

Research/Technical Note

Configuration of Interactions in Leadership Practices

Linda Yun Dong^{1,2}, Charles Liu^{2,3,*}, Tony Peng-Hao Dong², Raymond Pyan Shaw⁴

¹Department of Economics, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

²PSI Work Group AU, SmartSys, Sydney, Australia

³Department of Computing, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

⁴PSI Work Group CA, SmartSys, Toronto, Canada

Email address:

linda.yun.dong@PSI_smartsys.org (L. Y. Dong), charles.liu@mq.edu.au (C. Liu), tony.dong@PSI_smartsys.org (T. Peng-Hao Dong), raymond.shaw@PSI_smartsys.org (R. P. Shaw)

*Corresponding author

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Abstract: Recent trending always consider that astute leadership practice requires followership - they are Yin and Yen of successful leadership practice. However, a successful leadership practice can't isolated from leadership traits and behaviors, leadership personal factors such as identity construct, gender, narcissism level, aesthetic, ethic and justice level, as well as the influence of followership. In this paper, multiple aspects that contributed to the success of the leadership practice are studied. Some important concepts of Leadership is introduced. Components, including leader, follower, communication and situation and the interactions regarding leader are also analyzed. Related issues such as leadership modeling, trait and behavior, personal factors and influence of followership, are critically discussed along with conclusions and practical suggestions.

Keywords: Leadership, Followership, Traits, Identity, Narcissism, Aesthetic Level, Ethic and Justice Level

1. Introduction

In operations management, leadership impacts the performance of the organization in many ways [20, 23]. A team with a good leadership usually may have better performance on coordination and communication, which brings higher efficiency with lower cost due to the reduction of the loss of dealing with the internal friction in the team.

The impact of leadership can also be seen in many negative cases [17, 32]. Even though it is not uncommon that boards change leaders when enterprises are slip, actually the essential core to solve the problem lies in improving leadership, that enhances management and raises the probabilities of better performance.

The style is one of the most importantly symbolic of leadership's features [36]. Even though in most cases, the performance of a team can be stimulated strongly by financial/status reward, it must be in a particular leadership style to optimize and guarantee its efficiency [40]. Therefore,

it can be seen that the performance of an organization depends on the coordination of both the leaders and followers, making the followership an integral part in studying leadership and the organization management [3, 27, 35].

The importance of followership toward the leadership practice success is arousing more attentions of both industry and academic experts. Leadership and followership are considered as Yin and Yen, which are equally important toward the successful leadership practices. This paper argues that, though followership is a necessary force of driving to successful leadership practices, for example, the significant contribution of effective followership, successful leadership practice is a result of the interaction between many factors.

Considering the influence of the base of leadership, three main issues are studied in this paper. Firstly, leadership traits and behaviors affect the successful of leadership practice directly. Secondly, identity construct, gender, narcissism level, aesthetic, ethic and justice level all contribute to the success of leadership practices significantly. Finally, effective

followership contributes to the successful leadership practices while problematic followership is the obstacle to the success of leadership. Related conclusions are given with analysis and discussion of the issues on leadership modeling, traits, behaviors, personality and followers influence.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the definition, model, and concept of leadership with a discussion on its components and relationship. The difference between the management and leadership is also discussed. Section 3 introduces traits and behaviors theory with a discussion on the interrelation between. Sections 4 discusses some typical personal factors and their impacts on leadership. Considering the interactions in the team, Section 5 discuss the influence of followership. Finally, Section 6 presents our conclusions along with some suggestions.

2. Leadership Modeling

2.1. Leadership and Its Model

Leadership actually can be seen as an organizational process that a person serves as a leader to influence the other members to serve as followers in the organization under a cohesive and coherent mechanism to accomplish a goal by performing a series of tasks with both the individual and collective behaviors [30].

Depending on how leader approached duties and people, the leadership can be modeled as a four-quadrants-grid, namely managerial grid model, according to the extent of each characteristic (as shown in Figure 1). Four types of leader are introduced in the model, including 'Country Club Feelers', 'Impoverished Muddlers', 'Team Leading Engagers', and 'Authoritarian Thinkers' [3-6]. It can be seen that the difference between type 'Country Club Feelers' and 'Team Leading Engagers' lies in the task-based evaluation while type the 'Engagers' and 'Authoritarian Thinkers' in the strength of people skills. The former one reflects the level of profession and the latter of social skills.

