

EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP OF EFFECTIVE WORK TEAMS: A REVIEW OF EMERGING THEORIES

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Supporting Effective Teams: External Leadership

The complexity of the knowledge era requires new ways for facilitating learning and innovating in organizations to continually conquer rapid, global environmental change. Accordingly, teams and other collaborative forms of organizational design are becoming the norm as we move into the new millenium. Recent surveys show that as many as 40% of U.S. employees will be working in teams by the year 2000 (Manz & Sims, 1993; Verespej, 1990; as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995) “Teams have emerged as a potent weapon in the competitiveness wars. From a management standpoint, productivity and quality are the main reasons to implement a team system” (Manz & Sims, 1996, p. 165).

For teams to be successful, the environment that supports them must change from an individual focus to a team or group focus. “Companies must reengineer their internal systems and structures to support teams” (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; Shonk, 1992, as cited by Hall, 1998, p. 13), “because many teams fail in unsupportive organizational contexts” (Pasmore, Francis, Haldeman, & Shani, 1982, as cited by Hall, 1998, p. 13). A recent study (Hall, 1998) operationalized team environment in terms of nine support systems. These nine systems include: executive management, direct supervision, group design, performance definition, performance review, training, rewards, information, and integration. Some literature (e.g., Howell, Bowen, Dorfman, Kerr, & Podsakoff, 1997) considers systems such as these to be substitutes for leadership, where some sort of system replaces leadership tasks traditionally maintained by an individual. This research “focuses on whether subordinates are receiving needed task guidance and incentives to perform without taking it for granted that the formal leader is the primary supplier” (Howell et al., 1997, p. 23).

The individuals best able to lead the organizational change to the team-supportive environment are the formal leaders themselves. Yet, these supervisors and managers are often reluctant to find “substitutes” for their leadership because they do not know what their new roles will be. In fact, work team management or supervision is often identified as a primary reason why self-managing teams fail to properly develop and yield improvements in productivity, quality, and quality of life for American workers (Cummings, 1978; Klein, 1984; Letize & Donovan, 1990; Manz & Sims, 1987; Walton & Schlesinger, 1979, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995).

In this paper, two critical questions will be explored. First, what does recent leadership theory reveal about new leadership ideas? The new forms of collaborative organizational design require new ideas about leadership, and theorists are struggling to identify new concepts to complement the structures. Second, what do those theories imply that managers and supervisors can do to create environments that foster shared leadership? These answers to these questions will shed some light on the new role of the external team leader. For the sake of space, this paper will be geared toward the direct supervisor of the work team, or the direct supervision system that Hall (1998) defines as the first-line, external formal leadership of the team.

This paper will attempt to answer these questions by visiting several lines of recent (within the last 10-20 years) leadership research. Lines of research to be covered include emergent leadership, social learning theory, self-leadership, SuperLeadership, distributed leadership, shared leadership, and social constructivism. The order of these topics represents where they lie on a continuum from leadership as an individual phenomenon to leadership as a group process. In each section, I will define leadership according to that line of research, briefly review the theory and research, and enunciate some of the implications to external leadership of teams. Next, I will summarize the strengths and weakness of the theories. Finally, I will give some implications for future research and study.

Emergent Leadership

The current focus on collaborative forms of organizations highlights the importance of leadership behaviors emerging from the group. Emergent leadership theories attempt to explain when and how informal leaders will emerge.

Leader emergence refers to the phenomenon whereby someone within an interacting, leaderless group will eventually take on the role of group leader (Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986, as cited by Roedder, 1999). Leader effectiveness refers to the skill of the leader in guiding the group through the completion of its task.

Overview of Theory and Research

Roedder (1999) did a thorough literature review of leadership emergence theory. Some of the theories and subsequent research results are outlined here. Implications of these theories for the external team leader will be discussed in the next section.

One of the central emergence theories is Hollander's (1958, 1974, as cited by Roedder, 1999) notion of Idiosyncrasy Credits (ICs). According to this idea, an individual collects ICs as he or she conforms to the group. More ICs leads to higher status in the group, which leads to a higher probability of leader emergence. ICs are determined by individual task performance, observable characteristics of the person, and immediate past idiosyncratic behavior. Another meaning of IC's is social credit gained for performance contribution.

