# Leadership Approaches and Models

## Introduction

A good leader needs to employ a leadership approach or model that is best suited for his personality and his/her subordinates. A selected leadership approach or model gives a clear picture of how a person relates with others especially those that are below him in rank (Nawaz, 2016). Scholars suggest that leaders should feel the need to evaluate the leadership approaches and models that they adopt and work towards their improvement for the sole purpose of relating with others and engaging them in multiple fronts of organization’s activities.

Selection of a suitable leadership approach or model has been influenced by shift in industries. Many countries that are developed have moved to knowledge and service industries and abandoned the manufacturing industries (Kotlyar and Karakowsky, 2007). This shift has promoted the adoption of collaborative and coaching styles as a means of ensuring employee motivation and promoting focus on customers in the service industries (Nawaz, 2016). A leader with an in-depth insight on the various leadership approaches and models should be considered an asset to that organization.

Selecting a leadership approach to use in an organization may be problematic. Therefore key factors are used to guide in the leader in making this decision. The leadership approach that the leader has chosen has to fit in a given specific situation applicable to him or her. Some of the factors that a leader has to consider before choosing a leadership approach or model to use include: urgency of the task at hand, the size of the team the leader is handling, the experience levels that the team members have (Nawaz, 2016). In selection of a great leadership approach, one needs to consider the present situation, the goal of the organization and the best tools that can be employed in leadership. It is important to consider these factors in order to select the best approach in leadership as this increases the performance of the organization, the teams and individuals.

## Transformational Leadership Approach

Transformational leadership has a general end goal of creating leaders out of followers. This approach of leadership focuses on implementation of a strategic vision in order to bring about change in the organization. If this approach is executed in its authentic form, the followers are motivated, their morale is boosted and their performance is increased. Literature suggests that the leader and follower put the interests of the team above theirs (Hakan, 2008). Afterwards, the leader plays a vital role by putting his or her focus on the needs and input of the follower. This has an aim of empowering the follower into becoming a leader through motivation. MacGregor notes that a transformational leader notices that change is needed and acting on it through getting others to commit towards the change, creation of a vision meant to guide the change and implementing it (MacGregor, 2003).

### Transformational leadership in enhancing professional development and growth

Providing individual consideration is helpful in achievement of individual and organizational goals. The follower is mentored and coached on various aspects (Crow, 2012). The concept of mentoring and coaching in this case involves giving a listening ear to the follower, showing him or her empathy and providing support in areas that need guidance and help (Hakan, 2008). Appreciating the efforts of an individual in an individual helps them to improve their performance and work towards achievement of individual goals and organizational goals.

Transformational leadership fosters creativity and acts as a learning experience for the followers. Challenging the followers on taking risks and having a positive view of the future is a great strategy by this approach developing the followers professionally (Crow, 2012). Leaders therefore stimulate creativity and encourage the follower to see situations that are unexpected as a learning experience and not as a stumbling block (Kotlyar and Karakowsky, 2007). The follower is also able to ask questions and make an analysis of how to execute his or her duties.

Motivation changes the view that followers had about the future. They therefore end up working towards achievement of that future. More effort is invested in the tasks that are being handled currently (Hakan, 2008). The increased input towards work cause greater performance of the task that is at hand. Motivation also creates some sense of self-belief. This encourages a follower to go even beyond the limits to accomplish a task. In the process one ends up acquiring new set of skills that may be useful in their profession or in another related profession.

### Impact and Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership

This approach realizes more effects in comparison to transactional leadership approach. A study carried out by Erkutlu, Hakan (2008) revealed that transformational leadership encourages commitment by companies and organization and also encourages job satisfaction (Erkutlu, 2008). This approach also helps in comprehension of the leadership process by giving an explanation of how leaders motivate their employees.

### Criticisms of Transformational Leadership Model

The main criticism about this model is that it has the potential to abuse power. Griffins notes that there has been questions of morality on the model by development consultants (Griffin, 2003). The basis of these criticism of morality is on transformational leadership was that one needs to be have moral foundations in order to be fully transformed.

## Action-Centred Leadership Model

This approach to leadership is based on John Adair’s Three Circles Model. The model is arranged in three levels, that is Task, Team and Individual. These levels are the three main responsibilities of a leader. Achievement of a task, management of a team and management of individuals. Adair suggests that a great leader should have the ability to strike a balance between the three areas. He however clarifies that one needs to change the level of emphasis that is given for each area in response to the present situation. Elements could conflict with one another (Adair, 1973). An example is a group’s ability to concentrate on a task can be increased by pressure that is on time and resources. This model is popular because of the simplicity that it displays. If this model is applied, one would be able to execute a successful project.

