Leadership Propositions for Team Success

[1]Anita Bans-Akutey*, [2]Emelia Ohene Afriyie, [3]Benjamin Makimilua Tiimub

[1]Department of Business Administration, BlueCrest University College, Ghana
[2] Department of Management and Public Administration, Accra Technical University, Ghana
[3] Department of Environmental Engineering, College of Environmental and Resource Sciences, 310058, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

* anita.bans@bluecrest.edu.gh

ABSTRACT

Several leadership philosophies and theories guide and facilitate the attainment of organizational objectives. While traditional leadership styles tend to be more authoritative and directive; modern leadership styles are generally flexible, transparent, and inspirational; with most leaders leading by objectives. Some of these modern philosophies facilitate effective leadership, motivate followers and subordinates to perform efficiently and effectively, encourage team building and clear vision, facilitate a smooth change process while making room for the use of information, communication and technology tools. With the adoption of these modern styles of leadership, the autocratic style of leadership is gradually phasing off amidst losing popularity. It is therefore, recommended that leaders adopt a blend of supportive, participative and achievement-oriented styles of leadership. As much as possible, the directive style should be minimized or completely done away with if management seeks to attain team success.

Keywords: leadership, motivation, team success, e-leadership, change management

I. INTRODUCTION

Organisations, depending on how long they have been in existence, are guided by a variety of leadership philosophies that management believes will help in the attainment of objectives. Such managers are guided by classical and contemporary theories as well as empirical studies in developing leadership plans (Toor & Ofori, 2008). Before the twentieth century, the most common leadership style was autocratic leadership. With this style of leadership, making decisions was an activity that was reserved for only top management officials who did not deem it necessary to consult other employees of the same firm or factor their opinions in decisions that were taken. In recent times, things have transformed such that there has been a great decline in the practice of autocratic leadership styles in several business organisations (Kanungo, 1998). Leadership nowadays, is generally "characterized by more flexibility" (Panetta, 2012), "transparency" (Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011), "inspiration over decision" (Harris, 2004) as well as "leading by goals" (Northouse, 2016). This paper presents a leadership concepts for organisations with a focus on clear corporate recommendations that theoretically support effective leadership approaches for team success based on opportunities and challenges (Gokenbach, 2003; Gordon, 2005)

II. THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Scholars over the years have developed theories which elaborate majorly on why individuals get to leadership positions and have written extensively on such theories (Management Adda, 2019; Bans-Akutey, 2021; Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). These theories emphasize on special attributes, traits and behaviours people have that influence the way they lead at the workplace. "The Great Man Theory", "Trait Theory", "Behavioral Theory", "Situational Approach", "Skills Approach", and "Path-Goal Theory" are some of the classical theories of leadership examined in this paper.

"The Great Man Theory" which is also sometimes called the "Great Person Theory" exposes that "leaders are born with some special characteristics that enable them to lead" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). According to Thomas Carlyle "who made this theory popular" (Organ, 1996), once the appropriate situation presents itself, a leader is very much likely to emerge (Northouse, 2016). According to Bans-Akutey & Tiimub (2021), the "Great Man theory does not have any direct focus on followers, the immediate surrounding of the leader or the variety of situations that are likely to emerge; the

focus is majorly on the leader without taking into consideration variable environmental factors".

Colbert et al. (2012) explains that the "Trait Theory, which is almost the same as the great man theory, identifies that inherent qualities such as great personality, charisma, confidence, intellect, communication and social skills are inborn and not learnt". Researchers have however been unable to finalise on "the list of characteristics, traits and abilities" necessary for leading efficiently. (Management Adda, 2019). The "list of characteristics" seems dependent on which dominant trait a known or popular leader exhibits (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

"Behavioural theories, however, have facilitated a change of the narrative from the knowledge that leaders are born with inherent leadership characteristics; to the factual reality that leadership can be acquired" (Derue et al., 2011). According to Bans-Akutey & Tiimub (2021), "the behavioural theory is based majorly on how leaders carry themselves about and act as against their traits and characteristics". This means that "no matter the in-born traits or characteristics inherent in an individual, when exposed to the right environment, they are most likely to develop leadership attributes". The right behaviour in this case can be learnt or acquired by potential leaders even if they were not born with particular leadership traits or characteristics.

