SURVEY PAPER

GREENLEAF'S STYLE OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP COMPARED TO THE STYLES OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL THEORISTS (COVEY, SCHEIN, & BASS)

By

GABRIELLE L. McBATH

Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Northcentral University, USA.

Date Received: 03/04/2018 *Date Revised: 18/06/2018* *Date Accepted: 16/07/2018*

ABSTRACT

Morality and ethics are two instrumental facets within academia. Often however, with increasing federal, state, and local mandates, educational administration loses sight of these two criteria (Kowalski, 2008). Greenleaf (2010/1977), countering this dilemma, established a visionary leadership-style known as Servant-Leadership, wherein the leader humbled himself to the status of serving others holistically within the applicable environment (Greenleaf, 2003; Spears, 2004). His model of leadership incorporated guidance and fellowship. This paper will compare his model of Servant-Leadership to three educational/ organizational leaders of our current era: Covey's conscious versus ego, Schein's clarity of vision and the culture of the environment, and Bass' empowerment as individual consideration.

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Educational Theorists, Bernard Bass, Stephen Covey, Edgar Schein, Greenleaf's Servant-leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Morality and ethics are two instrumental facets within academia. Often however, with increasing federal, state, and local mandates, educational administration loses sight of these two criteria (Kowalski, 2008). Greenleaf (2010/1977), countering this dilemma, established a visionary leadership-style known as Servant-Leadership, wherein the leader humbled himself to the status of serving others holistically within the applicable environment (Greenleaf, 2003; Spears, 2004). His model of leadership incorporated guidance and fellowship. This paper will compare his model of Servant-Leadership to three educational/ organizational leaders of our current era: Covey's conscious versus ego, Schein's *clarity of vision* and the *culture of the environment,* and Bass' *empowerment as individual consideration.*

1. Greenleaf: A First Among Equals

Greenleaf was noteworthy in defining aspects of Servant-Leadership; specifically, the leader exemplified, (a) proper stewardship, (b) promoting the communal growth and wellness of subordinates, and (c) accurate conceptualization through persuasion (as opposed to coercion).

Proper stewardship derived from the premise of the American nature of philanthropy, while retaining the promise of benevolence in trust of another (Greenleaf, 2003; Spears, 2004). The philanthropic nature in business seeped into academia, while not overlooking its connection to the community (Greenleaf, 2002). However, with the former ample resources of the community dwindling academically, Servant-Leadership aided employees to re-establish human connections as motivation, as well as permitting communal wellness, and accurate conceptualization of tasks and projects.

Greenleaf (2010/1977) stated that ego promoted achievement, but it must remain in alignment. The measurement of a true leader began by subduing the ego, converting subordinates into leaders, and then

becoming a first among equals- *primus inter pares* (Bass, 2008). Although one interchanged the terms steward and servant-leader, this leadership theory demonstrated that the former was concerned with balancing the interests of all interlinked stakeholders within the educational environment (i.e., administration, board members, teachers, parents, students, community members, etc.). Within the latter, the servant-leader advanced the moral dimensions of these stakeholders. The leader's primary purpose was serving the needs of the subordinates on a spiritual level (Bass, 2008; Greenleaf, 2010/1977). The contemporary views of Servant-Leadership diverted from spirituality to include secular components enhancing holistic avenues of personal wellness, empowerment, shared decision-making, and participative management. Individual consideration was now a new criterion used to promote Servant-Leadership (Bass, 2008; Greenleaf, 2010/1977).

Servant-Leadership began with the primary thoughts and actions of the individual from which more complexities of service derived. Some were called to lead others, and some welcomed another's insight as the best path to follow. Communal growth and wellness commenced as school leaders excelled in moving faculty toward a goal. These leaders had the best traits of knowledge in beginning tasks. The servant-leader showed either group-consensus or inspiration. Without communal growth and proper direction, trust, respect, and ethics became stagnant (Greenleaf, 2010/1977).

Conversely, coercive power only fortified its resistance. If stakeholders were coerced overtly or covertly, unbeknown to them, any controlling effect lasted as long as the manipulative power lasted. In order to be removed from coercion and headed toward persuasion, the servant-leader posited the following questions: which moral traits did the servant-leader possess, and how does one distinguish between those with humility, indifference, or ulterior motives? (Greenleaf, 2002, 2003, 2010/1977).

