Application of Leadership Concepts

Delwin Lampkin

School of Business and Professional Studies, Brandman University

December 4, 2022

Acknowledgements

To all my professors who have guided me through this journey of legitimizing my understanding of leadership development in completing this formal education. Leadership is an everyday practice. Through the various means each professor has instructed, I have had the opportunity to gauge how to appropriately correspond, exercise stress, and time management when work, life, and education seemed to become off balanced.

To my mother who did the best she could to single handedly raise 3 children in an environment of crime, poverty, violence, and incivility. While it has taken me 18 years to achieve this milestone, know that growing up, I watched you struggle, never missing a day of work for 34 years, keeping the lights on and sacrificing the leisure so many takes for granted to ensure we had a meal on the table. You can be proud to know that now all your children hold degrees and continue their formal education journey so that future generations of our family stand a chance at having a quality of life far greater than our own. We are defying the cultural statistics.

My gratefulness is also extended to the Agustin and Michelle Aguayo who took a chance on me, connecting me to a huge market of clients when I incorporated my business 4 years ago. The risk you took allowed me the ability to hustle every week to earn an income big enough to return to school after running out of money 16 years ago and finish this milestone, self-funded with no loans.

Lastly, to my later to be wife, Melody Granados who has given me a renewed spirit and outlook on life. Since day 1, we continue to motivate each other to strive for a better tomorrow.

Abstract

A sustainable organization is constantly seeking individuals within its organization that are willing to take on the challenge of mentoring others in a way that supports the mission of the organization. During the 1 year and 8 months spent in Brandman Universities bachelor program of organizational leadership, several theories, and principles were analyzed that challenged our ability to become more effective leaders in both our own professional and personal lives. In this paper, research and reflection on those concepts will be outlined that demonstrate competencies that are essential to leadership effectiveness. Methods used are several peer review journal articles and academic book publications emphasizing the application of leadership, leadership dilemmas, comparable and contrasting views of how leadership is exercised. Shared are my own applications of leadership concepts and theories through reflection of personal experiences and how new information learned through the BAOL program has shaped future leadership practices. The results of these methods are an understanding that effective leadership strategies are constantly evolving as those we intend to lead possess different seen and unseen cultural values, beliefs, and experiences that must be nurtured to bring out the best attitude and performance in oneself and others.

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Application of Leadership Concepts

Effective leadership is the leading illustrator of a set of values and beliefs other individuals, or a group of individuals have decided to embrace through an unwritten social contract. The person leading is doing so because the traits they exhibit are the predominant influence on the individual or team's performance and behavior. Ideally, that person is modeling common tenants reinforced in most organizations core values. Those core values include but are not limited to integrity, courage, compassion, professionalism, accountability, and respect. Demonstrating those core values encourages stakeholders to take a genuine interest in one another and use it as a strategy to promote organizational growth, profitability of a company, accountability of both the business and its employees, and both the professional and personal development of employees. When these tenants are not practiced, individuals within a workplace community or team loose trust in those who are in charge resulting in a high attrition rate, hostility, and an unhealthy work environment. In the book *The Legal Environment of Business,* Cross asserts business ethics; "...has to do with how businesspersons apply moral and ethical principles in making their decisions" (Cross & Miller, 2019). Our intent in making sound and just ethical decisions is to not be right to avoid being wrong but to do right to fight or resist a wrong. In the workplace, this doesn't just apply to doing right to follow policy or process, but it too applies to the expectations of being deliberately conscious to exercising empathy in how we treat one another within the organization. How one can test if they are accomplishing ethical and moral rights through empathy is to reflect on the current communications and relationships they have developed with others and to determine if that communication and relationship is a common theme throughout the organization that contributes to its sustainability.

This research project will examine the practice of leadership that promotes sustainability in an organization by focusing on 5 main areas: analytical inquiry, ethics, leadership, diversity, and multiculturalism. Within these elements, we will define their meaning, strategies in their use, and how an understanding of these skills can help frame several action plans to improve our own organizations and the individuals within.

