successful in any field of application. Ideas of the "born leader" persist, particularly when leadership is evidenced by the extraordinary creativity, inventiveness or productivity associated with genius.

Edwin G. Boring in a discussion of great men and scientific progress observed. "We are now in the United States training, as we say, thousands of young scientists. We teach them facts. We train them in methodology. We endeavor, in a way not too clearly understood, to inculcate certain attitudes in them. And then, having done our best, we wonder why so seldom the spark of originality is found ----- for we never expect to uncover the flame of genius. Perhaps this attribute which is neither prevented nor assured by training is not gotten by training at all but can only be captured by selection on its adventitious occurrence-----. Perpetually we tinker with curriculum for making poor brains better, and yet we do not know just what it is that we should like to achieve."

Administrative behavior, however, is not rare but common; few persons can move through life without experiencing the responsibilities of leadership of some group for some purpose. The experiences begin with the play life of pre-school children, include the activities associated with school experiences, continue with the responsibilities that emanate from occupational careers, develop with the management of a home and family, and civic organizations. It is useful, therefore, to replace the idea of the "born leader," in the sense of a person with God-given traits with the incontestable



assertion that such a leader is born, but the development of his leadership trait skills is an outcome of the interaction between the chances which arise in a person's total life experience and the choices the person makes when those chances arise.

Gardner Murphy in his discussion of the biosocial origins and structure of personality makes these cogent observations. "The great individual causes extensive change; the personal factor has become of colossal magnitude . . . . In a time of crisis the individual likely to become a leader is he who senses the prevalent needs and knows how to structure the solution. If leadership that will enrich personality and satisfy its many potentialities is what we want, we must begin schooling the leaders early in life..... The more there are of these potential leaders, the more competent they are and the more deeply they love their task, the greater the likelihood that at the points of choice in the coming years they will guide the pent-up energies of a confused people in the direction of genuine self-realization."

What does leadership require of a man? Perhaps the answer to this question best describes the leader as a man. Job-knowledge in the sense of thorough acquaintance with education in its major facets is assumed. He knows the purposes and expected outcomes of his organization or institution. He knows the characteristics of the students and the nature of the teaching-learning process. He understands the responsibilities and needs of teachers and supporting staff. He knows the needs of his organization or institution for buildings and equipment that will facilitate the accomplishment of its purposes. He knows the total environmental conditions under which this organization or institution must operate. He knows the criteria by which the effectiveness and efficiency of his organization or institution should be evaluated.



He knows that his organization or institution is a system which operates within larger systems with larger purposes. The enumeration of these items of assumed knowledge should convey the fact that desirable administrative leadership requires a highly knowledgeable man. The phrase "highly knowledgeable" is used in place of "broadly educated" to indicate the acquisition of this knowledge proceeds from many experiences other than taking formal courses in psychology, administration, or other disciplines. But assuming the presence of this body of relevant knowledge, administrative leaders are subject to demands upon their fund of knowledge and their psyche that affects their performance as individuals and the success of their organization or institution. The concept of leadership and psyche was the basis for the first leadership theory known as "trait theory."

### PART III. THE TRAIT THEORY

".....the consistent failure to find a generalized personality syndrome typical of leaders may be due to inadequate measurement, lack of comparability of data from different kinds of research, and the inability to describe leadership adequately."

----- Cecil Gibb (1954)

"If we concern ourselves with the persons or individuals, we must consider, among other factors, their values, their traits, and their need-dispositions."

----- John Hemphill (1958)

Early research and theory formulation in this area was directed toward a unitary trait theory of leadership. The principle postulates of this theory are: (1) that there exist a "leadership trait" which is innate or inherent; (2) that leaders alone possess it; (3) that individuals vary in the degree to which they possess it; and (4) the trait when possessed, functions with

equal force in a variety of situations. The theory implies that the trait can be identified and measured.

Consequently over the past fifty years, there have been hundreds of studies made comparing the physical, the intellectual, or personality traits of leaders and followers\*. Frequently, these studies come up with a list of traits that make for "good" leadership. However, in 106 studies<sup>1</sup> only about five percent of the traits appeared in four or more studies. Although it shall be concluded at the end of this section that the traitist theory has provided little insight to leadership predictability, it might serve to indicate some of the more repetitive traits in the literature.

The following traits are more often found than not in the leader of a group that obtains its predetermined goal: (1) intelligence; (2) "well-roundedness"; (3) communication ability; (4) powerful inner drive; (5) awareness of group participation in goal obtaining; (6) mental and emotional maturity; and finally (7) administrative skills.