Trait-based theories, such as Kenny and Zaccaro (as cited by Roedder, 1999), suggest that traits account primarily for emergence, while the interaction of person and situation accounts for effectiveness. According to this research, the emergent leader tends to have traits of assessing

the situation correctly and responding appropriately. Along these same lines, emergent leaders possess the ability to accurately perceive the needs of a group and adjust their behavior into line with those needs (Zacarro, Foti, & Kenny 1991). Some suggest that followers allow others to lead when those “others” match their prototype of a leader (Lord, DeVader, and Alliger, 1986, as cited by Roedder, 1999). Some traits consistently found in leader prototypes include intelligence, dominance, and masculinity.

Subsequent research has shown that traits may not be the sole contributors to leadership emergence. It could be that traits contribute to emergence, and from there, other variables influence effectiveness (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991, as cited by Roedder, 1999). Kirkpatrick and Locke found six core traits for emergence: drive, leadership motivation, honesty, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business. However, core effectiveness variables were different: skills, vision, and implementation of the vision. The different variables for emergence and effectiveness support their idea that traits contribute to emergence, then different variables influence effectiveness.

Roedder’s (1999) model of leadership emergence (see Figure 1) is an attempt to integrate past theory with new ideas. Potential leader factors combine with group factors to introduce the leader candidacy phase, which then changes to the leader emergence aspect. The most important potential leader factor is self-monitoring, which is the ability to correctly interpret social cues and adjust one’s behavior accordingly (Synder, 1974, as cited by Roedder, 1999). Group factors include group member knowledge of task, needs of the group, and prototypes of group members. The group considers both potential leader factors and group factors during the leader candidacy phase, where the group makes judgments about fitness for the leadership role. Finally, out of the leader candidacy phase, a leader will emerge.

While leadership emergence theories certainly are applicable to teams and other collaborative organizational forms, they still appear to focus primarily on the individual and formal aspects of leadership. The next step is for these theorists to recognize that leadership can be a shared, informal phenomenon where individuals can rotate in and out of “leadership” at any given time.

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

Ideas from emergent leadership theory shed light upon the kind of environment that external team leaders should cultivate for leadership to emerge. Perhaps the external leader can train team members to become more flexible and self-monitoring, so they may emerge as leaders, as needed. External leaders could let go of some decisions to allow others to “step up” and emerge as leaders. Group factors may be most easily influenced by external leadership, by attempting to increase group member knowledge of task, and understanding and sharing the needs of the group with other group members. Knowledge of the business and self-confidence of members could be increased by giving more information about the group and how their work fits in with other parts of the organization.

Social Learning Theory

Stewart and Manz (1995) define leadership as guidance and direction provided to a team by someone functioning in a role constituting formal authority to influence the team. The focus is on the role of a designated team leader. The unique slant given by social learning theory is the idea of triadic reciprocity, which means that a leader, a leader's environment, and a leader's behavior reciprocally affect each other.

Research Overview

Social learning theory uses the idea of triadic reciprocity to illustrate the idea that a theory recognizing both person and situational characteristics seems to hold the most promise for providing a comprehensive understanding of team leadership. This theory regards the leader's cognitive interpretation of person-environment interactions as the key to a richer understanding of how individual and situational characteristics influence behavioral choice (Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Stewart and Manz (1995) created a team leader typology based on two dimensions: autocratic vs. democratic style, and active vs. passive involvement. Additionally, the leader's outcome expectations (expectation of success or failure) and efficacy expectations (expectation of the team's ability to achieve the outcome) can be used to predict leadership style (Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Overpowering leadership. The active/autocratic style of leadership behavior simply overpowers a team's effort to engage in self-regulation. Work teams with this style of leader will not become autonomous and will thus fail to improve quality, productivity, and employee morale. Leaders with this style may have low efficacy and negative outcome expectations for democratic leadership, and may perceive teams as a threat (Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Powerless leadership. This passive/autocratic type of leadership may initially give the team a sense of autonomy, but the team may come to feel powerless, and long-term reductions in quality, productivity, and employee morale may result. Leaders with this style may have low efficacy and weak outcome expectations for teams, and will perceive teams as irrelevant (Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Power-building leadership. This active/democratic style of leadership promotes self-management skills in teams, thereby increasing quality, productivity, and employee morale. However, the power-building leader who is highly active will continue to retain significant control over team behavior, preventing the team from actually setting its own direction and governing itself. Leaders who have high efficacy and outcome expectations for democratic team leadership, and who perceive teams as a challenge, are expected to establish goals congruent with a power-building leadership (Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Empowered leadership. Finally, the passive/democratic style of leadership will promote the highest level of self-regulation; and will therefore realize the most significant long-term improvements in quality, productivity, and employee morale. Leaders who have high efficacy