Analytical Inquiry

To provide solutions to a challenge or dilemma within an organization, one must engage in Socratic questioning that evaluates a multitude of current programs, policies, procedures, behaviors, and the efforts being made toward a desired outcome to either sustain or create change in them. In this evaluation, leaders are contemplating what direction to go in to address these dilemmas not with the objective of making a decision that is right but instead, an assessment that can determine if the direction we intend on going is effective versus decisions that are ineffective.

To determine a root cause of a dilemma, we examine a series of factors that may have contributed to the current condition of an organization. Some of these include the people involved, the current procedures outlined in the company's policy, the behaviors exhibited by those impacted by current practices, the resources available, and the social responsibility of the organization that impact the profitability and popularity of the organization within the community it serves. Not only should current conditions be evaluated, but past practices should also be reviewed that can provide explanation to how an organization arrived at the current culture, operation, and standards. It may be because of past incidents, communications, or observations, that caused an organization to arrive to where it is now. Recognizing these factors demonstrates how an organization has evolved over time. To sustain a healthy, productive, and

enduring organization, research and analysis should frequently be conducted that helps us

understand and "…guides [our] beliefs, ideas, conclusions and actions" (Fisher, 2001). To test

those considerations, we adapt principal ideas, techniques, and methods that are significantly

based upon what we know or what we have learned from sources within what we are evaluating

and sources outside of it with similar challenges. While we are always thinking about something

every second of our conscious lives, analytical thinking is a process of engaging in a "higher

level of think that is purposeful and disciplined" (Kirby & Goodpaster, 2006). This is the essence

of conducting an analytical inquiry.

An example of analytical inquiry that can be commonly practiced in the workplace is

exploring how to maintain organizational civility. Commonly this is a relationship between

employees that is regulated through equal opportunity employment law. In my more than 2

decades of experience working with and for hundreds of organizations, I have learned that

policies alone are not enough to maintain cohesion amongst employees. To find root causes of

incivility that result in toxic workplaces, analytical inquiries must regularly be conducted to test

the effectiveness of policies, leadership, and organizational culture. These inquiries are vital

because regardless of policies, procedures, leadership, or norms that prohibit explicit

mistreatment "…incivility as a minor yet frequent form of mistreatment may be left

unchallenged" (Yao, J., 2022) if we are not consistently evaluating via analytical inquiry ways

improve cohesiveness amongst members of an organization even when that civility has been

accepted as a social norm.

Strategies to Analyze, Compare, and Contrast Data

There are 3 strategies we can use to analyze, compare, and contrast data when conducting

an analytical inquiry. First, we can identify similarities in the various pieces of information we

gather within and outside of the dilemma or subject we are analyzing. While there are a variety of resources available for one singular topic, not all are applicable to the same circumstance or culture. When discussing leadership effectiveness, we must recognize that effective leadership styles differ from culture to culture, locally, regionally and internationally.

Second, we can look for differences in data. While the cultures may be the same in a place where leadership is exercised, seek with curiosity differences in values, beliefs, and opinions that may lead to different outcomes to those challenges and dilemmas. By finding contrasting perspectives, it's an opportunity to assess the credibility and logic of all information gathered. In analyzing the totality of the differences, we justify or validate our own reasoning. It's important to first seek to understand the differences in values, beliefs, and opinions to understand our own, testing rather our own conclusions are valid or within reasoning. As Facione in *Thinking Critically* suggest, we self-regulate by questioning our own original thoughts, validating them and when a paradigm shift occurs due to new information learned or received, we self-correct our reasoning.

Lastly in documenting our inquiry, we can use a block structure to develop uniformity in identifying the similarities and differences of a topic and two opposing ideas of the topic. This is highly effective in the development of the overall completion of a research study, providing a well-organized series of comparisons that is easy for a reader to understand. The block structure can be used to not only compare and contract 2 ideas but also 3 or more ideas where outcomes may vary beyond simply one or another conclusion.

Encouraging Analytical Inquiry in the Workplace

In encouraging analytical inquiry in the workplace, first promote the idea that the way we as an organization conducts business is forever changing and rapidly evolving. On the topic of

leadership development, we encourage business leaders to explore what the overall goal of the organization is to maintain sustainability. While revenue leading to profit may appear at the surface to be the main goal of sustainability for an organization, we discover that "corporate social responsibility has intensified; organizations are under pressure to demonstrate their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) credentials" (Palmer, 2021). When a business does not demonstrate a due concern for its community it conducts business in or serves, trust is diminished and other means of obtaining such service is sought by the community resulting in a loss of profit. Promoting analytical inquiry would encourage the workforce to study trends and historical decisions of the organization that have created a disconnect with not just the community being served but too the general employees of the organization whose work performance may have decreased due to undesirable work conditions.