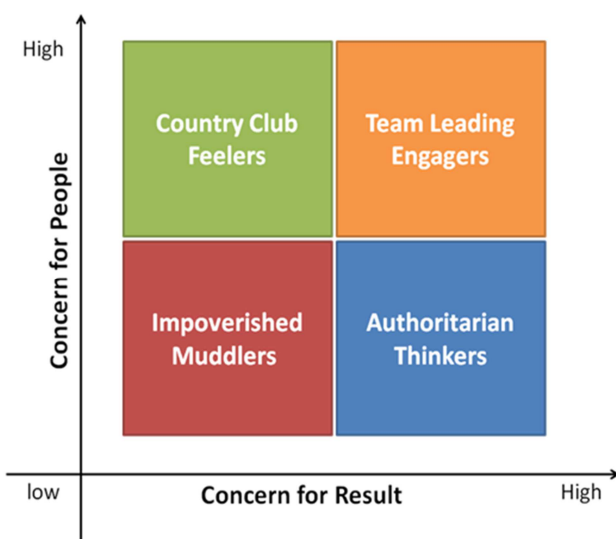


Figure 1. Leadership Grid.

Usually, leadership is discussed together with management. In most practical cases, the role of a leader often is played by a manager in the team. However, there are many subtle differences between the leadership and management. The main difference between is the leadership focus more on the goal and vision (do the right thing) while management concentrate more on guaranteeing the accomplishment of the task and the performance of the operations (do a thing right). Table 1 shows the difference between leadership and management regarding the responsibility and division of work in the organization, where they are similar in functions but different in effects.

Table 1. The difference between leadership and management.

Leadership	Management
Leadership defined in terms of what they do; leading people as a ruler, inspiring people as a motivator and facilitating or guiding them as a coach or mentor.	Management depicted as processes keeping a system of people and technology running smoothly, whereas leadership defines the view of the future, aligning people with that vision and inspiring them to make it happen.
Leadership is associated with-risk taking, dynamics, creativity, change, and vision.	Management is concerned with efficiency, planning, paperwork, procedures, regulations/control, and consistency.
Leadership emphasising innovate, strategy, long-term views.	Management focusing on administrate, maintain, control, tactics, specific focus, local.
Leadership energising staffs with a sense of direction and commitment.	Management allocating work tasks.
Leadership establishing/transforming organisational arrangements.	Management maintaining existing organisational arrangements.
Leadership involves engaging 'hearts and minds'.	Management coordinated through organisation structure.
Leadership originates.	Management initiates.
Leadership asks what and why.	Management asks how and when.
Leadership challenges it.	Management accepts the status quo.
Leadership is fundamentally a value — choosing, and thus a value-laden activity.	Management is the guarantee of the performance — supervision, monitoring, and adjustment to perform the task in efficient way.
Leaderships are thought to do the right things.	Managements are thought to do things right.

+ The difference between leadership and management discussed in terms of responsibility and division of work.

2.2. The Components of Leadership and Their Interactions

In leadership, there are four main factors supporting the structure of leadership [1], which are leader, followers, communication and situation.

2.2.1. Leader

The leader usually serves as the decision maker in the team. The performance of leader impacts the operations of the organizational behavior. The quality of a leader can be evaluated by two primary aspects: professional qualities and personal qualities. As for professional qualities, knowledge, and understanding about the position, task and capability to perform the work are the key elements to guarantee the

feasibility of the operations. As for personal qualities, the factors, such as mode of thinking, personality, social skill and emotional quotient, impact the efficiency and availability of the operations [21, 34]. Usually, the former qualities can be obtained by training and education while the latter by experience.

The operations in a team can be recognized as a system, subsystem or equipment in a specified operable and committable state at the start of a mission. The goal is certain, but the outcome is not assured. The leader serves as a role in the team that has a long weighted trigger to drive the team to work and change. It can be seen that the mode of leadership can influence the performance of the team. Therefore, the quality of leader plays a major role in the teamwork.

Notably, it is not the leader but the followers of the team that determines if the leader is successful. Thus the relationship between leader and followers has an impact on the operations. If the members lack confidence in the leader, the team will be uninspired. To convince the followers that the leader is worthy of being followed, it needs both the professional qualities and personal qualities co-work under a particular task circumstance.