An expansion of these characteristic traits in the order of their presentation is as follows:

1. The leader is somewhat more intelligent than the average of his followers. While some of his subordinates may be more intelligent, the leader has enough intelligence to reason clearly about problems he faces. Furthermore he has the capacity to take an overall view of the institution.
2. The leader is well-rounded from the standpoint of interest and aptitudes. Because he must deal

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\*For an excellent review of the literature on this topic see GIBB<sup>1</sup>.

with many types of people, the leader is able to adapt himself to a variety of situations. He is able to develop a common plane of interest with persons of varied backgrounds.

3. The leader has unusual facility with language. He is able to express his ideas clearly. He can explain his position, sell his plan, and gain support of his subordinates.

4. The leader has a powerful inner drive which impels him to strive for accomplishment. He is ambitious, sometimes to the point of obsession, and he willingly puts in long hours to realize his ambitions.

5. The leader is aware of the importance of cooperative effort in getting things done; therefore he understands and practices social skills. He practices good human relations, realizing his followers play a large part in his success as a leader.

6. Finally, the leader relies on administrative skills. Technical skills are seldom effective in promoting leadership. Good management, on the other hand, aids him in good leadership.

As previously implied, the seemingly well defined traits among the many possible have been dissappointing. The theory implied that the trait could be identified and measured with some predictability. To date, however, the

"traitist technique" of identifying leaders has failed to satisfy the serious researcher in the domain of leadership.

Recognizing that trait factors are not entirely sufficient to account for leadership phenomena, many researchers during the past decade devoted increased study to situational theory (types of organizations). Thus, the focus shifted from a study of personal needs disposition to a study of organizational roles and relationships--from a concern with the characteristics of the individual to a concern with the characteristics of the group. Thus a struggle ensued between the "traitist" and the "situationist," the latter emerging victorious in the fray.

#### PART IV. SITUATIONAL THEORY

" . . . concerning the qualities of the leader, I am taking the position that leadership behavior depends very, very heavily on the situation in which he finds himself, and I am arguing that administrative skills can be learned."

-----Kimball Wiles (1955)

The situational approach is based upon the hypothesis that a leader's behavior may vary from one setting to another. That different situations require different leadership behavior. Many variables enter into producing leaders, however, it is suggested that there are only two types of forces which influence how a leader arrives at a leadership position. Sometimes people are motivated by internal personal drives to become leaders; sometimes they find themselves in leadership positions as a result of external forces, of which they may or may not be aware. Usually both factors are at work.

Homans<sup>2</sup> has developed an interesting theory of exchange for explaining social behavior. It can be uniquely used to explain when a person decides to lead and when he decides to follow. The exchange theory is a complex formulation. Homans attempts to explain behavior in terms of cost incurred and rewards exchanged by actors\* interacting in a social system. He incorporates some of the market exchange concepts from economics and reinforcement concepts from psychology. Exchange theory incorporates four basic concepts: reward, cost, outcome and comparison level.

Let us apply these concepts to a leadership situation. Let us assume an actor in a group is contemplating initiating a leadership act in a problem situation. He considers what rewards he may receive if he provides leadership in terms of increased status, need for dominance, desire to see the problem solved, etc. He then considers the cost in terms of loss of status if the group rejects him or his part, etc. He then attempts to determine the outcome by subtracting the cost from the rewards. If the outcome is positive, it is a profit, and if negative, a loss. His decision to act will also depend on the comparison level. The profit must be sufficiently above a "break-even" point, and his past experience in comparable situations must have been successful often enough for him to take a chance of leadership. The more frequent he has succeeded in leadership attempts in the past, the more likely is he to attempt another leadership act (reinforcement).

In a similar manner, the actor in a social system who decides to follow also seeks a fair exchange. He weighs the cost against the rewards, considers the qualifications of the person offering to lead, and how successful he has led in similar situations in the past. He then decides

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\*Actor as used here is to be considered synonymous to educational leader.

whether there is a fair profit for him if he follows rather than leads.

Like the psychological (trait) investigations which preceeded them, the sociological (situation) studies also are subject to many limitations. Indeed, many of the early situational studies were concerned with group phenomena, primarily, and with leadership only incidentally, yet they do provide data concerning a host of organizational variables which the would-be leader dare not ignore.

Perhaps the most extensive comparison among groups, designed to distinguish the major dimensions by which groups differ and thereby measure the impact of the leader have been set forth by Hemphill<sup>3</sup>.

Hemphill identified the following fifteen group dimensions: size, viscidty, homogeneity, flexibility, stability, permeability, polarization, autonomy, intimacy, and control (pertaining to the group as a unit); and position, participation, potency, hedonic tone and dependence (expressing a respondent's relation to a group). He found two dimensions, viscidty (the feeling of cohesion in the group) and hedonic tone (the degree of satisfaction of group members) to correlate more highly with leadership adequacy than did the other dimensions.

