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Leadership Models

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### Abstract

As a result of the intrinsic human need to seek leadership, there has been much research into the various characteristics and traits common to successful and effective leaders throughout history. Each era has seen slight changes in the leadership styles, with both advances and regression, and the evolution of leadership theory is evident through a thorough examination of its history. This paper will present evidence of the leadership styles found within each the Pre-Classical, Classical, Modern, and Post-Modernism eras, including a discussion on the common threads of leadership thought that is woven throughout history.

## Leadership Models

Throughout the history of the world, humans have looked to the strongest, most capable members of their community for leadership. Further, leadership and its various impacts on people have been considered a vital attribute throughout time. “Human beings have always been keenly interested in leaders and in leadership. Confucius sought laws of order between leaders and subordinates. Plato described an ideal republic with philosopher-kings providing wise and judicious leadership” (Sorensen, 2002). Indeed, it has been said that “the history of the world is but the biography of great men” (Carlyle, 1840).

As a result of the intrinsic human need to seek leadership, there has been much research into the various characteristics and traits common to successful and effective leaders throughout history. Each era has seen slight changes in the leadership styles, with both advances and regression, and the evolution of leadership theory is evident through a thorough examination of its history. This paper will present evidence of the leadership styles found within each of the Pre-Classical, Classical, Modern, and Post-Modernism eras, including a discussion on the common threads of leadership thought that is woven throughout history.

### *Leadership in the Pre-Classical Era*

The Pre-Classical era can be described as the period of time from ancient history dating to around 600 A.D. During this era, leadership was autocratic and dominated by a supreme ruler, as evidenced by tribal leaders, pharaohs, emperors, and divine kings. “One such divine king was the Babylonian Hammurabi (ca. 2123–2071 B.C.E.), who received his right to rule and his code of laws from the sun god” (Wren, 2005, p. 13). It has been noted that Hammurabi issued a code of conduct that governed all aspects of life in Babylon, from business dealings to personal behavior and rules of society. In Hammurabi’s Code, “there was no incentive to do more than

required since wages were regulated” (Wren, p. 14). Later, however, when Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, workers were paid depending on their production and the quality of their work (Wren), a precursor to the more transactional leadership styles found in modern times.

Additional leadership or management theories from the pre-classical era designated specific divisions of labor, which was dictated by the various inherent skills found in workers of all nations (Wren, 2005). Further, Aristotle described various aspects of organizational management to include “departmentation...centralization, decentralization, and delegation of authority...synergy...[and] leadership” (Wren, p. 18-19). In summation, “Leadership, delegation, span of management, planning, organizing, and controlling were managerial practices found among ancient peoples” (Wren, p. 17).

### *Leadership in the Classical Era*

The Classical era can be defined as the period of time between the fall of the Roman Empire through the Renaissance, to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. During this time, the feudal system was established.

The structure of feudalism can be seen in how [its] three elements fit together. A lord was a noble who owned land, a vassal was a person who was granted land by the lord, and the land was known as a fief... The obligations and relations between lord, vassal and fief form the basis of feudalism. (Wikipedia.org, 2006)

This time also found the creation and establishment of guilds, primarily the merchant guilds (the buyers and sellers of goods) and the craft guilds (the makers of goods). Within the craft guilds could be found masters, journeymen, and apprentices. “The master owned the tools and raw materials and the finished product; journeymen were paid workers who had finished their apprenticeship but had not yet established their own shop; and apprentices were those who were learning the trade” (Wren, 2005, p. 22-23). The hierarchy of power found in feudal and guild

systems were examples of thought in the Classical era that would carry on into later generations of management theory and leadership research.

As the shift was made from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance, three standards for conduct began to emerge: the Protestant ethic, liberty ethic, and market ethic. “These three ethics...interacted in practice to change cultural values toward people, work, and profits. The outcome of this cultural rebirth was the creation of a new environment that would lead to the need for the formal study of management” (Wren, 2005, p. 25).

### *Leadership in the Modern Era*

With the onset of the Industrial Revolution came new ideas and theories regarding leadership and management. The beginning of the Industrial Revolution saw the rise of factories and an increase in entrepreneurialism, which led to various leadership and managerial issues that had never before been realized. “Problems were met and solved on an ad hoc basis... The general view of leadership was that success or failure to produce results depended on the character of the leader, on personal traits and idiosyncrasies, and not on any generalized concepts of leadership” (Wren, 2005, p. 50). Classical examples of leadership thought during the Modern Era include the works of Daniel McCallum, Frederick Taylor, and Max Weber.