2.2.2. Follower

Regarding follower, this role serves as an individual factor in the team. In most cases, followers are recruited by their professional quality for the task rather than selected as leader by their personal quality also. Considering the characteristics of the individual, it is hard to guarantee the personality of the followers. Therefore, different types of follower may require different styles of leadership to organize and inspire. In addition, the experience of the follower in the team is a significant factor. Usually, a newcomer in the team requires more supervision than an experienced member does. A person who lacks motivation requires more different approaches to inspire than one with a high degree of motivation. Even though the follower is professional enough to the task, due to the breaking in period, it is still needed to condition a new piece of a team by a procedure of adapting and adjusting. By giving an initial period of running under a particular load of work (light load, heavy load, normal load or mixed load) adaptively, good leadership helps the follower acquire both the self-recognition and the sense of teamwork in the team. Therefore, having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation is one of the fundamental skills to perform excellent leadership.

2.2.3. Communication

As for the communication in the team, it helps to build up the links among the members and leader. The strength of the links depends on the mode of communication. What and how to communicate either helps or harms the relationship in the team. Given leader, an organizational communication is planned rather than casual. A leader needs to clarify the goal of the communication and anticipate the receiver's viewpoint and feelings in advance. In most cases, a leader-launched communication is mainly aiming at delivering the message to express the meaning with conviction regarding the tasks and

goals. However, two-way communication usually has a better effect than one-way regarding teamwork. Therefore, communication of real leadership is also concerning about receiving the message. A two-way communication provides constructive feedback to the control for adaptive adjustment. It also helps to confirm the understanding of the leader. If exchanging is unimpeded, leader and the followers will identify the key points of the plan and the corrective actions to be performed, which helps to strengthen the trust between the both sides. Some of the communication can be non-verbal as well. For instance, setting an example can convey more information than delivering a speech or having a meeting.

2.2.4. Situation

The situation is a set of circumstances to perform leadership. All situations are different thus making the successful leadership case-by-case basis. Due to the diversity of the organizations, members, and tasks, one successful strategy in one situation might not always work in another. A leader needs to have enough knowledge, experience and professional qualities to judge the situation and then decide the corresponding actions to deal with it, which forms individual leadership style. Compared to some internal factors, like traits, the situation has an irresistible influence on a leader's action. The reason for the phenomenon lies in the property of the traits. Normally, traits are stable over a period but have little consistency across situations, in particular for the emergent one [28]. Therefore, situational leadership can be seen as a dynamic process of the operations based on some stable factors as the preset configuration of the organization. Some preset basis of leadership needs to be clarified in detail to figure out the dynamical process of leadership thus reduce the uncertain dynamics in the operations. Traits, Behaviors, and a relationship between the leader and followers on the team are three aspects of the leadership base. We will discuss them in the next sections.

3. Leadership Traits and Behaviors

The success of the leadership practice comes from a synergy of many factors, it can never be isolated from a good leader who possessed specific traits and skills of leadership. According to Sims, leadership is an activity contributed by different participants, is an art of contemplating, narrative and dialogue [33]. It is true that a successful leadership practice cannot be realized without the proper support of followership. However, the nature and the skills of the leader who acts as the leadership are more important for the successful leadership practice. This can be supported by Trait Theory and Behavior Theory of leadership.

3.1. Trait

House et al. [19] defined leadership as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization". More and more companies realize that effective leaders are important for them to maintain effective as they are

developing business globally [29]. Thus, it has become a trending that contemporary organizations apply a great number of trait-based assessments to secure proper leader can be selected. [13, 16, 37]. Evaluation programs such as 360-degree feedback, mentoring, job assignment, action learning, etc. were examples that organizations applied for setting the basic standard of leadership development [11].

Trait theory of leadership promoted that real leadership is born not learned, which depends on leader's personal quality. [21] A variety of studies indicated that personal characteristics of a leader, for example, demographic, skills, and abilities, traits drive to an effectiveness of leadership [22]. According to Bryman [9], Traits represent the distinguishing personal characteristics of a leader including intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, and appearance, while Great Man approach seek to identify the inherited traits that leaders possessed to distinguish them from those who were not leaders [9]. The research by Derue, et al., revealed that Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness are traits that with high correlation to leadership success, leaders who with these traits tend to be assessed as capable leaders [12].

