

## Literature Review on Leadership Theories

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**Abstract:** *The leadership research in the last two decades evolved mainly under the following philosophies : trait school, focused on leaders' dispositions ; behavioral school, concerned with leaders' behaviors ; contingency school, focused on leadership contingencies; relational school, considered leader-follower relations; sceptics school, questioned the existence and need of leadership; information-processing school, focused on cognition; and the neo-charismatic or transformational school. Definitions of leadership and different theories were reviewed in this paper.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership, Manager, Theory*

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### I. Introduction

The shift towards recognizing the importance of human capital in industrial age has led companies, and organizations, to change their paradigms about people management. Most organizations no longer see employees as a resource whose primary function is to provide goods and services, but rather are seen as critical to their capability of providing quality services (Farzad, 2006, p. 12) and their ability to grow and evolve continuously.

The success of any organization is dependent upon the collection of individuals, including leaders and subordinates, and the amount of effort everyone put into it. To understand organizational effectiveness, many researchers and practitioners have developed various studies to determine theories regarding leadership, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. (Cheng, 2003, p. 1).

In their review of literature, Wallace and Weese found that ineffective leadership to be “the major cause of declining industrial productivity and a downward positioning of North American corporations on a global scale” (Wallace & Weese, 1995, p. 182).

One reason for examining the leadership style is because research can help identify critical skills needed by leaders in today’s world, where effective leadership can be the key success in many organizations. While examining the impact of leader behavior on role stress characteristics and ultimately on organizational commitment in a large manufacturing cooperation in Midwest, Dale & Fox (2008) found a positive linkage between leader style and organizational commitment. They concluded that when subordinates perceive that the supervisor exhibits a high level of initiating structure, the supervisor is formalizing the work environment or providing formal rules and procedures for employees to follow. As a result, employees perceive higher felt responsibility and thus have higher affective commitment.

Burns (1978) pointed out that leadership is one of the most observed phenomena on earth, but the least understood. It is often regarded as the most critical factor in the success or failure of an institution (Bass, 1990a). However, leaders must understand their impact on employees, and ultimately the organization. Leaders mobilize employees toward commitment (Gardner, 1990).

Whilst the interest in leadership is growing in its perceived importance to business, the interest in exploring its nature, and attempting to identify what makes for effective leadership, is by no means new (Nave 2005). Early leadership studies focused on trait and behavior theories. Trait approach emphasizes attributes of leaders such as personality, motives, values and skills. However, researchers have realized that there is no trait would guarantee leadership success (Yukl, 2002, p.12).

Then researchers had turned to study the “behavior” of the leaders and how this would affect their followers. The success is a joint interaction between them in accordant to the situation; this had led to emergence of “Situational” approach. Situational leadership theory as presented by Hersey and Blanchard which hypothesizes the importance of a manager’s relationship orientation and task orientation in conjunction with effectiveness. However, they had modest success in identifying consistent relationships between patterns of leadership behavior and group performance (Robbins, 1997, p. 419).

## II. Leadership

Leadership is a subject that has long excited interest among people. The term connotes images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from top gleaming skyscrapers, or share the course of nations (Yukl, 2002, p. 1). Burns has written, "Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns, 1978, p. 2). From the beginning of civilization, history has been concerned with the study of its leaders and leadership still an area of active inquiry. Indeed, leadership is often regarded as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions (Bass, 1990a).

The discussion of leadership as a process may have been originated by Machiavelli in the sixteenth century (Smith, et al, 1989). However, a more systematic analysis of leadership, add Smith et al, may have only been advanced by Max Weber in early last century. For Weber (1946) leadership rested in three possible sources ('ideal-types') of authority: charismatic authority, reflected personal characteristics; traditional authority, referred to compliance with norms and forms of conduct; and legal authority, which resulted from functional 'duty of office'. Since Weber, research on leadership has developed more systematically giving way to an array of theoretical perspectives and conceptual definitions (Bass, 1990a; Yukl, 2002).

The study of leadership began in the twentieth century was initially concerned with leader effectiveness (Yukl, 2002). Researchers define leadership according to individual perspectives; Stodgill (1974) concluded that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. (Lok, 2001).

Leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behavior, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of an administrative position (Yukl, 2002, p.2). Table (1) shows some representative definitions.