The situational approach places emphasis on the fact that "there are mainly two different sides of leadership; thus the directive dimension and supportive dimension" (Northouse, 2016). The directive dimension is more instructional and followers tend to take detailed information regarding processes or operations from their superiors or managers. The supportive dimension comparatively, provides guidelines that ensure that employees have the requisite information and assistance to be able to efficiently achieve set objectives. "For every circumstance that surfaces, the leader is expected to appropriately analyse which of these dimensions is most suitable for his team of followers" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). "Keeping the capacity of followers in mind, the leader takes a decision on whether to give direction or provide the required support in the execution of a given task. Managers who implore the use of situational approach need to guard against micromanaging their employees" (Bans-Akutey, 2020).

The Skills Approach "places emphasis on talents and expertise which people can acquire and develop in contrast to the Big Man Theory and Trait Theory. In as much as in-born traits and inherent characteristics are significant for the attainment of leadership, effective leadership further requires in-depth capacity and capability development" (Northouse, 2016; Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). It suggests that leading effectively "results from many learned skills like knowledge of technique, principles and methods – technical skills; capacity to interact with other people meaningfully – human skills; and ability to develop new and innovative ideas for running the organisation – conceptual skills".

The Path-Goal Theory of leadership is a well advanced leadership theory which was proposed by "Robert House in 1971". "The theory posits that a selected leadership style needs to be dependent on several conditions – ensuring that there is a clear equilibrium between behaviour, need and context" (EPM, 2019). According to Northouse (2016), "the path-goal theory stresses on how leaders tend to motivate their followers so as to achieve set objectives". Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021) explain that "it was developed based on the expectancy theory of motivation where employees believe they can attain a set target from their employer; that they will be appropriately rewarded when the set target is sufficiently achieved; and that the reward is important and of superior value". According to the theory, "followers are motivated when the leader provides the needed support; this is achieved through defining goals, clarifying the path, removing obstacles and providing assistance" (Northouse, 2016). "The path-goal theory significantly sees to it that a leader makes use of a leadership style which is grounded on features of subordinates and environmental factors; in addition to a focus on motivation factors" (Bans-Akutey, 2021).

Bans- Akutey (2021) argues that "unlike other theories, the path-goal theory is not so straight forward". Owing to this, there is no particular style of leadership that best suits all situations hence the contingent approach. "With regards to the path-goal theory, each circumstance is considered peculiar and may require a leader to make use of a directive style –

which is related to the task being performed; a supportive style - which is relationship based; participative style – which is related to the process being used; and achievement-oriented style – which tends to be identity or status related" (EPM, 2019). This means that "a leader who makes use of the path-goal theory may employ the use of any of the four styles of leadership during any moment in time or a combination depending on characteristics of subordinates and environmental factors".

Environmental factors include "how specific tasks are structured, formal authority in organisations and controlling techiques, and level of support from the subordinate's team members or the organizational structure and culture" (EPM, 2019). "During situations where a subordinate does not receive the needed assistance and support from members of his workgroup, the leader is likely to make use of the supportive leadership style which tends to be more productive and results-oriented if leaders do not duplicate existing environmental structures in the organisation" (Bans-Akutey, 2021). During cases "where the organisation has existing formal authority systems and controls in place, as much as possible the directive style needs to be reduced to the barest minimum; also when tasks are well structured and seem repetitive, leaders are required to reduce direct instructions as much as possible" (Gardner et al., 2005).

It is generally argued that "the path-goal theory and the situational approach share very common similarities if not considered the same; nevertheless, though they share some similarities, they are totally different theories altogether" (Bans-Akutey, 2021). While on one hand "the situational approach requires that leadership adapt their styles to the level of subordinate development, on the other hand path-goal theory recommends that leaders adapt their leadership styles to suit subordinates' motivational requirements" (Northouse, 2016). "The path-goal theory serves as an aid for leaders, thus facilitating their understanding regarding how their leadership styles impact on subordinate motivation thus providing a link that connects leadership theory to motivational theory" (EPM, 2019). The significance of the path-goal theory is that it makes leaders aware of the fact that they are expected to assist their subordinates achieve set objectives.

.

III. LEADERSHIP STYLE THAT FACILITATES MOTIVATION

Leadership plays a very significant function in the success or otherwise of a group or team considering the fact that one of the main responsibilities of leaders is to motivate subordinates so they are able to attain set organisational goals. Mitchel (1982) explains that "motivation encompasses identification of those characteristics that serve as drivers to people's behaviours and propels them to participate in the desired behaviour". However, "there are various motives for which people do the things they do based on their individual peculiar needs". Owing to this, " what motivates one person may not necessarily motivate the other" (Mitchel, 1982). Considering how complex individual needs and motives are, various theories have been employed to explain the concept of Motivation. Among such theories are "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory / Motivator-Hygiene, McGregor's X and Y Theories, McClelland's Need Achievement Theory, The Equity Theory, Value – Percept Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Porter-Lawler Model" (Badubi, 2017).