and outcome expectations for democratic team leadership, and who perceive teams as benign-positive, will establish goals congruent with empowered leadership. Some behaviors of empowered leadership include modeling self-regulation (Manz & Sims, 1981, 1990, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995), serving as boundary spanners (Gilmore, 1982; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995), regulating environmental influences to reduce uncertainty for the group, and serving as a resource more than an authority figure attempting to influence behavior (Hackman, 1986; Walton, 1985, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Transition from active to passive leadership. As teams mature, the type of leadership required transitions from active to passive. According to Stewart and Manz (1995), team leaders must start with power-building leadership to help build team skills, then move toward more empowered leadership styles so that the team can become more autonomous and self-managing.

Research findings. While this particular model has not been specifically tested, several components have been studied in previous research. Specifically, the authors cover person and situational characteristics. Studies of person characteristics suggest that leaders with more education and experience tend to be more democratic (Bass, 1990, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995). Additionally, those with a high need for affiliation are more likely to work cooperatively with their followers, and are likely to develop positive expectations for democratic forms of team leadership.

Studies of situational characteristics suggest that the clarification of legitimate roles for external team leaders is important (Lawler, 1986; Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1990; Schlesinger & Klein, 1987; Trist, Susman, & Brown, 1977; Walton, 1977, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995). If the team leader role is not clear, the leader may get the idea that the position will eventually be eliminated, and then try to block team progress. Lack of role definition for team leaders can cause ineffective leadership (Manz & Sims, 1987; Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1990; Verespej, 1990; Lawler, 1989, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995). Finally, a culture that rewards leaders for team development, rather than short-term performance, is critical for facilitation of democratic team leadership (Bernardin, 1986, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995). This is crucial since team implementation is often accompanied by an initial drop in performance (Trist, Susman, & Brown, 1977, as cited by Stewart & Manz, 1995).

Critique. While this theory seems limited in that it views leadership as in the hands of an authorized individual, and ignores the possibility of informal leadership, the implications for practice are useful. These implications will be discussed in the next section.

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

This theory implies that external team leaders should strive for power-building or empowered styles of leadership, depending on the maturity of the team. It follows that the leader needs to have an awareness of the team's maturity, and respond accordingly. Ultimately, the leader will strive for an empowered style of leadership by modeling team behaviors, integrating across boundaries, monitoring and "softening" environmental influences to reduce uncertainty for the group, and serving as a resource to the team. Since more education and experience as leaders tends to promote democratic forms of leadership, it logically follows that external leaders, and

team members, for that matter, should be given opportunities to gain experience as leaders. This experience will naturally educate leaders, but more formal training opportunities are warranted as well.

Self-Leadership

Before moving to SuperLeadership, which is leading others to lead themselves, it is important to understand what “lead themselves” means. Sims and Manz (1996) coined the phrase “self-leadership” as the moniker for “lead themselves.”

“Self-leadership” suggests “purposeful leadership toward personal standards of behavior and performance” (Sims & Manz, 1996, p. 87). This viewpoint suggests that individuals are responsible for setting their own goals, and that organizational control systems are not necessary, and in fact often hinder, the process of leadership.

Overview of Theory and Research

Three basic assumptions underlie self-leadership (Sims & Manz, 1996). First, everyone practices self-leadership to some degree, but not everyone is an effective self-leader. Second, self-leadership can be learned and thus is not restricted to people who are “born” to be self-starters or self-motivated. Finally, self-leadership is relevant to everyone who works. These ideas are the backbone of their theories, showing their fundamental beliefs that leadership can be learned, and that everyone can, and should be, a self-leader.

Behavior-focused leadership strategies are important in the self-leadership process (Sims & Manz, 1996). Behavior-focused leadership strategies are specific actions that we apply to ourselves, so we can perform better. Some of these strategies include self-goal-setting, self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reward, self-punishment, cueing strategies, and rehearsal. These strategies are particularly geared towards helping individuals successfully complete those tasks that are annoying and difficult, yet necessary.

Part of self-leadership is building natural motivation into work (Sims & Manz, 1996). Some strategies for building this motivation include:

- (1) Redesign work to increase natural rewards
- (2) Search for natural rewards that already are part of the work
- (3) Build natural rewards into the work
- (4) Focus dwelling on what you like as opposed to what you do not like about the work.

A third set of strategies that Sims and Manz (1996) advocate for self-leadership is cognitive-focused. These strategies specifically deal with the control and influence with one’s own thoughts. Some of these tactics include mental imagery, mental rehearsal, cognitive self-talk, and self-management of beliefs and assumptions. The ultimate goal is “opportunity thinking” instead of “obstacle thinking” (Sims & Manz, 1996).