Guetzleow's<sup>4</sup> investigation of decision-making conferences and Katz, Maccoby, and Moorse's<sup>5</sup> study of high- and low-production groups, likewise, emphasized the fact that working with people in groups is a complicated undertaking and that there are many differences among groups which are of crucial importance to the leader. However, one of their major findings was that the greater the unity within a group in attitudes toward leadership, the higher the satisfaction in the group.

Wiles<sup>6</sup> has concerned himself with the concept of power in situational theory. He has pointed out that power is used differently by persons with



different concepts of leadership. He distinguishes between "power over" and "power with" the group. A "power over" approach decreases the possibility of reaching the full power of the group. It limits the potential accomplishments of the group. Wiles states his concept of "power with" the group as follows: "Under the group approach to leadership, a leader is not concerned with getting and maintaining personal authority. His chief purpose is to develop group power that will enable the group to accomplish its goal. He does not conceive of his power as something apart from the power of the group. He is concerned with developing the type of relationships that will give him "power with" the group."

Wiles insists that there is greater control over group members under the "power with" approach, because the group itself will bring pressure to bear on individual group members to achieve group goals. It should not be assumed, however, that Wiles is advocating a system in which the official leader has nothing to do with power. On this point he states: "The official leader administers the controls the group imposes on itself." This is perhaps the ideal for which to strive. One precaution is that informal group goals are sometimes inconsistent with the total goals of the total organization. In that event, the administrator may be compelled to resort to the "power over" approach; and this will reduce his acceptance as a leader. Therefore, one of the primary objectives of the administrator-leader must be to bring informal group goals and organizational goals into congruence.

The examination of leadership so far has been concerning both the individual (trait) and the organizational (situational) dimensions of leadership. Research concerning the individual dimensions represents the



psychological approach to the study of leadership; research concerning the organizational dimensions represents the sociological approach. The most recent approach to the study of leadership, however, is concerned with both dimensions and recognizes that both personality and role are determinants of observed behavior within an organization. These investigations may be subsumed under the title "behavioral studies of leadership."

#### PART V. BEHAVIORAL THEORY

"An Educational leader should not hesitate to act if his judgement dictates that passivity would not lead to eventual achievement of institutional goals."

-----John Peoples (1968)

Behavioral studies of leadership analyze the kinds of functions people carry out when they are in the positions of leadership. The kind of leadership position a person holds will determine the degree to which he carries out certain functions, e.g.: (1) a leader may perform a symbolic function, such as the Queen of England performs at present: (2) or a leader may perform primarily a decision-making function. This could be exemplified by the political "boss," who makes decisions behind the scenes to be carried out by the individuals\*; (3) another function that most leaders perform in one degree or another is giving information or advice; and (4) a function that is common to most positions of leadership is the one of initiating plans.

Of course, all four of these functions are indispensable to people who

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\*The discussion of "styles of leadership," e.g., directive, permissive, etc., is not within the intended scope of this paper.

are in positions of leadership. Studies indicate, however, that some positions will make certain behavior more of a requirement than do other jobs.

Halpin<sup>7</sup> provided a succinct explication of the behavioral approach to the study of leadership when he stated: "First of all, it focuses upon observed behavior rather than upon a posited capacity inferred from this behavior." No presuppositions are made about a one-to-one relationship between leadership behavior and an underlying capacity or potentiality presumably determinative of this behavior. By the same token, no apriori assumptions are made that the leader behavior which a leader exhibits in a group situation will be manifested in other group situations---- nor does the term-----suggest this behavior is determined either innately or situationally. Either determinant is possible, as in any combination of the two, but the concept of the leader does not itself predispose us to accept one in opposition to the other.

Out of the work of the Personal Research Board at Ohio State University, two dimensions of leadership---initiating structure and consideration---i--- have emerged as significant dimensions for describing leader behavior. These two dimensions were delineated by Halpin and Warner, from a factor analysis of responses to the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire<sup>8</sup> of Hemphill and Coons.

These dimensions have been defined as follows:

1. Initiating structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and members of his work group, and in endeavoring to establish well-defined patterns of organization, channels of communication, and methods of procedure.

2. Consideration refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in relationship between the leader and members of his staff.

More recent research has focused on "leadership behavior" as differentiated from "leadership." The focus here is on behavior rather than presumed underlying capacity. This approach involves describing and measuring behavior of the leader and emphasizes the how aspect as it relates to the interpersonal relationships between a leader and those with whom he is involved in his administrative role. Assessing leadership behavior involves obtaining evidence on perceptions and expectations that associates have of the leader rather than focusing entirely on what he does.