**Table 1. Leadership Definition**

No.	Leadership Definition
1.	Leadership is "the influence increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization". (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 528).
2.	Leadership is exercised when persons mobilize institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers. (Burns, 1978, p. 18).
3.	Leadership is the process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose" (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p. 281).
4.	Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve organizational goals. (Bartol & Martin, 1998, p. 415).
5.	Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization. (House et al, 1999: p.184).
6.	Leadership is a special case of interpersonal influence that gets an individual or group to do what the leader or manager wants to be done. (Schermerhorn, 2000, p287).
7.	Leadership can be defined as the nature of the influencing process – and its resultant outcomes – that occurs between a leader and followers and how this influencing process is explained by the leader's dispositional characteristics, and behaviours, follower perceptions and attributions of the leader, and the context in which the influencing process occurs. (Antonakis, et al 2004, p.5)
8.	Leadership is a dynamic process, where leaders mobilize others to get extraordinary things done. To do so, leaders engage five practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. (Kouzes and Posner, 2007, p.14)

Despite numerous definitions of leadership, a frequently cited component is the concept of "influence". Tannebaum and Massarik support the notion of influence when defining leadership as "interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specialized goal or goals" (Stumpf, 2003).

Burns explains that leadership is different than power, noting that "to control things- tools, mineral resources, money, energy- is an act of power, not leadership, for things have no motives. Power wielders may treat people as things; leaders may not" (Burns, 1978, p. 18).

Reviewing the listed definition, table (2.1), exposed that (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Bartol & Martin, 1998; and House et al, 1999) explained the importance of influence factor; while (Burns, 1978) emphasized the need to arouse, engage and stratify the motives of followers. (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990) added another dimension of meaningful direction and purpose to collective efforts, though the authors did not include the relationship between leaders and followers. On the other hand (Antonakis, et al, 2004) added to the influencing process the relationship between leaders and followers, and how this influencing process is explained by the leaders' characteristics and behaviors, though the authors missed the objectives. (Kouzes and Posner, 2007) included the dynamic process, mobilizing others to get extraordinary things done, however, missed the perception of followers.

Considering all related factors to leadership, the researcher may propose that "leadership is dyadic and dynamic process, where leaders understand and professionally influence followers to transcend self-interest for

the greater good of the organization, through motivating, inspiring a shared vision, and supporting higher level of need of the followers; and defining a competent rewarding system, so as achieve the challenging organizational goals, effectively and efficiently, through collective efforts”.

### III. Manager Versus Leader

Controversy has arisen over whether leaders are different from managers or they are the same; one opinion argues that the role of management is to promote stability or to enable the organization to run smoothly, whereas the role of leadership is to promote adaptive or useful changes. (Schermerhorn, et al, 2000, p. 286). Leadership is regarded as the most critical factor in the success or failure of an institution (Bass, 1990a). Leaders must understand their impact on employees, and ultimately the organization.

Antonakis et al. consider leadership to be “purpose driven, resulting in change based on values, ideals, vision, symbols, and emotional exchanges” and “management is objectives driven, resulting in stability based on rationality, bureaucratic means, and the fulfilment of contractual obligations” (2004, p. 5). This is an interesting contrast: leadership is arguably based on purpose, change, and emotions; in contrast management is based on objectives, stability, and rationality. In specific, what kind of change are they referring to? If their notion of leadership-driven change is defined as managerial change, then it may be a kind of change that is objective and guided towards social stability. If their notion of leadership driven change is defined as ideals-emotion change, then it may be a kind of change that is subjective and guided towards social change. Table (2) defines some differences between the two concepts:

**Table 2 Leaders Versus Managers**

Leaders	Managers
Leaders are the heart of an organization.	Managers are the brain of an organization.
Motivate, encourage, and work with people	Establish systems
Create a vision and set a direction, and sharing with followers	Create rules and operational procedures.
Align people based on their knowledge, abilities and personality.	Are a task-oriented and often not people-oriented.
Ask how and when	Asks what and why
Take you to a new place	Take care of where you are
Wonder that if the problem set in a new environment might require a different solution.	Think that a successful solution to a management problem can be used again.
They write business plans, set budgets and monitor progress.	They get organizations and people to change.
Do things right	Do the right thing

Source: (Colvard, 2009)

This raises a concern of another level; how do leadership and management occur in practice? How agents act and how these actions may be conceptualized whether as leadership or as management. There is a fine line dividing both. It was noted that literature reviews on leadership studies tend to include works adopting positivist views, which in fact have dominated the field of management studies in the West (Yukl, 2002). We can, therefore, conclude that leaders turn vision into action, while managers complete tasks.