Ethics

"Human beings are not the strongest species on the planet. We're not the fastest, or maybe even the smartest" (Jake B., 2012). This declaration was part of the opening statement of Season 1, episode 4 of the television show *Touch*. The character Jake Bohm, played by David Mazouz is an autistic child fixated on mathematical theories of how humans connect. He goes on to say: "The one advantage we have is our ability to cooperate... to help each other out. We recognize ourselves in each other, and are programmed for compassion, for heroism, for love" (Jake B., 2012). His comments go on to assert that it is this very thing that makes us as humans stronger, faster, and smarter which is how we as a species survive and would ever want to. In reflecting on this notion, consider what the leading attribute would be for having such an ability to cooperate with one another. Aside from the occasional wars fought throughout history and

minute fraction of savagery toward one another compared to the overall global population, we as humans have faired well in our behaviors toward one another. These behaviors are built upon a series of moral principles, a set of rules or a guideline of acceptable conduct shared by all of society. We as a species have over time formed our own code of ethics: "Broad ethical aspirations that include a few general principles to guide behavior" (Collins & Miller, 2019). In practicing these ethical aspirations, we ask ourselves what is best in the welfare of ourselves and others when making life decisions and according to whose or what terms.

The who and what terms of ethics is sorted through a series of different types of ethics. They include but are not limited to supernaturalism, consequentialism, emotivism, virtue, subjectivism, intuitionism, situational, and duty-based to name a few. Each have their own form of devotion of authority that people give sanction to in determining what is just and what is unjust. Where ethics is constantly challenged is the shift in focus on ethics based on the values and beliefs people have individually. These values and beliefs are commonly shaped by culture, attitudes, and experiences. In a Utilitarian ethical behavior, ethical decisions are made based upon "…the greatest good for the greatest number of people affected" (Mills, 2019). There is a further argument that "If the action is beneficial to the greatest number of people affected by it, then it is right, [and that] if it is detrimental to the greatest number, then it is wrong" (Collins, 2019). This is an ethical theory I most practiced for many years with the belief that my decisions may never satisfy everyone. After a series of professional life experiences including the furtherance of my formal education, a paradigm shift occurred in which I recognized that the least number who may be harmed by the decision can be harmed physically, emotionally, or psychologically without action of ill intent. Recognizing this, I had to ask myself should the least have to bear a cost of suffering. Applying the theory to workplace culture, I experienced

cognitive dissonance where I observed behaviors in the workplace that could arguably been

deemed inappropriate. This included sexual jokes or comments, pranks, and labeling. While

these behaviors were done with the intent of building comradery, for a minor few, they saw these

behaviors as harassing and, in some cases, abusive physically and verbally. One has to wonder if

the overall group were ok with such conduct, does that mean the few have to endure it.

Refocusing my own intentions when determining what is ethical, I no longer look at what

is considered right or wrong but instead evaluate what is reasonable and what is unreasonable.

My attitude, my choice in how I respond to situations, and my well-intentioned intent shape my

ethical practices as a leader. The ethical theory I have found to match my ethical behavior is that

of a virtuous ethical decision maker.

Practicing Virtue Ethics as a Leader

To practice virtue ethics, is to have high morals and standards that allow us to make

decisions based on good intentions. As Nafsika Athanassoulis explains in the book *Virtue Ethics*,

we take normative ways in which we look at ethical decision making and split them into 2

different categories of how one would take account of the actions being observed. While we may

consider determining what is right based on the outcomes, we can also look at rather something

was ethical from the lens of those "that give an account of what is right in terms of the agent's

motives and intentions" (Athanassoulis, N., 2013). The profound view of ethics satisfies the

difficult decisions that are made in certain professions like law enforcement where although rare

in a career, a peace officer may be faced with the difficult decision of taking a life to save the life

of him/herself or the life of another. This is in stark contrast to supernaturalism ethics which

makes decisions be determined based on a source of moral rules of a god. This is commonly

found in religion in which people base their ethical compass on what they interpret from scriptures promoting a supernatural being.