### Action-Centred Approach in Professional Development and Growth

Action centred approach focuses on the need for team work. People tend to assume that leading a group of people is leadership. However, recent developments in the area of leadership share a different perspective. Since a team is made up of people with different strengths, skills and areas of expertise, it is the responsibility of a leader to identify these skill sets from each of the team members (Crow, 2012). A leader should be able to organize the way the team works together. Team work is an essential quality that most employers are interested in. The contemporary issues existing in the world requires a team that work together in order to solve problems.

### Action-centred approach in Increasing Productivity and Effectiveness

Leaders who employ this approach in leadership direct his or her followers and helps them find their right place in a team or group. This is achieved through various methods. Setting high goals with the team which are achievable. The leader also ensures that the teams in the organization maintain discipline. Discipline is key for the success of an individual and that of an organization. This model also allows for regular assessment of individuals and established teams.

The model also has focus on behaviours which result in the need for training in leadership. Training is vital for improvement in performance. Organizations have taken steps in using this model to aid their leaders to see how behaviours can influence others. There is also the need to know how the behaviour of others influence the leaders.

### Criticisms of Action Centred Approach

The major criticism associated with this approach is that it pays very little attention to the flat structures that are regarded as the best organizational form. This model is also criticized for being less relevant in today’s workplace. There is also criticism that this model is too simple and it is stating what is already known

## Transactional Leadership Approach

This approach is different from transformational leadership in that the leader uses rewards and punishments to ensure that the followers have complied. These leaders have a belief that agreements in form of contracts are key motivation factors for the followers. There have been arguments that despite the fact this approach influences job satisfaction among the employees, it delays creativity. It has three elements namely: contingent reward, management by exception (Active) and Management by exception (Passive).

### Impact and Effectiveness of Transactional Leadership Approach

The approach is suitable when time is of essence and the management needs to save on costs that are associated with training of leaders. It has worked for several firms and organizations that are technology based and not human based. However, this method is a disaster for organizations that seek to create leaders out of followers such as institutions of higher learning. The fact that this approach to leadership provides quite a good number of advantages does not mean that it has no weaknesses. The approach makes assumptions that everyone in a given organization is rational and does not act on the basis of emotions. This is not the case because most people who have not undergone leadership training have trouble being rational. In situations that are not very stressful, this approach cannot be ranked as the best in leadership training. Besides, this approach can destroy an organization from within due to the competition that is created from the desire for reward or to evade punishment.

### Transactional Leadership in Professional development and Growth

This approach equips a follower with the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines. In a technological intensive environment, time constraints is a big issue that can be catered for by this approach. An example of a technology firm such as Google working on an update for its application that is supposed to be released soon. A reward offered to employees who can meet the deadline is great strategy to get the project to be completed in time. Specifications are also made on quality of the work to be submitted and followers get to work. This improves the results of the organization in general and individual results in demonstration of their ability to work under pressure and still meet deadlines.

### Criticisms of Transactional Leadership

This model receives criticisms for rewarding the followers on practical levels only. It also receives criticism because of limiting creativity. It limits creativity since goals have been set prior to them being advised, guided and trained. This model also fails to reward initiatives that are not beneficial to the organization but are personal in nature.

## Conclusion

Researchers and scholars have had arguments about transformational and transactional leadership models. Some think that one is better than the other. This discussion has never had a clear final statement stating which model is better than the other (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). A person who wants to determine which leadership approach is better will end up concluding that both of them have their own advantages and disadvantages and that they only depend on the existing situation (Kotlyar and Karakowsky, 2007). It is therefore clear that there is no one leadership model or approach that is standard to fit all situations. It is therefore wise for organizations and leaders to not rely on only one model of leadership.

Today’s, Action-centred models have received criticisms that it is too simple and that it is out of date (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Besides all the criticisms in the model is being used globally by many institutions, organizations and companies. Departments of Governments have also employed this model. Followers are not the only beneficiaries of a leadership session. The different leadership approaches present a wide range of knowledge and abilities that a leader has and that are yet to be acquired. Learning is a continuous process (Kotlyar and Karakowsky, 2007). A good leader should not stop at what he or she knows, they can still use the leadership models and approaches as a learning experience.

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