Since self-leadership is so closely related to SuperLeadership, research and more theoretical ideas will be covered in the section on SuperLeadership.

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

Since becoming a self-leader is the first step in SuperLeadership (see section below), the implication of self-leadership is that the external leader learn, use, and, most importantly for team members, model self-leadership behaviors. More on this will be discussed in the next section.

SuperLeadership

“Teams... have become the most common vehicle through which self-leadership is expressed... The team becomes the unit of self-leadership” (Manz & Sims, 1996, p. 156). In fact, “when contrasting a traditional organization with a team organization, leadership roles are the most critical element that changes” (Sims & Manz, 1996, p. 186). “Teams are a type of collective or group self-leadership. The SuperLeader makes it happen by initiating, encouraging, and supporting empowered teams” (Manz & Sims, 1996, p. 171). Leaderless teams are a paradox, because no team is ever truly without leadership. Therefore, teams demand a new form of leadership called SuperLeadership.

Perhaps Lao Tzu best enunciated the idea behind SuperLeadership: “the best of all leaders is the one who helps people so that, eventually, they don’t need him” (Lao Tzu, taken from Maccoby, 1981, as cited by Manz & Sims, 1987). SuperLeadership is the practice of leading others to lead themselves. True leadership comes from within. In the end, achievement flows from follower self-leadership (Sims & Manz, 1996). The main difference from traditional management to SuperLeadership is the emphasis on followers, and especially the notion of developing followers who are effective self-leaders.

Overview of Theory and Research

Primary themes in shift from traditional leadership to SuperLeadership. Sims and Manz (1996) identified some themes in this shift. Ultimately, the leader takes the idea of self-leadership (see previous section), and applies it to the group level. First, the leader helps the group to move from external observation to self-observation. Second, the move is from assigned goals to self-set goals. Third, there is a shift from external reinforcement for task performance to internal reinforcement plus external reinforcement for self-leadership behaviors. Fourth, leadership moves from motivation mainly based on external compensation to motivation also based on the natural rewards of the work. Fifth, the leader helps the group move from external criticism from the organization, which is often not fully “heard” by the team, because they do not own the criticism, to self-criticism, which creates ownership in the group. Sixth, leadership shifts from external problem solving to self-problem solving. Seventh, leadership moves from external job assignments to self-job assignments. Eighth, leadership shifts from external planning to self-planning and from external task design to self-design of tasks. Ninth, leadership shifts from obstacle thinking to opportunity thinking. Last, but not least, there is a shift from compliance to the organization’s vision to commitment to a vision that the employee helped to create (Sims & Manz, 1996). All told, the group takes on its own tasks, and more ownership ensues, because “they did it themselves.”

Research findings. One study investigated the role of the external leader of work groups in a small-parts manufacturing plant organized according to a self-managing team work system that had been in place for several years (Manz & Sims, 1987). Results suggest that there is a legitimate role for external leaders of self-managing teams and that it differs considerably from the traditional leadership role. While the internal, elected team leader served as an additional team member who facilitated the group organizing itself, the external coordinator had a responsibility for getting the group to manage itself, and did so by encouraging self-management behaviors. Additionally, evidence showed that these SuperLeadership behaviors were significant over and above the more traditional leadership behaviors.

An important means by which these self-management leader behaviors are expressed by external leaders is through one-on-one individual communications with team members, especially internal team leaders (Manz & Sims, 1987). The most important self-management leader behaviors were “encourage self-reinforcement” and “encourage self-observation/evaluation”. The weakest relationship was “encourages self-criticism,” possibly because it focuses on what not to do, rather than what to do, and can be demoralizing.

External leaders transforming to SuperLeaders are likely to experience four stages as they make the transition (Sims & Manz, 1996). First, leaders experience suspicion, uncertainty, and resistance, as they embark upon a new journey. Often, organizations have implemented initiative after initiative, with many of them failing. This history may suggest to leaders that teams are just another “flavor of the week,” and resistance may follow. Second, leaders move to a gradual realization of the positive possibilities offered by teams as they see teams working. Third, leaders begin to have an understanding of their new leadership role. Finally, and most crucial, leaders begin to learn a new language consistent with SuperLeadership premises.