Two starkly diverse allegorical leaders answered the preceding questions: Leo the Servant in Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East* (die Morganlandfahrt), and Big Nurse of Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.* Leo, a humble servant, led the group in spirit and wellness, while sustaining song and holistic care of the group's members during this journey. When he went missing, it was discovered that Leo was truly a noble king in disguise. In contrast, Big Nurse was an antagonistic, dominating, and manipulative influence versus the protagonist MacMurphy. Her disregard for the human condition of kindness toward, and the protection of, her patients led to MacMurphy's untimely death. The wide spectrum of these leaders illustrated their role as vast and not delineated easily; however, what was of greatest importance in Servant-Leadership was proving one knew about the ramifications of actions. These actions were either toward oneself or toward another (Greenleaf, 2002, 2003, 2010/1977).

2. Covey's Conscious Versus Ego and Time Management Quadrants

Covey (2004a, 2004b, 2008) was an influential researcher, teacher, writer, and motivational speaker, in multi-areas of leadership and education for numerous decades. His 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' (2004b), revamped from the 1989 publication, launched profoundly the role of character ethics within many environments: academic, business, and military. Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind was a complemented, manageable, abridgment of the soul's ethical quest found originally in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (350 B.C.). Aristotle, Covey, and Greenleaf (2002) emphasized results, and internal freedom found within results. Servant-Leadership paralleled the art of doing good deeds, the loyalty of a genuine friend, and the pursuit of happiness obtained from placing others above oneself (Aristotle, 2009; Covey, 2004a, 2004b, 2008; Greenleaf, 2002; Hartman, 2011).

Habit 2 began with a leader's mental preparation (first creation), before the physical creation (second creation). The first creation was aligned also with the intrinsic freedom to choose, as portrayed as rudimentary as a natural "birth right". Notwithstanding this first-right denoted the ability to choose by means of the leader suppressing a

faulty ego (Covey, 2004a, 2004b, 2008).

One must distinguish between the conscious and the ego, according to Covey (2004a). Conscious activity meant aiding others on a continuum: the ends were linked to the means. It sought genuinely to adapt to the situation at-hand while making sacrifices for stakeholders' needs. A local paradigm occurred one spring when school-district superintendents supported a salary-freeze, as well as other contractual concessions, to help minimize the pending lay-offs of teachers.

The fanatical ego, personified, micromanaged groups falsely while focusing on the exclusion of others. Disallowing feedback, it interpreted myopically its own unbalanced agenda. Egotism denied reality by censoring accurate information (Covey, 2004a). An example was a novice administrator's reaction to a new homework policy. If the community reacted well to it, the school leader took credit gladly for its implementation. However, if students, parents, and community members were upset at this new policy, then the school leader passed blame onto a committee "for review and revision."

In contrast to Greenleaf (2010/1977), Covey (2004b) managed the leader's time elements into a matrix of quadrants (Appendix A). In addition to understanding criteria within academia during each quadrant, he demonstrated also how to move daily tasks from one quadrant to another. In Quadrant I, classified as urgent and important, the school leader faced pressing problems or crises. An example was a power outage or a water-main break in school. This posed an immediate priority to the school leader because of the safety risk to employees and the legality under New York State Educational Law (155.17h). Hence, school may not remain in operation under these conditions. Managers who performed solely in this Quadrant exhibited excessive stress, and psychological burnout (Covey, 2004b; New York State Education Department, 2009).

In Quadrant II, where most of the leader's daily issues should be placed, Covey (2004b) classified these activities as important but not urgent. Exemplars included relationship building, planning and recognizing new activities, and prevention. The school leader used this time to evaluate effectively the new teacher mentorship program, or prevent potential errors in bussing students during a field trip. Planning was accomplished with a list of multiple, potential outcomes, while encouraging components of responsibility (Covey, 2004b; Kaye, 2010).

Quadrant III categorized daily tasks as not important but urgent. With this paradoxical phrase, activities included interruptions by pressing phone calls, reports, or meetings. Many "mis-managers" deemed these activities as "important", and therefore perpetuated wasting time. An example showed a school leader, perhaps a Dean of Students, replacing a principal in attendance for whom this meeting would have been better suited (Covey, 2004b; Kaye, 2010).

The last Quadrant IV was marked as not important and not urgent. These activities were trivial time wasters, or busy work. Checking some pieces of mail, for example fit this category. Those leaders led primarily from Quadrants III and IV showed chronic irresponsibility, felt "victimized" and dependent upon others or institutions for their needs. The key for a school leader moving all tasks into Quadrant II was to have the correct tools needed for prevention, not prioritization, of crises. This was accomplished by identifying roles of stakeholders, selecting proper goals, agenda assessment, and its daily adaptation (Covey, 2004b; Kaye, 2010).