According to Bans-Akutey (2021), Maslow's hierarchy of needs groups human needs in five stages (categories) and explains that depending on which level an individual has attained, will be satisfied and motivated to work productively if real present necessities are met appropriately. "The five stages of Maslow's theory are physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs" (Smith & Cronje, 1992). "Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory establishes satisfiers or characteristics of work that bring about fulfillment in an organisation's employees. Some of these satisfiers are achievement, fulfillment, recognition, the nature of the actual work being done, responsibility and advancement" (Saif et al., 2012). "McGregor's X and Y theories categorise employees in two main groups – theories X and Y" (McGregor, 1960). "Theory X, proposes that employees mostly dislike work and need to be coerced, controlled or threatened with punishment in addition to being directed before they are able to produce the desired results; while Theory Y, on the other hand, proposes that if employees are sufficiently satisfied with their work, they tend to work effectively" . "McClelland's need achievement theory argues that individuals are driven to excel as a result of their own personal aspiration" (Saif et

al., 2012). "The Equity Theory explains that employees will always consider how much work is put in achieving an objective and the rewards that are derived from assigned responsibilities; therefore if anticipated reward is high, they will work satisfactorily" (Naveed et al., 2011). "The Value - Percept Theory states that personal values directly influence an employee's satisfaction" (Anderson et al., 2001). "The main assumption of Vrooms's expectancy theory is to gain maximun satisfaction while decreasing dissatisfaction among employees" (Wagner & Hollenburg, 2007). "The Porter-Lawler Model mainly exposes that the way an individual behaves is affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic elements, personal goals, individual needs, personal desires and the capability to take decisions between possible behaviours" (Wagner & Hollenburg, 2007).

These motivation theories, though they apply to individuals also relate to groups as groups are constituted by the individuals. "The concept of motivation, however, becomes more complicated with the formation of teams. This is as a result of the fact that individuals in the team or group will have diverse specific personal needs that need to be met to get them motivated to give off their best" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). "If these several diverse personal motivation needs likely to be present in a team, are not well managed by leadership, some members of the team may not work as expected while on the other hand, those who are motivated will work excellently" (Wolman, 1956). Management therefore needs to explore ways of satisfying each member of the team.

IV. LEADERSHIP STYLE THAT FACILITATES TEAM BUILDING AND CLEAR VISION

Leaders make use of various styles to ensure team objectives are achieved effectively. "Wolman (1956) identifies four leadership styles that influence the potential changes of a group. These are weak leadership, excessive deference to authority, blocking and evaluation apprehension. These leadership styles can positively or negatively impact a group depending on what motivates individuals in the group" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

Bans-Akutey & Tiimub (2021) argue that "if a group or team has weak leadership, it simply means the leader is mostly not firm enough when it comes to decision making and is not able to provide the needed direction for the team. When this happens, a

member of the group may volunteer to perform the 'directing' responsibility of the leader". The adversee effect of this on the team is not likely to be very critical if the subordinate has sufficient information to facilitate excellent decisions. However, if information is insufficient, "the group may be prone to losing focus and direction as a result of misplaced priorities; which may have the potential of delaying the achievement of the team's goals".

"Excessive deference to authority refers to a scenario where individual members of the group appear to mostly agree with the leader without any sort of opposition to activities or projects that the leader initiates". The problem here is that when the leader happens to make a mistake, none of the team members says anything. "This mostly negatively impacts organisations as project timelines, quality and cost are not achieved" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

Blocking happens when information flow among individual members of a team is disrupted (Bryman, 2004). "It is worth noting that when information flows freely among team members, it facilitates efficiency and effectiveness" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). When within a team, as a result of the close "relationship between the leader and some few team members", those few individual members of the team are able to have access to some information that is not available to the others; such team members withhold the information they have with the other group that is not close to the leader. This likely to bring division in the team thereby causing some team members to be deprived of the necessary essential information to achieve the set objective. "An advantage however is that blocking ensures that confidential information does not go outside of the team" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). It becomes rather difficult for competitors to make use of such confidential information against organisations who own the information.