Of course, the management function can include problem solving and facilitating meetings as well as the traditional tasks; however, it is not necessary for the same person in a group to exercise all these tasks. Different people can take on parts of the management function. Some of them can do the planning, another person can do budgeting, while a third team member can monitor quality. The team can share responsibility for meeting performance targets (Maccoby, 2000, p. 57).

It is worth noting, however, that Managers provide leadership and leaders perform management functions, but managers typically don't perform the unique functions of leaders. (Colvard, 2009).

Nevertheless, the question that may arise: are leaders and managers both essential for an organization? Yes: both are essential for an organization's prosperity. While leaders develop the vision, managers carry out the vision. Managers should therefore acknowledge the importance of the leadership component of their work and be developed to become leaders who achieve goals (Raubenheimer, 2004).

### IV. Leadership theories

#### TRAIT THEORY

Early studies analyzed leadership based on hereditary attributes (Bass, 1990a) and compared traits of leaders with those of followers. Trait approach emphasizes attributes of leaders such as personality, motives, values and skills. By identifying specific traits or characteristics of leaders, one could distinguish a leader from a follower (Hughes, 2005, p. 25).

Research concerning trait theory concentrated on the following factors: (a) physical factors such as age, height, weight, physique, health, and appearance; (b) ability factors such as fluency of speech, tone of voice, academic performance, intelligence, judgment and decision, insight, and initiative; and (c) personality features such as integrity, emotional control, self-confidence, and popularity (Bass, 1990a; Bryman, 1986). According to this theory, an individual must possess these traits or characteristics in order to assume leadership.

Seeking to ascertain if trait theory accurately predicted leadership potential, Mann (1959) had reviewed trait studies, and reported that the foundation of trait theory lacked validity. Traits reported as being crucial to effective leadership in one study were not validated in others. (Hughes, 2005, p 26).

Stogdill (1974) completed a second review of trait leadership research that included an additional 163 studies that were conducted from 1949 to 1970. This review identified factors associated with energy, age, status, mobility, education and intelligence as being able to separate effective leaders from ineffective leaders. According to Stogdill (1974), improved measurement techniques and methodology lead to the identification of these traits. However, Stogdill (1974) surmised that trait theory research produced confusing results because a combination of traits proved effective in some groups of leaders, while they were ineffective in others. Therefore, Stogdill concluded that leadership requires more than just the study of people, but also the study of situations. (Hughes, 2005, p26).

Many other researchers, also, have realized that there is no trait would guarantee leadership success; and the attributes are related to leadership behaviour and effectiveness. (Yukle, 2002, p.12).

Mullins (2008) added two further limitations to trait approach:

1. There is bound to be some subjective judgment in determining who is regarded as a “good” or “successful” leader.
2. The list of possible traits tends would be very long and there is not always agreement on the most important.

Even if it were possible to identify an agreed list of more specific qualities, this would provide little explanation of the nature of leadership. It would do little to help in the development and training of future leaders (Mullins, 2008, p310).

## **V. Behavioral Theories**

Failure of the trait theory led to further research that focused on behavioral styles of leadership. Behavioral theories emerged during World War II because trait research had failed to explain leader effectiveness (Bryman, 1986).

Behavioral leadership proposed that behavior of the leader impacted work and follower effectiveness. This era of research focused on leadership behavior as a mean of identifying the best way to lead. Under this approach, many studies were carried out to support this theory, majorly:

### ***IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDIES***

Studies conducted during the 1930s at Iowa State University identified three leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Bryman, 1986). According to Daft (1999) an autocratic leader is one who tends to centralize authority and derive power from position, control of rewards, and coercions.

A democratic leader delegates authority to others, encourages participation, relies on subordinates' knowledge for completion of tasks, and depends on subordinate respect for influence” (Daft, 1999, p. 69). Laissez-faire is the absence or avoidance of leadership and has been labelled the most ineffective style (Bass, 1990a).