3. Schein's Clarity of Vision and the Culture of the Environment

Greenleaf's (2010/1977) vision of Servant-Leadership included thinking beyond the status quo of daily operations: foresight included consistent discipline and practice. This criterion of Servant-Leadership mandated an expansive and conceptual-based thinking. Schein (2010, 2011), an influential researcher and professor (emeritus) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management, focused on a leader's clarity of vision. Greenleaf and Schein shared the outlook of promoting future conceptual thinking, while stressing that there was an imperative bond between leadership

and the culture of its academic environment (Schein, 2010, 2011; Spears, 2004).

The leader's vision was both empirical and clinical, while inter-mixing topics of excitement and worth to the situation. However, the culture of the school connected elements of phenomenon and coercion. These two disharmonious elements warred against one another in both a cultural and sub-categorical environment (Schein, 2009, 2010).

Vision began within the culture of the organization. The most profound and accurate criteria in this assessment was observed behavioral regularities when people interact (Schein, 2009, 2010). Schein claimed that rhetoric and body language were prevalent in every human interaction within the organization. Understanding these signs developed of the leadership aura and the academic climate (Mendoza, 2008).

A paradigm assessed looking at the placement of faculty and school leaders within a conference room during a meeting. Body language suggested not only gestures, but who associated well with whom. Body positioning reflected the interest-level of the conference's participants. Faculty and school leaders arranged themselves spatial into patterns in which they were most comfortable. Members of the same academic department normally sat close to each other (for example). People within an academic culture conceptualized the physical, spatial environment leading to sharing assumptions of community and experience. Clarity of vision ensued by effective teamwork and collaboration. This socialization process within the school culture was imperative for members to learn what was expected of them within the environment (Mendoza, 2008; Schein, 2010, 2011; Spears, 2004).

Schein's (2009, 2010, 2011) unique view of Servant-Leadership connected understanding the transformational group culture and its leader of non-hierarchical typology. The leader demonstrated benchmarks by processing skills, while allowing the articulation of goals. Articulating the objective, either verbally or in writing, preceded the notion that the end-result was to form a new desired behavior. Only then, did the school leader become an agent of change by understanding cultural elements of the environment at different stages of development. A model (Appendix B) denoted three tiers during cultural change, (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions (Burke, 2011; Schein, 2009, 2010, 2011).

When entering a new group culture, the Artifacts category was the assessment of empirical behavior, language usage, the artistic output of the group, or the physical composite of the environment. The results showed that empirical behavior was difficult to decipher because behavior was encompassed by projected feelings and deeper assumptions (Schein, 2010). Espoused values and beliefs exhibited how group members rationalized their decisions, while never being certain if these decisions were harmonious indeed to other Artifacts or behaviors. The group culture must determine factors guiding group performance, as opposed to unmediated rationalizations. The basic underlying assumptions were the group's oversight. For example, a group perceived erroneously that they had enough resources to complete a project. Schein (2010) determined that when solutions remedied the problem repeatedly, they were taken-for-granted in future scenarios. Therefore, group members or school leaders needed to assess the group's perceptions, values, and beliefs (Burke, 2011; Schein, 2009, 2010).

4. Bass' Empowerment as Individual Consideration and Coping with Stress

Bass (2006, 2008) was instrumental in Transformational Leadership (Appendix C), while enhancing his predecessor Burns' *Leadership* (2010/1978). Burns stressed that every good leader provided movement and change within an organization; however, change cannot occur unless there were explicit, obtainable goals. Despite having a solid rapport with subordinates and envisioning leadership objectives, Burns lacked a reciprocal environment of intellectual stimulation and promotion of self-confidence. This was where Bass modified Burns' theories with the inception of Individual Consideration. Both authors, as well as Greenleaf (2002),

stressed that empowerment was the subsequent product (Banutu-Gomez & Banutu-Gomez, 2007; Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burke, 2011; Burns, 2010/1978; Greenleaf, 2002).

The school leader recognized the faculty's individual differences, while promoting their needed academic development. Empowering leadership encompassed self-governance of subordinates, without it reverting to *laissez-faire* leadership (i.e., abdicating responsibility). Empowering leadership focused-on caring for all stakeholders within the academic unit and not ignoring the needs of those people or situations. Bass concluded that elevating the interests of faculty, by heightening their capabilities, was instrumental in a leadership role (Banutu-Gomez & Banutu-Gomez, 2007; Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burke, 2011).