Applying Virtue Ethics

Looking at virtue ethics in a broader context, we as humans can do horrific things. To suggest that a virtuous ethical leader will always make a good decision that is solely driven by an organizations policy or does not harm another is flawed. A virtuous ethical leader has a choice knowing that they are more than capable of doing something bad but chooses not to when it is not necessary. This is the psychological evaluation of keeping our attitudes in check even in the most vulnerable and stressed situations. As a law enforcement official, I reflect on moments where I found myself in dangerous situations where my own life was endangered solely because of the authority I was imposing on another as I attempted to take a person into custody in a case and manner prescribed by law. More specifically, to be assaulted by an individual trying to evade arrest by attempting to take my firearm and with reasonable assumption, take my life. In this situation, I made a choice to do what some would consider to be a bad thing which was to fight back in controlled violence to overcome his resistance and not succumb to his attempts. Although some may consider the act of violence to be bad, we place the act in the category of what would be considered reasonable, reaffirmed by legal precedence. As such, we can conclude ethical decisions that impact more than just ourselves as individuals are measured by what a majority of society deems to be acceptable and reasonable.

As described in this situation, people are flawed and are capable of doing some dangerous things at times societal rules are broken for justifiable reasons. When we refuse to break societal rules, we are denying ourselves the ability to make decisions that at times can be the most noble of things to include helping another person out and demonstrating compassion

through empathy. The decisions we choose to make are deeply rooted in our ethical decision framework.

Leadership

Leadership is the ability to always seek development opportunities and translate them into actions that empowers, encourages, and fulfills the needs of others. When exercising leadership, it is not self-serving but instead the willingness to be a vulnerable servant to those around you. Exercising leadership can sometimes be seen as a risk as you are challenged to both impose your values and consider the values of others with the intent creating the best version of you and those you are attempting to influence. But within that risk is the ability to build trust and other bonds that can benefit the leader, its followers, and the entity both may be a part of such as a business or family.

Strategies Essential to Leadership Effectiveness

While several exist, there are 3 strategies or behaviors that are essential to leadership effectiveness. The first is a focus on the psychological needs of an individual such as an employee. A model illustrating these needs is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs where people are motivated through a commitment to their personal and professional growth, self-fulfillment, and basic needs. "Human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need" (Maslow, A., 2022). With this in mind, we start with the basic needs where people want a leader or want to be a part of an organization where its leaders promote physiological needs. This includes time to refuel with nourishment, proper clothing, and rest. In a public safety profession, this is best paralleled with the need for first responders to be provided a moment between calls for service to eat, proper safety equipment that assist in their ability to

perform safely in hazardous conditions, and a moment to rehabilitate the mind and body through sleep or forms of deescalating the emotions generated from mitigating a severe event.

Next, people want to be provided safety where their dignity, reputation and job security is maintained. Above this, is a sense of belonging where people want to feel a part of the family or organization. This could include a friendship or team like atmosphere where interconnection and solidarity thrives as people are meeting their roles and responsibilities. Above this is the esteem of the individual where a person demands the social proof that their efforts are making a difference. This psychological need is in the form of feeling accomplished because of their works. Lastly, people have a desire to achieve self-fulfillment; a focus on reaching their full potential and explore their own creativity. My intention is to focus on all levels of these needs to obtain the highest quality of performance out of others as they simultaneously create the best quality of themselves.

Another strategy essential to leadership effectiveness is the ability to influence without the necessity of authority. Often leadership is seen as the ability to direct people utilizing rank, seniority, or tenure one may possess to give direction. We commonly see this in titles that are bestowed upon others in the workplace that give assumption that those holding the title have leadership qualities that encourages performance. An example of this is workplaces where rank titles exist such as Team Lead, or Team Leader. Within a household are the title of mother, father, or parent. To be in a position of influence a series of attributes and a talent must exist to inspire others to follow regardless of tenure, rank, title, or status. This is commonly referred to as social power which "comes from the ability to influence another in a social relation" (Uhl-bien, 2020). This influence is often gained through the actions of the leader and those actions are often aligned with the values, beliefs, and principles of the follower.