### ***OHIO STATE LEADERSHIP STUDIES***

The Ohio State studies were viewed as influential because the research focused on activities of leaders, instead of traits (Bryman, 1986). Through this research, the leadership behavior Description Questionnaire was developed. Results of the Ohio State studies indicated two major dimensions of leadership behavior, labelled “consideration” and “initiating structure”, (Mullins, 2008, p.312) that could be defined as follows:

1. Consideration reflects the extent to which the leader establishes trust, mutual respect and rapport with the group. This dimension is associated with two-way communication, participation and the human relations approach to leadership.
2. Initiating structure reflects the extent to which the leader defines and consolidates group interactions towards attainment of formal goals and organizes group activities. This dimension is associated with efforts to achieve organizational goals.

The two dimensions of leadership were mutually inclusive and created four types of leadership:

1. Quadrant I: High consideration and High initiating structure;
2. Quadrant II: Low consideration and High initiating structure;

3. Quadrant III: Low consideration and Low initiating structure; and
4. Quadrant IV: High consideration and Low initiating structure. (Mullins, 2008).

#### **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN STUDIES**

Leadership research during the 1940s conducted at the University of Michigan compared the behavior of effective leaders with ineffective leaders (Leftwich, 2001). These studies resulted in the development of two types of leadership behavior (Bryman, 1986). Employee-centered leaders focus on the individual needs of followers, while job-centered leader's direct activities toward efficiency by focusing on reaching task goals and facilitating the structure of tasks (Leftwich, 2001).

Although the employee-centered and job-centered styles of leadership correspond to the Ohio State studies concepts of consideration and initiating structure, the Michigan studies concluded that leaders used one type of leadership and did not change styles depending on employee competency. (Hughes, 2004, p.29).

The two-dimensional approach led to the interesting possibility that a leader might be able to place high emphasis on task issues and still promote high levels of subordinate satisfaction by simultaneously exhibiting consideration behavior. While initial studies supported the idea that a leader exhibiting both high initiating structure and high consideration would produce the best results, the notion of the great high-high leader was later pronounced a myth; it was too simplistic (Bartol & Martin, 1998, p. 421).

#### **MANAGERIAL GRID**

One popularized outgrowth of the emphasis on leader behavior aimed at both task and people issues is the Managerial Grid, developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. (Blake & Mouton, 1985, pp. 10-11).

The foundation of the theory is a contrast between two approaches to the managerial role: (a) concern for production and (b) concern for people (Bryman, 1986). Blake and Mouton believed that both concerns are essential ingredients of effective management and each is conceptualized as a nine-point scale, thus producing eighty-one possible combinations of managerial behavior.

The grid is composed of five categories that are based on concern for production and concern for people (Bryman, 1986). The categories are:

1. Impoverished management: is characterized by low scores on both dimensions – production and people, a context in which conflict is likely. The leader maintains low involvement with people and minimal communication.
2. Country club management: has a high concern for people and a low concern for production. Emphasis is on maintaining friendly relationships within a harmonious work environment.
3. Middle-of-the-road management: is concerned with both people and production; it is possible to balance work and morale.
4. Team management: promotes a high degree of concern for both people and production. Followers are involved in the planning and execution of work.
5. Task management: is concerned with production and views employees as suppliers of labour who must be controlled and directed.

### **VI. Contingency Theories**

With the modest success in identifying consistent relationships between patterns of leadership behavior and group performance, the field of leadership was ready for a new paradigm (Chemers, 1997, p. 28). It became increasingly clear to those who were studying the leadership that the predicting of leadership success was more complex than isolating a few traits or preferable behaviors; this led to focus on situational influences. (Robbins, 1997, p. 419).

Contingency theories tried to predict which types of leadership style will be most effective in different types of situations (Holda, 1995). Contingency approaches hypothesize that there are no universally acceptable styles of leadership. A leadership style may prove valid in one situation, yet ineffective in another.

Therefore, discrete factors in the situation influence leadership. "Leadership must change with the situation – or the situation must change to accommodate the kind of leadership exercised" (Fairholm, 1998, p. 53, cited in Hughes, 2005).

Many studies have attempted to isolate critical situational factors that affect leadership effectiveness including the degree of structure in the task being performed, the quality of leader-member relations, the leader's position power, subordinates' role clarity, group norms, information availability, subordinate acceptance of leaders' decisions, and subordinate maturity (Howell et al., 1986, pp. 88-102).