Getzels and Guba<sup>9</sup> identify the terms "nomothetic" and "idiographic." The former is described as emphasizing institution or groups through the establishment of patterns of organization, channels of communication, and assignment of individuals to tasks. The "idiographic" delineates behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth in relationships between the leader and members of the group or institution.\*

Research indicates that obtaining an accurate picture of an educator's leadership behavior necessitates securing information from various groups with whom he associates. Furthermore, it appears that the administrator is likely not to be seen in the same light by various groups.

Other researchers have examined the conceptual leader behavior and organizational climate. Wiggins<sup>10</sup> views the leader's behavior characteristically as the result of the interaction between the expectations of his

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\* It is obvious that there is some overlap of the work by Getzels and Guba and previously discussed work of Halpin and Warner.

role and his need-dispositions or more specifically and operationally his values or orientations<sup>11</sup>. Lonsdale conceptualizes organizational climate as "the interaction between the task-achievement and the needs-satisfaction dimension within an organization."

In summary, the behavioral approach to the study of leadership has provided additional insights into the nature of leadership, the distinction between administration and leadership, the relationship between sociological and psychological dimensions of leadership, and the relationship between emerging theories of administration and theories of leadership.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the behavioral approach, however, is that it has highlighted the need for developing a better understanding of leadership.

## PART VI. LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

"A principle is defined as a fundamental consideration or basic rule which serves as a means of evaluating present practices or a guide to future action."

-----the author

The principles as stated in this section are direct quotes from the literature as reviewed in The Education Index (1959-1969) and E.R.I.C. (1966-1969). They should be considered as inductive principles\* arrived at as a result of research programs of experimental design.

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\*Although each of these principles is supported by some research, it must not be assumed that each is completely valid. Much additional research needs to be done for further validation of these and other principles.

These principles are to be presented without discussion and are as follows:

1. "There exists a significant relationship between leader behavior characteristics and organizational climate in which the leader exists."
2. "Leadership is the product of interaction, not status or position."
3. "Leadership cannot be structured in advance. The uniqueness of each combination of persons of varying interactional patterns and of varying goals and means, and of varying forces within and without impinging upon the group will bring forth different leaders."
4. "A leader in one situation will not automatically be a leader in another situation."
5. "Leadership does not result from a status position, but rather how a person behaves in the organization."
6. "Whether a person is a leader in a group depends upon the group's perception of him."
7. "The way a leader perceives his role determines his actions."
8. "Most groups have more than one person occupying the leadership role."
9. "Leadership fosters positive sentiments toward group activity and persons in the group."
10. "Leadership may be democratic or autocratic but never laissez-faire."
11. "Leadership protects the critical group norms."
12. "Leadership is authority rendered to some who are perceived by others as the proper person to carry out the particular leadership role of the group."
13. "Program development that involves only persons of a single position is not as comprehensive or lasting as that which involves people of various positions in the organization."

14. "The closer an individual conforms to the accepted norms of the group, the better liked he will be; the better liked he is, the closer he conforms; the less he conforms the more disliked he will be."

15. "The higher in rank of the member within the group, the more central he will be in the group's interaction and the more influential he will be."

16. "In general, the 'style' of the leader is determined more by the expectations of the membership and the requirements of the situation than by the personal traits of the leader himself."

17. "The leadership of the group tends to be vested in the member who most closely conforms to the standards of the group on the matter in question, or who has the most skill and information related to the activities of the group."

18. "When groups have established norms, it is extremely difficult for a new leader, however capable, to shift the group activities."

19. "The longer the life of the leadership, the less open and free communication within the group and probably the less efficient the group in the solution of new problems."

20. "The leader will be followed more faithfully the more he makes it possible for members to achieve their private goals along with the group goals."

21. "Active leadership is characteristic of groups that determine their own activities, passive leadership of groups whose activity are externally controlled."

22. "In a small group, authoritarian leadership is less effective than democratic leadership in holding the group together and getting work done."

23. "The leader's style of leadership tends to be influenced by the style in which he is led."

24. "The more the member holds to the organizations professed values, the more likely he is to be promoted within the organization."

25. "The requirements for organizational leadership change with the life of the organization; at the start the leader is characterized more by doctrinal loyalty, aggressiveness, and personal quality ("the charismatic leader"); later when the organization is well established, by administrative skills ("the bureaucratic leader")."

26. "Within an organization, conflict between leader and subordinates tends to increase the number and correctness of the organization's regulations, and vice versa--i.e., regulations go along with conflict."



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