A third strategy that can be essential to leadership effectiveness is a focus on identifying shared cultural values amongst all members of an organization. Culture is comprised of hidden traits of beliefs and values. Beliefs are commonly described as a representation of "our subjective conviction in the truth of something - with or without proof." (Samovar, L. A., 2016). Those beliefs form the foundation of our values. The values that one holds are often defined as a unique set of "guidelines that assist us in deciding what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, right or wrong, and appropriate or inappropriate in almost every context of human activity" (Samovar, L. A., 2016). In measuring those values, we ask ourselves how important something is to us. We use our values and beliefs every day in our decision making as a compass of determining what fulfills us as human beings or in another way; what brings us self-satisfaction when it comes to the choices we make.

Application of Leadership Strategies

Creating a series of core values is a way of ensuring everyone has a shared set of cultural values that are aligned with their personal values. The tenants of respect, dignity, professionalism, compassion, fiscal responsibility, or stability are just a few core values that are commonly shared by everyone's culture. These same tenants can be part of a shared mission or set of core values of a workforce. When core values are established, legitimate power is gained. Legitimate power is the "extent in which a manager can use subordinates' internalized values and beliefs that the boss has a right to command to control their behavior" (Uhl-bien, 2020).

To be an effective leader in the workplace, these 3 strategies can be applied in how we deliver workplace harassment education. From personal experience of developing and delivering such curriculum to over 100,000 employees in various businesses and organizations each year, part of that education should include sharing the theories of working in what I like to call a

Respect-Based Leadership organization in an effort to promote a work environment free of discrimination, harassment, abusive conduct and retaliation. It's essential to go beyond policy by conveying a message to audiences of meaningful discussions about the type of work environment they envision and facilitating further discussion on how we can move toward that idea workplace. To cultivate a deeper self-reflection of social responsibility in creating such an environment, one can introduce learning activities that simulate and illustrate common challenges in the workplace that create cognitive dissonance in direct conflict of a shared set of values and beliefs. As these learning exercises are being conducted, we should encourage participants to rely on their core values to produce a desired outcomes that maintains a unified work environment. By incorporating educational opportunities that promotes culture, we in turn become more culturally conscious. As we become more culturally conscious, adapting to cultural differences becomes a habit.

Diversity and Multiculturalism

Diversity is the ability to recognize the various seen and unseen patterns, behaviors, traits, and identities of others and collaborate among those differences to create a new culture where all attributes are welcomed. One must be fluid recognizing that cultures within a community constantly changes as new cultures and behaviors are introduced into an environment. What is within diversity are the seen and unseen attributes of an individual or community. At the surface are the seen diversities like arts, languages, behaviors, dress, foods, and celebrations people may hold. These are traditionally characteristics that even if not understood, are recognizable and supposable. Underneath the surface is the unseen. This can consist of roles, values, customs, traditions, rules, status, beliefs, thought patterns, experiences, relationships, restrictions, identity, and regional economic status. These are deep, less

changeable, but not impossible portions of ones culture. Unless one engages in inquisitive

curiosity, our culture may not be known or understood by another person because most of our

culture is hidden or internal.

Multiculturalism is the understanding of how despite our surface level differences, we

can belong to multiple cultures due to a series of experiences we share with people throughout

our lives. Multiculturalism is an acknowledgment of how much the world has changed over the

centuries, even more so within the last century due to technology that has allowed us to travel

and connect with one another faster than any other time in history. "This global dynamism is

characterized by dramatic alterations in technology, increased world travel, many new economic

and political institutions, shifts in immigration patterns, growing demographic diversity, and

greater population density" (Samovar, L. A., 2016).

A challenge with understanding the complexities of diversity and multiculturalism is

when we have cross-culture misunderstanding. In moments of communication, we exhibit certain

behaviors or may use certain gestures that may be socially acceptable in one place but take on a

different and sometimes offensive meaning in another. In some cases What one sees within their

perception may be different than what presently exist. What we perceive is determined by "the

way in which we receive and interpret information from any of our senses" (Bucher 2015, p. 64).