Kim Fisher (as cited by Sims & Manz, 1996) found four common reasons for difficulty in the supervisor transition to team leader. First, giving responsibility to the team is frequently seen as a net loss of power or status. To combat this, organizations need to educate external leaders on what their new roles would be, in this case, the ideas of SuperLeadership. Second, often the team leader role has not been well defined for them. If the leader does not know what the new role is, he or she cannot be expected to fulfill that role. Third, some external leaders are concerned that they will lose their jobs as a result of the transition to teams. As leaders see the team taking on more duties that traditionally belonged to the supervisor, the leader may see it as a threat to his or her job. Finally, many external leaders are asked to manage in a way that is quite different from the way they are managed themselves. The modeling of desired behaviors by top management is crucial!

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

A useful list of practical tips for getting started with SuperLeadership can be found in Table 1. First and foremost, the external leader must become a self-leader, and model the behavior for the team (Sims & Manz, 1996). While the ultimate goal is group self-leadership, especially at the beginning, the SuperLeader must provide orientation, guidance, and directions, because the group may not yet have an adequate set of self-leadership skills. However, there is a fine line

between overdirection and underdirection on the part of external leaders, and this balance changes as the team develops and is able to take on more self-management activities (Sims & Manz, 1996). This implies that external leaders must be extremely good at evaluating the current needs of the team, then acting accordingly, without “stepping on” the team.

Unfortunately, it is not unusual for leaders to report temporary decrease in satisfaction with their own work during the transition to teams, as team development may be accompanied with an initial temporary drop in performance (Sims & Manz, 1996). However, research suggests that long-term rewards of teams are substantial. Therefore, it is crucial that the organizational culture reward leaders for team development, rather than for short-term performance. Otherwise, the external leader may see team development as team failure, and abandon the effort. Additionally, external leaders must recognize that this initial drop in performance may occur, and continue to encourage the team to persevere despite the problems.

The way the SuperLeader responds to mistakes can ensure or thwart a successful transition. The SuperLeader must foster an environment where employees are free to fail, in order for them to take risks and truly learn. However, giving appropriate freedom to fail is crucial. In other words, the SuperLeader should step in (in a way that encourages learning), if the mistake will affect the customer. Again, the SuperLeader must use a critical balance of behaviors: of knowing when and when not to let mistakes occur (Sims & Manz, 1996).

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is the presence of capable leadership in different units and at different levels of an organization. “Distributed leadership is the glue of alignment” (Labovitz & Rosansky, 1997, p. 170). A flock of geese can be used as metaphor for distributed leadership. Geese fly in a V-formation, with leadership changing when lead goose gets tired. “Each bird knows the direction; each is capable of taking its turn at the vanguard. And each member of the flock has confidence in the ability of its fellow geese. The flock operates as an organic unit” (Labovitz & Rosansky, 1997, p. 180).

Fisher and Fisher (1998) use a slightly different definition of distributed leadership. According to their definition, leadership is not only scattered throughout the organization, but is distributed within the team. In other words, anyone can be a leader, and the leadership role rotates from person to person, depending on the task that is to be accomplished.

Overview of Theory and Research

Labovitz and Rosansky (1997) used the example of the military organization to illustrate differences in leadership. In peacetime, the military has no compelling mission or threat to galvanize effort or stir emotions, so things are done “by the book,” and people (especially in lower ranks) are bored. During peacetime, there is a tendency to “look out for Numero Uno.” However, in a combat situation, this static hierarchy is replaced by organic behavior. The mission is clear, people become energized, and leadership breaks out all over. These authors have found that successful, aligned organizations tend to operate in combat-like environments.

Fisher and Fisher (1998) view the role of the formal external team leader as the “boundary manager.” The boundary is the make-believe line that differentiates the team from the environment that surrounds it (see Figure 2). Whereas the traditional manager solely oversees the throughput of the team, the external team leader needs to develop the team, so it can manage the throughput itself, so he or she can focus on the environment that surrounds the team (input, output, feedback, etc.). While traditional managers usually work in the system, boundary managers work on the system instead, becoming an organizational designer using open systems thinking (Fisher & Fisher, 1998). An illustration of boundary manager focus areas can be seen in Figure 3.

The ideas behind distributed leadership are steps in the right direction toward viewing leadership as an emergent group process as opposed to an individual influence phenomenon. However, it falls short in that leadership is still viewed as in the hands of individuals who may pass off the “leadership stick” to one another. Yet, the implications for external team leadership seem practical and useful. These implications are covered in the next section.