3.2. Behavior

Behavior theories of leadership suggested that effective leadership can be achieved by proper behaviors which can be grasped through education and training. Contingency model can demonstrate this phenomenon [14], managerial grid model [3] and transformational and transactional leadership [1, 12]. The autocratic leader tends to centralize authority, acquire power through position, resources control and coercion. Democratic leader would rather to delegate authorities to the subordinates, encourage, rely and depend on them for task completion and gain respect for influence. The research conducted by Derue, et al. also suggested that three dimensions of leadership behaviors worked together to achieve effective leadership, respectively include: task oriented, relational oriented and change-oriented behaviors, explained why leadership development program should be sufficient enough to cover the behaviors of all three dimensions. Same research further demonstrated that transformational leadership possess both relational and change oriented behaviors tend to achieve effectiveness criteria more easily.

3.3. Discussion

In practice, the performance of the team will be affected by both. Trait and behavior work together to enable the leadership vivid and human. This comprehensive impact of the leadership can be symbolic by many aspects, and one of the characteristics is trust in the team, which serves as an unignorably significant factor in operations management [41]. Teams with trusting leadership not only has higher collective performance but also positively impact the performance of members of the team both on individual efficiency. This trust mainly comes from the understanding. A successful operations leader usually has a thorough understanding of

both human resource and operations, thus not only delivering the hard facts and providing thoughtful and constructive feedback but listening to empower who are part of the team by effective communication with operations staff.

When a negative situation appears, the trust impacts much on the performance of the operations. With the professional understanding about the business and production, for instance, a leader could realize the crux of the phenomenon when communicating directly with employees might be a better approach, thus rapidly making the accurate estimation of the situation and positioning the critical link in the system.

By explanations of the reasoning behind the request, leaders can bridge the information gap between the departments and within the team thus eliminate information isolation. With effective communication mechanism, decisions, operations, and progress can be coordinated in real-time, thus making the whole team act like one. This type of effective organizational behaviors brings more mutual trust to both the leaders and members on the teamwork and can impress upon the members need to improve. Especially when a goal could not be reached, employees are empowered to share with management the necessary information for developing alternative, available plans. Therefore, insightful understanding with the unique trait will embody the leadership with professional patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion. It also can be seen that personal characteristics serve as an integral part of leadership as well. We will discuss this in the next section.

4. Personal Factors of Leadership

Besides the trait and behavior, some other personal characteristics are also the factors influence the operations in an organization. It is suggested that group dynamics ought to receive greater attention as a process model linking leader personality to organizational performance [38].

In this section, some key personal factors that impact leadership, including identity construct, gender, narcissism level, aesthetic, ethic and justice level, are discussed.

The identity of both leadership and followership will influence the success of leadership practice due to close relation with how individual behaviors in the organizations. Identity was defined as an 'a person's sense of who they are,' people tend to establish identity about the self [15]. Organization and individuals that consisting of an organization all have identities, which can be identified, constructed, maintained and controlled. The identity of managers is fragmented and contradictory; complex connections existed between leadership, gender, and identity.

The demands of leadership have the relevance of personal, social and business. People are individuals with unique identities, which can be influenced by organizations and also have an influence on organizations. Self-concept is the collection of attitudes people have about itself including self-esteem, positive self-concept has high self-esteem while negative self-concept has a low self-concept, leaders with positive self-concepts tend to be more efficient, those with

negative self-concept are not effective even harmful to both team and individuals. In addition, Charismatic leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate people like a fire to ignites followers, they energy and give a commitment, produce results over the requirement of duty [25].

As of the gender also has a significant impact on leadership practices. According to Pullen [38], gender is something people do instead of something they are. Male leaders tended to speak declaratively, and female leaders are good at negotiated and stressed their interactivities with others. Both man and woman can also lead effectively by taking the specific advantages of themselves while on the contrary, may fail due to negative impacts. Unhealthy narcissism normally appears when individual's idealized ideas of self-fail to integrate with its inadequacies in reality, and narcissism leaders tend to be over-involved and abusive, treat others merely as their possession to achieve grandiosity instead of someone who has a relationship with [38]. According to Ladkin [26], the Aesthetic category of 'the beautiful' can be applied in leading. With the natural of a relational phenomenon, leading can be acted beautifully through the efforts in three key aspects: mastery, congruence between form and content and purpose. The practice of leadership character by multiple and complex ethical challenges, with the real purpose of achieving organizational effectiveness, contemporary theories of leadership justice denies ethics, it masculinization, hence human values of love and care are ignored [31].