For example, with the implementation of the New York State Healthy Schools Act (2007), and establishing schools' wellness policies, faculty could request exercising during the work day. Normally, this was limited to the hours that school was in operation, and was an on-going issue in many school districts. Many districts did not allow teachers' flexibility with scheduling or during their academic planning period. A transformative leader, one in true service, provided flexibility to teachers during the day by allowing them to use the weight room or track during a free period (The swimming pool, however, was off-limits unless a life guard was present). Planning period flexibility during the work day established promotion of individual and collective interests (Silver, 2007).

5. Discussion

One unique, theoretical, avenue that separated Bass within Servant-Leadership was aiding subordinates coping with stress. Bass viewed stress as the main criterion for groups making hasty decisions, while ultimately leading to its failure. Stress occurred when group members were blockaded from achieving their goal, while preventing options to retreat. Within a structured environment, there was more stress in a unified group due to commitment of goal attainment, or the leader not being able to transcend the individual needs of the group members. Panic was defined as a heightened-sense of tension that led to impulse (Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

For example, in a nearby high school, the State exams in Math had to be rated the day before students were eligible to graduate. Due to unforeseen circumstances, some Math teachers were absent legitimately due to medical leaves and jury duty. Therefore, with not enough teachers to complete the grading in one day, the remaining department members began to panic. A servant-leader supplied more teachers from another building, provided lunch, and substitutes, while ensuring that they worked cohesively without interruption. This eased the teachers' stress-level and focused them toward goal achievement. Groups expected direction under stressful situations; each individual needed to know their particular task (Covey & Whitman, 2009). If they did not receive such instruction, abstract direction, and covert suggestibility precipitated the human reaction of flight (Bass, 2008). A logical reaction was an overwhelmed teacher, with no guidance, who "went home sick". Therefore, "Panic can be reduced or avoided by strong leadership that point[ed] the way to safety" - both structurally and psychologically (Bass, 2008, p. 820).

Conclusion

Servant-Leadership magnified one solid mantra: take care of your people, while treating them with decency to help society move forward. Ethics and morality were formed by individual choices but encompassed by environment. When connecting to academic policies and protocol, one must consider human connectivity, as it began by acknowledging the work of one person at a time (Cohen, 2010; Johannesen et al., 2008; Kerfoot, 2007; Michaelson, 2007). An archaic, but relevant, example: Plato's (ca. 370 B.C.) function of achieving Social Morality (Moral Authority) began with his principle of specialization. That is, one person conducted well one task within the Republic. It symbolized that each individual had great talent to contribute to the goodness of the whole (Plato, 2008).

More than two thousand years later, the works of four

essential educational/ organizational leaders Greenleaf, Covey, Schein, and Bass saw potential in every relationship of serving others. They ensured standards that did not limit the paths of faculty and school leaders - that did not corrode the existence of our need for one another's help. Servant-Leadership did not neglect the art of self-development, while calling us to a higher purpose (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Marx, 2006). Servant-Leadership began ultimately with the internal volition to trust: a primary step to avoid mediocrity and indifference in Servant-Leadership studies.

References

[1]. **Aristotle (trans., 2009).** *The Nicomachean Ethics* (D. Ross, Trans.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

[2]. **Banutu-Gomez, M. B., & Banutu-Gomez, S. M. T. (2007).** Leadership and organizational change in a competitive environment. *The Business Renaissance Quarterly,* 2(2), 69-90.

[3]. **Bass, B. M. (2008).** *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (4th Ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

[4]. **Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006).** *Transformational Leadership* (2nd Ed.). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

[5]. **Burke, W. W. (2011).** *Organization (sic) Change: Theory and Practice* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

[6]. **Burns, J. M. (2010/1978).** *Leadership.* New York, NY: Harper Perennial Political Classics.

[7]. **Cohen, W. A. (2010).** *Drucker on Leadership: New Lessons from the Father of Modern Management.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[8]. **Covey, S. R. (2004a).** *The Eighth Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness.* New York, NY: Free Press.

[9]. **Covey, S. R. (2004b).** *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change.* New York, NY: Free Press.

[10]. **Covey, S. R. (2008).** *The Leader in me: How Schools and Parents around the World are Inspiring Greatness, one Child at a Time.* New York, NY: Free Press.