Daniel McCallum developed a management system reminiscent of the leadership thought of the Pre-Classical and Classical eras. The system was “based on good discipline, specific and detailed job descriptions, frequent and accurate reporting of performance, pay and promotion based on merit, a clearly defined hierarchy of authority...and the enforcement of personal responsibility and accountability throughout the organization”(Wren, 2005, p. 85). The system created by McCallum was put into place throughout the railroad industry, developed and expanded into the “Organizational growth, geographical separation of activities, and the

separation of ownership and management [which] were the driving forces for systematizing railroad management” (Wren, p. 88). Andrew Carnegie, a very well-known American entrepreneur, established his understanding of management and leadership through his work at the Pennsylvania Railroad and its institution of McCallum’s management system. “It was on the Pennsylvania Railroad that Carnegie learned how to measure performance, control costs, and assign authority and responsibility; it was in the steel industry that he applied these lessons” (Wren, p. 99).

Another principal theorist in Modern leadership thought was Frederick W. Taylor, who developed the foundation for the Scientific Management system, which can still be found in various aspects of leadership today. Taylor believed that “management should have the responsibility for setting standards, planning work, and devising incentive schemes” (Wren, 2005, p. 124). This scientific management system included: the managerial duties of task management, wherein “management should have the responsibility for setting standards, planning work, and devising incentive schemes”; the establishment of the planning department, which was responsible for establishing “the flow of the work and the exact order of work by each class of workers and machines”; and Taylor’s “functional foreman concept” (Wren, p. 129-130). The leadership style presented by Taylor has extended into the current era, now understood as “*functional authority* over a task, not over the worker, and without circumventing the supervisor” (Wren, p. 130).

About the same time, Max Weber asserted his belief that the ‘new’ Protestant (or Calvinistic) churches had, around the time of the Reformation, began to influence their followers to begin to become entrepreneurs and work in the secular world, thereby inspiring the onset of capitalism. According to Weber, as people began to look for more earthly indications of

their salvation, they began to view worldly success as one of those indicators (Wikimedia Foundation [WF], 2006). As a result, the need and greed to constantly work towards having more materialistic and earthly goods was created, developing the spirit of capitalism that has since developed into the work ethic towards which many people today strive and many employers seek in prospective employees.

### *Leadership in the Post-Modernism Era*

Research into the history of leadership and the development of an abundance of theories and styles has been prevalent in the Post-Modernism era, the years that span from the end of the Industrial Revolution to the present. “In the recent literature of leadership...there have been four main ‘generations’ of theory: trait theories, behavioural (sic) theories, contingency theories, and transformational theories” (Doyle & Smith, 2001).

Early research in this era was focused on identifying specific traits common to leaders throughout history, and researchers have asserted that the skills needed for leadership were inherited rather than developed. “As the early researchers ran out of steam in their search for traits, they turned to what leaders did - how they behaved... Different patterns of behavior were grouped together and labeled as styles... Despite different names, the basic ideas were very similar” (Doyle & Smith). These ideas included the understanding that leaders are concerned about the tasks that must be completed; that they concern themselves with the needs and interests of their followers; that they make decisions for others and direct others to follow instructions; and that leaders may also share the decision-making process with others (Doyle & Smith).

An example of a behavioral leadership model is the Managerial Grid Model (later known as the Leadership Grid). This model discusses five different levels of management or leadership that had previously been identified. Unfortunately, “when researchers really got to work on this it

didn't seem to stand up. There were lots of differences and inconsistencies between studies. It was difficult to say style of leadership was significant in enabling one group to work better than another" (Doyle & Smith, 2001). Like those researchers who focused on leadership traits and characteristics, behavioral leadership theorists did not consider the situations or contexts surrounding such behaviors.

As a result, a contingency approach to leadership research began to emerge. At last, effective leadership was found to be dependent on a variety of factors. "For example, Fred E. Fiedler argued that effectiveness depends on two interacting factors: leadership style and the degree to which the situation gives the leader control and influence" to include "the relationship between the leaders and followers...the structure of the task...(and the) position of power" (Doyle & Smith, 2001). Fiedler believed that both task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders can be effective, contingent upon the situations in which they find themselves working. His leadership model focuses on the relationship between leader and followers, the structure of the task at hand, and the power that is inherent in the leader's appointed position.