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

Leadership can get commitment and a “combat-like” environment by keeping people connected to the environment, helping them think holistically, keeping the “big-picture” goal in front to avoid fragmentation into opposing departmental goals, rewarding and recognizing people for the “big-picture” goal, using the review process to carry the message to employees, and creating opportunities for people to interact (Labovitz & Rosansky, 1997). Some leadership behaviors essential to alignment are: create shared purpose, get commitment, and integrate the organization.

The extent to which an external team leader can act as a boundary manager depends on the maturity of the team. Effective boundary managers provide substitutes for hierarchy before abandoning throughput supervision (Fisher & Fisher, 1998). “Throughput supervision” refers to management of the daily details of the team’s activities, the actual process of the team’s task getting done. In addition, distributed leadership can be facilitated via rotated leadership roles, peer coaching, shared customer advocacy and business analysis.

Fisher and Fisher (1998) delineate seven competencies of the effective boundary manager.

- (1) Articulate a vision for the organization. Good leaders involve their team in the visioning process.
- (2) Become “the living example,” (Fisher & Fisher, 1998, p. 203), by modeling the desired behavior.
- (3) Effectively coach individuals and teams.
- (4) Understand and communicate business information to the team effectively.
- (5) Aggressively eliminate barriers to team effectiveness.
- (6) Actively facilitate and develop team members.
- (7) Focuses on the customer’s perspective.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is an extension of, rather than a replacement for, previous theory on vertical leadership. According to shared leadership theory, leadership can exist as a shared group level phenomenon and can be an important determinant of group outcomes (Pearce & Sims, 1999). Whereas our traditional idea of leadership describes one individual influencing subordinates, shared leadership depicts the process of shared influence between and among individuals. According to proponents of shared leadership theory, shared leadership and traditional, vertical leadership interact, meaning both ideas are applicable.

Research Overview

Pearce and Sims (1999) derive their ideas of shared leadership from multiple theoretical viewpoints. These viewpoints include: Law of the Situation, Emergent Leadership, Substitutes for Leadership, and Vertical Dyad Linkage. Also included are: Co-leadership, Followership, Empowerment and Self-Leadership, and Self-managing Work Teams.

Pearce and Sims cited several recent empirical studies (Pearce, 1997; Pearce & Sims, 1998; as cited by Pearce & Sims, 1999) to support their ideas of shared leadership. First, a study utilizing factor analysis provided two factors of leadership: controlling and catalyzing. Controlling includes aversive, directive, and transactional behaviors, while catalyzing includes transformational and transactional behaviors. Second, shared leadership was significantly related to citizenship behavior, customer ratings of group effectiveness, managerial ratings of group effectiveness, and group self-ratings of group effectiveness. Third, shared leadership was significantly related to potency and networking behavior. Fourth, shared leadership accounted for more unique variance in manager, customer, and group self-ratings of group effectiveness than vertical leadership did. Taken together, these results provide support for the concept of shared leadership as something different from traditional theories solely emphasizing the influence of one individual on another.

Given their results supporting shared leadership, Pearce and Sims (1999) continued to outline a conceptual framework for shared leadership. This model can be seen in Figure 4. By way of thorough review of the literature and previous studies, Pearce and Sims were able to make some predictions using their model. The following is a brief summary of their findings:

- (1) Ability: As ability within the group increases, so does engagement in shared leadership.
- (2) Proximity: As proximity increases, need for shared leadership increases because the effectiveness of a single vertical leader decreases.
- (3) Maturity: As maturity increases, shared leadership increases.
- (4) Familiarity: As group member familiarity with one another increases, shared leadership increases.
- (5) Interconnectivity: As interconnectivity between individual's tasks within the group increases, the opportunity for shared leadership increases.
- (6) Creativity: Shared leadership may be more appropriate for groups with creative tasks.

- (7) Complexity: As complexity of the task increases, the opportunity for shared leadership increases.
- (8) Criticality: As criticality of task increases, shared leadership increases.
- (9) Urgency: As urgency of task increases, the need for shared leadership increases.
- (10) Support systems: More likely that shared leadership will occur when support systems support it.
- (11) Reward systems. Rewards based on group outcomes are needed for shared leadership to occur.

While these results reflect previous investigations of various components of the model, no study has been done to date to look at all of the components at the same time. Pearce and Sims (1999) recognize this weakness, and call for future research attempting to measure shared leadership, examine it in different contexts, and investigate the interaction between vertical and shared leadership. Additional key issues that need continued study include: when is each (vertical and shared leadership) the preferred source of influence, how does one develop shared leadership, and how does one shift between vertical and shared leadership.

