Chapter 1
Research-Based Leadership for Next-Generation Leaders

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ABSTRACT

This chapter uses a leadership typology to review categories of traditional and emerging leadership theories and styles. Those theories and styles that have particular application or extensive research in the areas of education, change, problem solving, decision making, and organizational culture are emphasized. Strategies for increasing leader self-awareness, matching leadership styles and organizational needs, and improving problem solving and decision making are provided. The aim of this chapter is to give a clear and comprehensive overview of the array of leadership styles and theories grounded in research. The intent is to help practitioners working in education be more effective leaders by providing a comprehensive theory base to guide their actions, and to help them utilize the leadership style(s) most appropriate for their organization.

INTRODUCTION

With more than a hundred years’ research (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009) devoted to the field, it is no wonder that the volume of information available about leadership is overwhelming. As Dinh et al. (2014) have noted, currently no unified theory of leadership exists. Instead, leadership styles and theories abound, addressing numerous aspects of leadership. The Encyclopedia of Leadership (Goethals, Sorenson, & Burns, 2004) lists 17 entries for ‘leadership styles’ and 38 entries for ‘leadership theories.’ Richmon and Allison (2003) created a “non-exhaustive” (p. 36) list of 35 theories of leadership in their efforts to produce a typology of leadership theories. Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, and Johnson (2011) proposed a “more comprehensive leadership system” (p. 1166), then outlined nine categories of current leadership theory, and discussed two to three models, styles, or approaches within each of those categories. Significantly more daunting, a recent Google search for leadership styles yielded 36,500,000 results, while a similar search for leadership theories returned 35,200,000 results.

American companies spend a staggering amount of money on leadership training and development – nearly fourteen billion dollars annually (Rothman, 2016, para 5). However, the business world is not alone in its hunger for effective leadership. Education too spends an enormous amount of human capital and time in its efforts to help create successful leaders. Colleges offer certificates in leadership studies and universities offer both Ph.D.’s and Ed.D.s in educational leadership, organizational leadership, strategic leadership, and leadership and change.

It is encouraging that so much attention is being paid to leadership. At the same time the sheer volume of information available about leadership can be daunting. The leadership literature contains many clusters of research that emphasize different aspects of leadership. What do we know about leadership thus far? How do we know what type of style or theory of leadership will work? And with which groups? And under what conditions or circumstances? What theories and models are available to practitioners in the field who on a daily basis must solve problems, make decisions, and navigate organizational culture?

For someone seeking an overview of leadership or simply desiring an update on developments in leadership research, a framework with which to contain and organize the numerous theories is essential. As a result of examining leadership research published in 10 top-tier academic journals during the time period of 2000-2012, Dinh et al. (2014) created a framework for organizing leadership theory which may prove useful in “getting one’s arms around” the abundance of information available about leadership theory. Dinh et al. categorized the leadership theories as either “established” or “emerging.” They listed nine thematic categories of established, traditional leadership theories:

- Neo-charismatic theories,
- Leadership and information processing,
- Social exchange/relational leadership theories,
- Dispositional/trait theories,
- Leadership and diversity/cross-cultural leadership,
- Follower-centric leadership theories,
- Behavioral theories,
- Contingency theories, and,
- Power and influence of leadership.

In terms of emerging leadership theories, the authors listed eight thematic categories:

- Strategic leadership,
- Team leadership,
- Contextual leadership,
- Complexity and integrative perspectives of leadership,
- leader emergence and development,
- Ethical/moral leadership theories,
- Leading for creativity, innovation, and change, and
- Identity-based leadership theories.

Table 1 presents the two types of leadership and the thematic categories of leadership contained in each one. In the pages that follow each of the thematic categories of leadership theories will be discussed.