5. Influence of Followership

Leadership is a dynamical process in the team. Due to the property of social behaviors, all the members of the team, including a leader, will influence each other. Therefore, followership will also impact the leadership practice, and effective followership contributes the success of leadership practice. The importance of following Even though the activity directors are leaders, however potentially significant contributions to successful leadership are making by followers [18]. Team outcomes credit or blame leaders even they had little effect on it because leaders are more likely contributed to positive or negative outcomes instead of whole teams.

A successful leadership practice cannot be isolated from a proper support of followership. However not all types of followership will influence the success of leadership positively, what required is effective followership, instead of that problematic followership negative impacts on the leadership success. Followership has a variety of expression which exactly matches with what can be observed in the workplace [8]. For example, alienated followers, conformists, chameleons, passive followers and effective follower [8, 24]. According to Brown and Thornborrow alienated followers tend to be critical and independent in thinking while passive in actions, always feel cheated and unappreciated. They are hard to have the willing to work on finding solutions to the problem even though they have the ability to do so which

may be led by setbacks experiencing and obstacle encountering, also may be broken promises by superiors. They are easy to concentrate on organization's shortcomings and negative parts of other people. Conformists, they have another name 'Yes' people, characterized by avoiding conflicts, willing to follow any orders of boss regardless the consequences and the nature of the task, they are unenterprising and dependent. Pragmatic Survivors, also known as Chameleons who can be aware of the situation in advance clearly and know how to benefit themselves best and minimize the risk. They normally know their work very well and can finish it in the most proper way, however, with too much consideration of self-interests they also easily to play political games, "better safe than sorry" is their slogan. Passive followers, the Sheep, whatever they do they will look to the leader and people around. Constant inspection is required. Refuse to do anything beyond their working scope. They are passive and uncritical, lack of initiative and a sense of responsibility. Leaders who are over-controlling and mistakes punished normally lead to this kind of follower. Effective followers never refuse conflicts; they are a mindful never averse risk, willing to embrace change, always serve the organization for its best interest. They are reliable, able to think for themselves with well balance the benefits of the team, tend to be self-managed and complement the efforts of leader. This kind of followers supports the leadership positively.

It is clear that the effective follower, who focus on the best interest of the organization, performs 'function well' features by self-management to benefit the organization the best. However, what is to be questioned is: will leaderships be confident enough to bear such followers on their way of working especially when facing the conflicts. It is too common in the reality that leaderships have their expectations about the followership as a result of their psychological situation and the interactions with organization and individuals when the behavior of the followers is beyond the expectations of the leadership; conflict is inevitable and negative result may appear. In this case, the development of the effective followership not only depends on the willing of followers but also accounting for the positive environment of the organization as well as the perceptions of the leaderships. People may prefer to be a chameleon, conformist, or passive followers by considering their personal benefits and the career development within the origination. Otherwise, perhaps, unfortunately, if experienced obstacles or betrayal such as broken promises by superiors, they may even become alienated followers. As a result, the success of the leadership practices will be damaged. Therefore, Collinson [10] suggested that comparing with what it was recognized, leaders' impact on followers' identities may be more complex, more understanding about identities of leaders and followers as well as and their interaction are necessary to be developed.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we study the configuration in leadership

practices. The comprehensive aspects contributed to the success of the leadership practice are studied with the related analysis and discussion on the issues on leadership impacts, followership influences, and the coordination contributions concerning leadership practices.

Successful leadership practice is a result of the positive interaction under a particular configuration of the organization. Many factors, such as traits and behaviors of leaders, identity construct, gender, narcissism level, aesthetic, ethic and justice level, as well as the quality of followership, contribute to both the performance and the sustainability of the leadership. Acknowledging the natural of leadership and followership correctly, focusing on the establishment of a positive working environment with humanized consideration and justice, preventing the negative impact while developing positives are crucial to ensure the success of the leadership practices. It can be seen that despite in most case the pyramid-like structure of the organization, diverse configurations combining with various interactions makes the dynamics of leadership and the related elements in the organization work as more a systematic network than a hierarchy pyramid.

Meanwhile, the crucial contribution of leadership toward the success of the leadership practices demonstrates that effective leadership can be achieved by leadership cultivation through proper leader selection, necessary leadership skills development and reasonable assessment. On the other hand, the increasing importance of followership toward the success of the leadership practices emphasizes that efforts on follower cultivation and effective followership development will also important for a positively driving the success of leadership practice. It is suggested that to ensure the effectiveness of leadership practice, maximize the benefits both of the individual and organization, a contemporary organization should focus on the buildup of both leadership and followership, at the same time supporting a positive working environment.

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