While the lack of empirical evidence is an issue, Pearce and Sims (1999) have made a major step forward in leadership theory by recognizing shared leadership as a phenomenon above and beyond traditional vertical influence leadership paradigms. Their model is a good start towards defining shared leadership. Time will tell how the model stands up to future empirical research.

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

Pearce and Sims (1999) did not offer specific behavioral implications for external leadership of teams, though some can be drawn from their model and literature review results. First, and perhaps most important, external leaders need to realize that the phenomena of shared leadership does exist, and that they should try to facilitate the emergence of leadership behaviors in their team members. Second, external leaders can increase shared leadership by providing opportunities that increase the abilities of group members, perhaps via training. Third, external leaders of geographically dispersed groups should realize that the decreased proximity requires more shared leadership, and facilitate those behaviors accordingly. Fourth, external leaders should realize that their roles will change throughout the lifetime of the team or group. More vertical influence may be needed in the beginning, but shared leadership should increase as the group matures, requiring the external leader to let go of some of the vertical influence. Fifth, external leaders interested in promoting shared leadership should create activities and tasks where group member familiarity can increase, and structure tasks so that they are interdependent. Sixth, shared leadership is most appropriate for groups with creative, critical, urgent, and complex tasks. Finally, external leaders need to structure support systems, especially the reward system, to support collaborative group activities.

Social Constructivism Theory

According to social constructivist theory, leadership is “more about making meaning than about making decisions and influencing people” (Drath & Palus, 1994). The traditional perspective views leadership in terms of dominance and influence. In the social constructivist frame,

leadership is seen as a social meaning-making process that occurs in groups of people who are engaged in some activity together. Leadership is the procedure through which people put social tools (authority, norms, values, work systems) to work to create meaning (Drath & Palus, 1994). Instead of a generic force that the “leader” can apply, leadership is part of a context, a process that arises in various forms and with various effects whenever people attempt to work together. Anyone in the group can be part of the leadership process, not just the canonically recognized leader or manager.

Overview of Theory

According to constructivism, “there is no way to determine what is ultimately real... the best we can hope for is to make arrangements in our minds that create a coherence out of our experience” (Drath & Palus, 1994, pp. 2-3). This view suggests that we each have a set of different assumptions in our heads (a “meaning-making structure”) that we use to construct knowledge about an experience, so we can “interpret, anticipate, and plan” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 3). Not only do individuals make meaning for themselves, but together people make meaning socially, so they are able to communicate, cooperate, and agree about what is happening.

Leadership as meaning-making is crucial to the idea of communities of practice. A community of practice is “a naturally occurring and evolving collection of people who together engage in particular kinds of activity, and who come to develop and share ways of doing things – ways of talking, beliefs, values, and practices – as a result of their joint involvement in that activity” (Galagan, 1993, p. 33). The community has a shared interest and a common sense of purpose, and is emergent, often different from formal structures. The community is responsible only to themselves, they collaborate directly, and have a shared history and culture.

Since there is no way to determine what is ultimately real, the best we can hope for is to make arrangements in our minds that create coherence out of our experience (Bruner, Finagarette, Goodman, Kegan, Piaget, as cited by Drath & Palus, 1994). Understanding is constructed out of a wide range of materials that include the social and physical environment, and histories of the people involved (Brown & Duguid, 1991). From a radical constructivist viewpoint, knowledge is not a “representational copy” of reality or the ontological world. Thus, the body of knowledge held to be true in a community of practice is nothing more than a shared belief system. From this perspective, even the so-called cognitive aspect of learning – that is, the acquisition of knowledge – is nothing more than learning to accept socially shared beliefs and practices. The acquisition of expertise is thus not the acquisition of declarative and procedural knowledge, but more broadly the social process of enculturation (Mandl, Gruber, & Renkl, 1996).

Effective communities of practice provide the backbone for the successful organization. Some of the benefits of these communities include increased organizational flexibility, organizational learning, innovation, and personal benefits to employees (Harris, 1997). The disruption of communities of practice threatens the survival of the organization in two ways (Brown & Duguid, 1991). First, it threatens to destroy the working and learning processes by which the organization, knowingly or not, survives. Second, it cuts itself off from a major source of potential innovation that inevitably arises in the course of that working and learning. So, the organization must view itself as a community-of-communities, acknowledging the informal

processes and legitimizing and supporting the activities that members must conduct in order to further develop the community. The next section will overview some methods and principles for external leaders to support a community-of-communities.