"Sometimes, individual members of a team tend to feel they are misunderstood, judged wrongly or harshly by other team members. During such circumstances, the grieved team members withdraw or hold back their thoughts. This is called evaluation apprehension. Members of a team who are unable to express their opinions, feelings or thoughts freely due to perpetual criticisms from fellow team members are likely to become demotivated" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). "A leader in such a situation needs

to ensure that all team members have the freedom to express themselves freely without fear" (Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff, 1991).

V. LEADERSHIP STYLE THAT FACILITATES CHANGE

In considering an approach that facilitates change in an organisation, "transactional and transformational leadership styles" are the best fit. "Transactional leadership basically describes the cost-benefit reciprocal phenomenon that exists between leaders and their followers" (Bass, 1985). Northouse (2016) explains that "transactional leadership refers to various models of leadership which build on the exchanges that occur between leaders and followers". "Transformational leadership, on the other hand builds on the theory of transactional leadership" (Bass, 1985); though the opposite is not entirely true. Bryman (1992) argues that "since there are clear-cut dimensions (Bass, 1985), a leader can be both transactional and transformational simultaneously". "A transformational leader is one who encourages and stimulates followers to attain more than what management expects" (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). When an organisation is undergoing a major change in various aspects of its operations, employees tend to sometimes resist the change. During such times, transformational style of leadership may be used to get the best out of employees by reducing their resistance towards the change. This implies that, if an organisation is undergoing change, the best approach to ensure employees do more than management expects from them is the transformational leadership approach. (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

VI. INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE THAT FACILITATES THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Innovative, sustainable leadership in human systems and dynamic environments is achievable within the sustainable development goals and philosophical concepts (Tiimub et al., 2021). With the adoption of technology in this century it is very difficult if not impossible to have leadership devoid of the use of "information and communication technology" (ICT). Most organisations make use of technology in communicating with employees (Armstrong & Sambamurthy, 1999; Colwill & Townsend, 1999). According to Sweetser & Kelleher (2011), social media, which appeals to the younger generation,

has found its way into the corporate world. E-Leadership basically refers the communication between leaders and their followers with the use of ICT.

E-Leadership ensures interaction between employees and employers; subordinates and superiors; team members and team leaders; for constructive feedback (Goh & Wasko, 2012) as well as leading by intellectual stimulation and individual consideration (Avolio, Kahai, & Dodge, 2000). The use of organizational intranet, wikis, social media, and conferencing applications among others are common ICT tools that facilitate e-leadership.

VII. CONCLUSION

Summarily, various forms of theoretical support are required alongside good motivation for effective team building and envisioning to pave ways for desired change processes, which when aided by innovativeness and the use of technology, could actually propel organizational team successes in modern leadership perspectives that ought to effectively engage individuals and groups as clearly pointed in this review. It is therefore, recommended that leaders adopt a blend of supportive, participative and achievement-oriented styles of leadership. As much as possible, the directive style should be minimized or completely done away with. To facilitate change, leadership should consider the transformational leadership approach or a blend of "transactional and transformational leadership styles" as the combination has proven to also produce excellent results. And it is good to also blend management with leadership in order to overcome eminent challenges while optimizing unique opportunities with propositions meant for success while providing a clear direction for future leadership research

VIII. REFERENCES

Anderson, H., Singale, M., & Svana, V. (2001). *Psychology in the work context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Armstrong, C. P., & Sambamurthy, V. (1999). Information technology assimilation in firms: The influence of senior leadership and IT infrastructures. *Information systems research*, 10(4), 304-327.

Avolio, B. J., Kahai, S., & Dodge, G. E. (2000). E-leadership: Implications for theory, research, and practice. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(4), 615-668.

Badubi, R. M. (2017). Theories of Motivation and Their Application in Organizations: A Risk Analysis. *International Journal of Innovation and Economic Development*, 3(3), 44-51. DOI:10.18775/ijied.1849-7551-7020.2015.33.2004.

Bans-Akutey, A. (2021). The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership. *Academia Letters*, Article 748. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL748.

Bans-Akutey, A. & Tiimub, B. M. (2021). The Effect of Leadership Styles on the Dynamics of a Group. *Academia Letters*, Article 2061. https://doi.org/10. 20935/AL20

Bans-Akutey, A. & Tiimub, B. M. (2021). Assessing Transactional and Transformational Leadership on Workgroup Behaviour. *Academia Letters*, Article 3044. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3044

Bans-Akutey, A. (2020). Differentiating micromanagement from effective management: A manager's guide. *Global Scientific Journal*, 8(11), 827-833

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. The Free Press, New York.