The meaning of something can be widely different in different cultures, workplaces, or localities

and therefore to be an effective leader it is important that we do not always make our meaning of

something, someone else's reality. Instead, it is important that we regularly analysis the

relationships being built among others who may have physical differences at the surface within a

workplace but unseen commonalities. In a workforce, we should determine what are the

significant forms of communication that are occurring between colleagues that are fostering a

positive and meaningful relationship, and use those engagements as a guideline or example to

help others understand the results of tolerance and inclusivity of other cultures. Inclusivity is the

beginning of the organization itself creating its own multitude of culture and when fused together

the formation of a unique multiculturalism within.

Communicating and Promoting Inclusivity in a Diverse Workplace and Community

3 strategies I currently use to communicate inclusivity in a culturally diverse workplace is

the promotion of understanding local acculturation and cross culture communication as I

facilitate cultural diversity presentations, sharing the various cultural traits, behaviors, values and

beliefs of others both locally, and internationally. America consists of a multitude of cultures due

to the number of people migrating to the country with different natural origins. These cultures

are multiplied as people from those different national origins practice acculturation.

Acculturation is "…a process through which a person or group from one culture comes to adopt

the practices and values of another culture, while still retaining their own distinct culture" (Cole,

N. L., 2020).

Second, organization can make a commitment to diversity that goes beyond simply

sharing cultural differences. If there was a motivation to promote diversity, employers can look

no further than the profit margins generated as a biproduct of having a workplace with a wide

variety people from various backgrounds. I disagree with Delongs' assertion that "Diversity

training alone rarely leads to changes in attitudes and behavior." (Delong, T., 2007) I find that

how we define and deliver training is what makes the difference in causing a paradigm shift for

individuals in the workplace. I intend to challenge the perception of how we look at cultural

diversity training, Part of that includes instead of calling it training, perhaps we can use terms

like educational opportunity or development which subconsciously changes the perception of the

employee attending. In its delivery will also be an opportunity of inviting diversity of thought

and an opportunity for the audience (the employees) to share their own culture. His is part of an

attempt to demonstrate the value of diversity, allowing employees to learn about one another

thus creating a workforce that fosters a professional yet bonding relationship amongst one

another.

Third, in my law enforcement career I aim to encourage my fellow law enforcement

colleagues to practice the art of cultural consciousness as they respond to calls for service.

Exercising the duties of a peace officer is not just about enforcing laws within a codified system

implemented through legislation or societal vote. To be an effective peace officer in any

community, it takes an understanding of a communities' cultures and values. What may be an

effective crime fighting method in one neighborhood may have little to no effect in another if

one lacks an understanding of what is important to that community or cultural trends that may

contribute to making a community more vulnerable to certain crimes. Learning about cultural

trends helps built trust between the organization, its communities served and the profession as a

whole.

An example of this is using culture in solving crime. In some communities, families may

regularly leave shoes on the front porch of a home as they may discourage them to be worn

inside the home. This is common amongst families with national origins tied to many Asian

cultures. When those shoes are not seen on the porch, it may be a signal to prowlers monitoring

the residence that no one is home and that the home is vulnerable to being burglarized. With this

cultural knowledge, peace officers may promote safety campaigns, conduct additional patrol

checks of areas that may have a high population of members who engage in this practice, or even

implement intelligence led policing strategies to predict future crimes based on trend. Part of building a community oriented policing strategy is to be aware of cultural practices amongst community members especially amongst victims. In other instances, community members may have a cultural distrust in law enforcement due to experiences in other countries or historical connotations of policing practices toward certain races. By demonstrating a proactive approach to policing through cultural consciousness, one is showing the community that it values diversity and multiculturalism, not discouraging it to avoid being victimized.

Conclusion

Leadership within an organization can be practiced by anyone. The practice is not exclusive to those who are identified as managers or supervisors. The art of leadership is to consistently analyze the organizational behaviors and culture of the organization and use this information to navigate the people within toward a direction of continued prosperity where both the needs of the organization and the needs of one another within that organization are being met. The culmination of this year and 8-month study of organizational leadership has compartmentalized the key elements that are essential to becoming an effective leader in an organization. The key concepts of ethical decision making, leadership styles, and the embracement and benefits of diversity and inclusivity. An organization that performs while keeping a commitment to its core values in sight creates its own fusion of multiculturalism built on a shared set of values that can be used to build stronger leaders, and a stronger organization.

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