Since leadership thought began to evolve once again, the transformational model of leadership has become one of the most prevalent theories of thought within the Post-Modernism era. Transformational leadership has been defined as a process wherein "leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of 'raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation'" (ChangingMinds.org [CM], 2006). Transformational leaders appeal to their followers' social and spiritual values, thereby motivating them to work harder to reach the goals and achieve the vision of their leader(s). Further, transformational leaders encourage their followers to collaborate rather than to work independently, which may be seen to be a more effective tactic and which is



believed to encourage better performance (CM). Two of the leading transformational leadership models were those presented by James MacGregor Burns and Bernard Bass.

According to Burns' theory of transformational leadership, "Transformational leaders raise the bar by appealing to higher ideals and values of followers. In doing so, they may model the values themselves and use charismatic methods to attract people to the values and to the leader" (CM, 2006). Further, Burns suggested that the result of transformational leadership is "a mutual relationship that converts followers to leaders and leaders into moral agents. The concept of moral leadership is proposed as a means for leaders to take responsibility for their leadership and to aspire to satisfy the needs of the followers" (Stewart, 2006, p. 9).

According to Bass, transformational leadership is based upon the effects that leaders have on their followers. There are three types of transformations that could occur: "Increasing their awareness of task importance and value; Getting them to focus first on team or organizational goals, rather than their own interests; (and) Activating their higher-order needs" (ChangingMinds.org [CM], n.d.). Additionally, Bass considers the leader's charisma or personality to greatly affect his/her ability to lead and transform his/her followers, although he has determined that charisma in and of itself is not sufficient to cause any transformation to occur.

### *Discussion*

Quality leadership traits and behaviors combined with favorable situations and effective leader-follower relationships cause transformations to occur, resulting in positive experiences for everyone involved. The research that has been conducted throughout the years regarding leadership has evolved as time has passed and as thought has advanced. Within the various

studies of the history of leadership, the theories and models have illustrated the evolution of thought as well as the basic foundations of leadership that have withstood the test of time.

Within the early years of leadership research, theorists focused on specific traits common to leaders throughout history. As these theories began to fall apart, new research was conducted into the behavior of leaders. Psychologists during this time began to focus on the internal and external influences that affect a person's behavior. The attribution theory was then applied to leadership thought, in which it is asserted that "success on a task can be attributed to internal factors (ability or effort) and external factors (task difficulty or luck)" (Leahy, 1996, p. 6). As a result, leadership research began to focus on the situations or contingencies under which leaders either succeeded or failed. The resulting theories and leadership models incorporated the various traits and behaviors of leadership while also incorporating the external influences on leadership success.

The Post-Modernism era of leadership theories demonstrates the most recent progression of leadership thought into the realm of motivation and inspiration. Current leadership theories establish the existence of transactional and transformational leaders, those who use extrinsic motivation to encourage workers and those who exploit their followers' intrinsic motivators and moral or ethical values to encourage production, much like that found in the Pre-Classical era as expounded by Nebuchadnezzar. "Contemporary research in cybernetics, semantics, and human performance technologies has shown the need for a more authentic, integrated and cross-cultural approach to learning and leadership" (Richford, 2001). The leadership traits and behaviors and situational influences are still in effect, yet current thought now reflects the combination of both external and internal influences on the successful and effective leader.

*Conclusion*

A thorough research into the history of leadership styles and models reveals that there are specific components of leadership and management that have been present throughout history, from ancient times through the present day and beyond. There has always been and will probably always be an element of hierarchy and authority within leadership, although the amount of power within each level may be diminished or expanded dependent upon different situations and settings. In the pre-classical era, the central power was autocratic, although even ancient leaders determined that division of labor and use of incentives were effective managerial tools. In the feudal and guild systems of the classical era, the hierarchy of power in authority and leadership was further established and would be evidenced throughout the rest of history.

The Industrial Revolution in the modern era found a greater need for successful and efficient management and leadership, and much of contemporary leadership thought is based on research into the successes and failures of management and leadership in that time period. Finally, the post-modernism era has found an abundance of research into leadership history with a resulting abundance of leadership theories and models that will provide for the development of successful and effective leaders of today and tomorrow. There now exists a well-developed, highly evolved understanding of leadership that should allow for the development of more well-rounded, highly evolved leaders of the future.

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