#### **FIEDLER'S CONTINGENCY MODEL**

The first comprehensive contingency model for leadership was developed by Fred Fielder, where he proposes that effective group performance depends on the proper match between the leader's style of interacting

with his/her subordinates and the degree to which the situation gives control and influence the leader. (Robbins, 1997, p.421).

Fiedler developed a personality measure, the least preferred co-worker (LPC) scale, as a measure of leader personality. The measure is based upon a series of semantic differential ratings of a person with whom one has worked in the past and is completed by the leader not by the subordinate (Lawrance, 2000, p.20). The underlying premise is that a leader's description of the person with whom he/she has worked experienced the greatest difficulty working is reflective of a basic leadership style. Fiedler's second premise is that the leader's personality orientation or behavioral style influences group performance and varies according to "situation favorability". Robbins (1997) summarized these situations: (p.422)

1. Leader-member relations: the degree of confidence, trust, and respect subordinates have in their leader;
2. Task structure: the degree to which the job assignments structured / unstructured); and
3. Position power: the degree of influence a leader has over power variables such as hiring, firing, discipline, promotions, and salary increases.

Results from Fiedler's research indicated that task-oriented leaders are more effective in high-control and low-control situations, and that relationship-oriented leaders are more effective in moderate-control situations. Task-oriented leaders perform better in favorable situations "because everyone gets along, the task is clear, and the leader has power; all that is needed is for someone to take charge and provide direction" (Daft, 1999, p. 96).

Conditions unfavorable to the task-oriented leader require high levels of structure and task direction. The relationship-oriented leader performs better in favorable situations because human relations skills are important in achieving high group performance in these situations.

#### ***HOUSE AND MITCHELL PATH-GOAL THEORY***

The path-goal theory developed by House in 1971 and refined in 1974 by House and Mitchell, "argued that motivation to engage in behavior was a function of the product of the person's perception of the probability that the behavior would lead to a goal and the perceived importance of the goal" (Chemers, 1997, p. 44). The model is based on the belief that the individual's motivation is dependent upon expectations that increased effort to achieve an improved level of performance will be successful, and expectations that improvement will be instrumental in obtaining positive rewards and avoiding negative outcomes. (Mullins, 2008, p.322). The leader can influence subordinates' perceptions of work and the paths to attaining stated goals (Holda, 1995).

Bartol and Martin summarized the path goal theory's four major leader behaviors into four groups (Bartol & Martin, 1998, pp 431-432):

- (a) Directive Leadership: involves letting subordinates know what is expected of them, providing guidance about work methods, developing work schedules, identifying work evaluation standards, and indicating the basis for outcomes or rewards. It is like task orientation.
- (b) Supportive leader behavior entails showing concern for the status, well-being, and needs of subordinates; doing small things to make the work more pleasant; and being friendly and approachable. This behavior is similar to relationship/oriented or consideration behavior.
- (c) Participative leader is characterized by consulting with subordinates, encouraging their ideas when making decisions.
- (d) Achievement-oriented leader involves setting challenging goals, high degree of confidence in subordinates.

#### ***LEADER-PARTICIPATION MODEL***

Vroom and Yetton (1973) focused their research on decision-making rather than styles of leadership (Holda, 1995). This model seeks to enhance the decision-making ability of the leader and the follower's acceptance of those decisions. It was complex decision tree incorporating seven contingencies whose relevance could be identified by making "Yes" or "No" choices (Robbins, 1997, p. 429).

Vroom and Yetton's model was normative; it provided a sequential set of rules that should be followed for determining the form and amount of participation desirable in decision making, as dictated by different types of situations (Robbins, 1997, p. 429).

The model presents three basic styles: (Bloisi, et al, 2007, pp. 665-666)

- a) Autocratic: where the leader unilaterally makes decisions.
- b) Consultative where the leader solicits member inputs before deciding.
- c) Group: where the leader collaborates with members to arrive at a joint decision.

## **VII. Transactional leadership**

Burns (1978) indicated transactional leadership, commencing from defining the relationship between superiors and subordinates as a social exchange, motivated followers primarily through conditional rewards. These rewards were results of reaching established goals and task accomplishment. Bass defined the transactional leader as one who pursues a cost-benefit, economic exchange to meet subordinate's current material and psychic needs in return for contracted services rendered by the subordinate (Bass, 1990b). Transactional leadership could also be viewed as involving exchanges between leaders and followers that reflected more traditional values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and reciprocal obligation. The exchange would result in the employee's compliance in exchange for the leader's assistance in pointing the way to the attainment of mutual goals. (Cheng, 2003, p. 21).