Baškarada, S., Watson, J. & Cromarty, J. (2016). Balancing transactional and transformational leadership. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 25(3), 506-515.

Bryman, A. (1992). *Charisma and leadership in Organizations*. London: Sage.

Bryman, A. (2004). Qualitative research on leadership: A critical but appreciative review. *Leadership Q.*, 15(6), 729–769.

Colbert, A. E., Judge, T. A., Choi, D., & Wang, G. (2012). Assessing the trait theory of leadership using self and observer ratings of personality: The mediating role of contributions to group success. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(4), 670-685.

Colwill, J., & Townsend, J. (1999). Women, leadership and information technology: the impact of women leaders in organizations and their role in integrating information technology with corporate strategy. *Journal of Management Development*, 18(3), 207-216.

Czarniawska-Joerges, B., & Wolff, R. (1991). Leaders, managers, entrepreneurs on and off the organization. Organ. Stud., 12(4), 529–547.

Derue, D. S., Nahrgang, J. D., Wellman, N. E. D., & Humphrey, S. E. (2011). Trait and behavioral theories of leadership: An integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Personnel psychology*, 64(1), 7-52.

Dunaetz, D. (2018). Path-Goal Theory (Chap 6) Leadership by Northouse, 8th ed. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/Zub6tdiLX04.

EPM (2019, April 26). Path-Goal Theory of Leadership [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/62Hs- 4QJf5Q.

Gardner, W. L., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., May, D. R., & Walumba, F. O. (2005). Can you see the real me? A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *Leadership Q.*, 16(3), 343–347

Goh, S., & Wasko, M. (2012). The effects of leader-member exchange on member performance in virtual world teams. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 13(10), 861- 885.

Gokenbach, V. (2003). Infuse management with leadership. *Nurs. Manage*, 34(1), 8–9.

Gordon, A., & Yukl, G. (2005). The future of leadership research: Challenges and opportunities. *German J. Hum. Resour. Res.*, 18(3), 359–365.

Harris, A. (2004). Distributed leadership and school improvement: leading or misleading? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 32(1), 11-24.

Kanungo, R. N. (1998). Leadership in organizations: Looking ahead to the 21st century. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 39(1-2), 71-82.

Lloyd-Walker, B., & Walker, D. (2011). Authentic leadership for 21st century project delivery. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29(4), 383-395.

McGregor, D. (1960). Theory X and theory Y. *Organization theory*, 358-374.

Management Adda (2019, September 20). Leadership Theories [Video file]. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/WOtBp0D85LI.

Mitchell, T. R. (1982). Motivation: New directions for theory, research, and practice. *Academy of management review*, 7(1), 80-88.

Naveed, A., Usman, A., & Bushra, F. (2011). Promotion: A Predictor of Job Satisfaction A Study of Glass Industry of Lahore (Pakistan). *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(16), 301-305.

Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Sage edge Publications, London 7th edition.

Organ, D. W. (1996). Leadership: The great man theory revisited. *Business Horizons*, 1-4.

Panetta, L. (2012). *Sustaining US global leadership: priorities for 21st century defense*. Washington, DC: US Department of Defense.

Saif, K. F., Nawaz, A., Jan, A. & Khan, M. I. (2012) Synthesizing the theories of job-satisfaction across the cultural/attitudinal dimensions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(9), 1382-1396.

Simon & Schuster Books. (2012, March 13). Lessons in Leadership from Steve Jobs [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ2ewY-0i34

Smith, P. J., & Cronje, G.J. (1992). *Management principles*. A Contemporary South African edition. Kenwyn.

Sweetser, K. D., & Kelleher, T. (2011). A survey of social media use, motivation and leadership among public relations practitioners. *Public Relations Review*, 37(4), 425-428.

Tiimub, B. M., Bans-Akutey, A., Tiimob, E. N. & Agyenta J. J. (2021). Innovative Perspectives on Addressing Realities Confronting Humans in Aesthetic Natural Environments: A Reviewed Communication Based on Sun Tzu''s Leadership Philosophical Concepts. *East African Scholars Multidiscip Bull*, 4(4), 28-38

Toor, S-R., Ofori, G. (2008). Leadership versus Management: How They Are Different, and Why. *Leadership Manage. Eng.*, 8(2), 61-71.

Wagner, J. A., & Hollenburg, J. R. (2007). *Organisational Behaviour*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle: Prentice Hall.

Wolman, B. (1956). Leadership and group dynamics. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(1), 11-25.