[11]. **Covey, S. R., & Whitman, B. (2009).** *Predictable Results in Unpredictable Times: How to Win in any Environment.* Salt Lake City, UT: Franklin Covey Publishing.

[12]. **Greenleaf, R. K. (2002).** *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Ed. L. C. Spears). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

[13]. **Greenleaf, R. K. (2003).** *Servant-leader within: A Transformative Path* (H. Beazley, J. Begg, & L. C. Spears, Eds.). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

[14]. **Greenleaf, R. K. (2010/1977).** Servant leadership. In G. R. Hickman's (Ed.), *Leading Organizations: Perspectives for a New Era* (2nd ed.) (pp. 87-95). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

[15]. **Hartman, E. M. (2011).** Virtue, profit, and the separation thesis: An Aristotelian view. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 99(1), 5-17.

[16]. **Johannesen, R. L., Valde, K. S., & Whedbee, K. E. (2008).** *Ethics in Human Communication.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

[17]. **Kaye, C. B. (2010).** *Complete Guide to Service-learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, and Social Action.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

[18]. **Kerfoot, K. (2007).** Bossing or Serving? How Leaders Execute Effectively. *Nursing Economics (sic),* 25(3), 178-188.

[19]. **Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2007).** *Leadership Challenge* (4th Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[20]. **Kowalski, T. J. (2008).** *Public Relations in Schools* (4th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

[21]. **Marx, G. (2006).** *Sixteen Trends: Their Profound Impact on our Future.* Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service.

[22]. **Mendoza, P. (2008).** Socialization to the academic culture: A framework for inquiry. *Revista de Estudios Sociales,* 31, 104-117.

[23]. **Michaelson, S. W. (2007).** *Sun Tzu for Execution: How to Use the Art of War to Get Results.* Avon, MA: Adams Business.

[24]. **New York State Education Department. (2009).** *School emergency plan: Annual update and drill.*

Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/Emergency/AnnualDrillArticle.html

[25]. Plato (trans., 2008). *Republic* (R. Waterfield, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

[26]. Schein, E. H. (2009). *Corporate Culture Survival Guide.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[27]. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (4th Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[28]. Schein, E. H. (2011). *Helping: How to Offer, Give, and Receive Help.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

[29]. Silver, S. (2007). Assembly approves Healthy Schools Act. [Press Release] New York State Assembly. Retrieved from http://assembly.state.ny.us/Press/ 20070531/

[30]. Spears, L. C. (2004). The understanding and practice of Servant-Leadership. In L.C. Spears &M. Lawrence's (Eds.), *Practicing Servant Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness* (pp. 9-24). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Appendices

Appendix A

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I. – Crises – Pressing Problems – Deadline-driven Projects	II. – Prevention – Relationship Building – Planning New Projects
Not Important	III. – Interruptions/ Some Phone Calls – Mail/ Paperwork – Some Meetings	IV. – Time Wasters/ Busy-Work – Some Mail – Some Phone Calls

Table 1. Table of Covey's (2004b) Time Management Matrix

Appendix B

Culture	Tenets	Results
Artifacts	Visible Structure/ Process Observed Behavior	Behavior Difficult to Decipher
Espoused Beliefs and Values	Goals, Values, Aspirations Rationalization Ideology	Congruent/ or Incongruent to other Artifacts/ Behavior
Basic Underlying Assumptions	Subconscious Beliefs Taken-for-granted Beliefs/Values	Assess Perception, Behavior, Ideologies, & Feelings

Table 2. Table of Schein's (2010) Three Levels of Culture

Appendix C

Behavioral Element	Burns (1978)	Bass (1985)
Visionary	X	X
Empowering (Showing Respect for Subordinates)	X	X
Role Modeling (Exhibiting a Personal Example)		X
Role Modeling (Exhibiting Self-confidence		X
Intellectually Stimulating Environment		X

Table 3. Comparing and Contrasting Burns (1978) and Bass' (1985) Behaviors found in Theories of Leadership

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Gabrielle L. McBath earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Northcentral University, and has a research and publication background on the various topics of: Educational mandates, English & German language and literature, and volunteers' motivational theories in wartime. She received her Master's degrees from LeMoyne College (Syracuse, NY) in Educational Leadership and the State University of New York College at Cortland in Secondary English. Her undergraduate work was completed at St. John Fisher College in English and German. Currently, she is a Manuscript Reviewer for the Journal of International Education Studies, Canada.