Bass (1990b) indicated that the transactional leader accomplished the attainment of mutual goals and contributed to the adequacy of his or her subordinates' performance in five steps:

1. Involved the clarification of what was expected from the subordinates including the objective of their performances.
2. The supervisor explains what the employees were to do to meet the expectations set forth.
3. The explanation of how the performance would be evaluated.
4. The supervisor would provide feedback to the employees regarding whether the objectives had been met.
5. Finally, the supervisor would allocate rewards based on the attainment of the objectives (Bass, 1990b).

Transactional leadership involves either positive or negative exchange, depending on the follower's performance (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Once the exchange is completed, there is no further need to interact unless another process of contingent reward introduced (Antonakis & House, 2002).

## **VIII. Transformational Leadership**

Overall, the transformational leadership provides deeper aspects on leadership than previous theories, for example contingency (situational) theory. The situational leader acts according to the situation and maturity level of the subordinate, having short-run effect, whereas the transformational leader influences the subordinates' deeper needs and has long-run effects. Roughly comparing, the situational leadership theory is quite near to the transactional leadership model, where the rewards and punishments are the motivators for the right kind of behavior. In situational leadership, the leader's behavior is the tool to reward or punish. Transformational leadership has deeper and wider impacts. Even if the transformational leader takes into account the situation and the maturity level of the subordinate, he or she sees the individual differences and potential of each subordinate, and using this information, the leader will motivate subordinates. As a result, a more sustainable commitment and stronger effort have been gained. (Hautala, 2005).

Burns saw transformational leadership style as occurring when a leader and his or her followers interacted in such a way so as to "raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality", with the key being shared values and goals (Bass, 1990b). Transformational leaders care about their followers and understand the impact of their actions on the group, seek the development of followers who are motivated by high- internal values and consequently more attached to the leader's mission (Avolio & Yammarino, 2002). Chemers annotated that "True transformational leadership occurs when followers adopt institutional objectives as part of their own self-concept and pursue their own personal fulfilment by achieving collective purposes" (Chemers, 1997, p. 158).

Transformational Leadership, which is an expansion of transactional leadership, does not place major emphasis on exchanges or rewards within the system. Instead, transformational leadership challenges followers to disregard self-interests and encourages pursuit of institutional goals, interests of the group, and moves followers gradually from concerns for exchange to concerns for achievement and growth (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Robbins views transformational leadership as built on top of transactional leadership (Robbins, 1997, p. 439).

## **IX. Laissez-faire Leadership Style**

Avolio and Bass (1991) explained that transactional and transformational leaders can be described as active leaders, acting to prevent problems from occurring in their organizations and acting to solve problems. On the other side, Hartog et al., (1997) distinguished between these active forms of leadership and the "extremely passive laissez-faire leadership", noting that the laissez-faire leader "is inactive, rather than reactive or proactive", they added Laissez-faire leaders "avoid decision making and supervisory responsibility" (p. 21). Since the theory of laissez-faire leadership implies that laissez-faire leaders are inactive and passive, as opposed to proactive, it is logical to assume that laissez-faire leaders will score high on avoiding and low on collaborating. Thus, the theory of laissez-faire leadership implies a positive relationship between leaders' scores on laissez-faire leadership and their scores on avoiding and a negative relationship between leaders' scores on laissez-faire leadership and their scores on collaborating. (Hartog et al., 1997).

There are many examples of behaviors that represent a “do nothing” or “hands-off” approach. Such behaviors include staying away from employees, shirking supervisory duties, and being “inactive, rather than reactive or proactive” (Bass, 1990a, p. 550).

Bass (1990a) uses the following statement to differentiate laissez-faire leadership from other types of leadership behaviors and styles: Laissez-faire leadership should not be confused with democratic, relations-oriented, participative, or considerate leadership behavior. Nor should it be confused with delegation or management by exception. Delegation implies the leader’s active direction of a subordinate to take responsibility for some role or task. The active delegative leader remains concerned and will follow up to see if the role has been enacted or the task has been successfully completed. The leader who practices management by exception allows the subordinate to continue paths that the subordinate and the leader agreed on until problems arise or standards are not met, at which time the leader intervenes to make corrections. (Bass, 1990a, p. 545)

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