Implications for External Leadership of Teams

Several important questions can be asked in the framework of this more participative and facilitative leadership style. How can the contribution of each person in the community be made increasingly important and increasingly appreciated for its importance? What is the most effective way for this community engaged in this particular practice to make sense of their situation? It is a shift in perspective from “I need to make things happen” to “we need to make things happen, and I need to figure out how to best participate in the process of us making things happen” (Drath & Palus, 1994).

Since an important characteristic of communities of practice is that they are emergent, external leaders should not try to gain control, they should surrender it (Brown & Gray, 1995). Instead of directing the community of practice, the external leader should support it. Additionally, since the community of practice viewpoint assumes people are naturally in motion (Kelly, as cited by Drath & Palus, 1994), they need, rather than motivation to act, frameworks within which their actions make sense. Instead of a directive leader, the manager is simply a player in the leadership process.

Some strategies that an external leader to a community of practice can utilize to help make meaning for the group include: detecting and recognizing the group, aligning the organizational environment to support sharing knowledge, and providing the resources and tools they need. Finally, external leaders can create integrated human and information systems, integrate information retrieval and documentation into the natural flow of work, and develop a community memory (Harris, 1997).

Conclusion

So, what do all these theories mean to our current understanding of leadership? This next section summarizes the findings, and suggests areas of future research.

Summary

The first theory reviewed, emergent leadership, examines how a leader emerges from a group of individuals. This theory is important to teams, because effective teams require members to emerge as leaders to accomplish the teams work. This is an older body of research, so there have been several empirical studies to support the tenets. However, these theories seem to focus at the individual level, ignoring the process of leadership as a whole that I believe is above and beyond the sum of the individual parts. Additionally, this theory does not seem to lead to many practical implications for the external leadership of teams.

The second theory overviewed, social learning, views leadership as a specific, authorized role. The lack of insight into informal processes of leadership and lack of recognition of a shared

phenomenon are weaknesses. However, this theory does recognize that leadership behavior is a product of the leader, the environment, and the behavior itself, which is a move away from more trait-based theories. The division of leadership into styles gives some insight to practitioners who want to lead teams. Especially pertinent to team leaders is the idea that leadership style must change in conjunction with team maturity.

The third theory discussed was self-leadership, which is adjusted to the group level via SuperLeadership. Strengths of self-leadership and SuperLeadership are the use of mixed strategies (behavior-focused, cognitive-focused, and finding natural rewards in the work) to develop leadership. Additionally, these strategies are very practical in that they are easy to learn, understand, and use. Some research supports these ideas. However, SuperLeadership still seems limited in that it describes how to help individuals lead themselves as opposed groups leading themselves as a whole. SuperLeadership seems to acknowledge, but not fully utilize, the synergy of the group and leadership as an added phenomenon above and beyond the sum of the individuals.

The next theory discussed was distributed leadership, which is the idea that leadership can be distributed throughout the organization and among team members. A major strength of this theory is Fisher and Fisher's (1998) idea of external team leader as boundary manager, and the practical strategies that they give to accomplish that end. Additionally, distributed leadership moves another step towards the idea that leaders can be found in informal place, and do not have to be formally authorized by the organization. However, again this theory misses the group level process of leadership that occurs in teams.

Shared leadership is the first of the theories to recognize leadership as a shared group level phenomenon. A strength is that this theory adds to current leadership theory, viewing group leadership as additive to individual leadership. This theory attempts to integrate many lines of research into a conceptual model, which is another strength. While the conceptual model has not been tested as a whole, several parts have, and the authors acknowledge this. However, this model is fairly new, and, as such, has not been operationalized or measured. Therefore, it is difficult to abstract practical implications for external team leadership.

Finally, social constructivism views leadership as making-meaning in a community of practice. The process, contextual view of leadership is this theory's major strength. Another strength is that anyone, formal leader or not, can be a part of the leadership process. This theory seems to be the most face valid of the theories reviewed in this paper, though lack of empirical research detracts from proven validity. Again, as this is a fairly new theory that has not been well operationalized, practical implications for external team leaders are difficult to find.

Future Research

In terms of future research, more work is needed on shared and social constructivism paradigms of leadership. Further operationalizing and empirical study would add to the face validity of these theories. While I do not believe that the ideas of SuperLeadership fully incorporate the group process of leadership, the tenets are useful and practical. Therefore, I would like to see more about what kinds of organizational change must take place to support the change to

SuperLeadership. Additionally, several theories recognize the difficulty of changing the beliefs of the traditional manager to the new values of leading teams, but none give advice on how these beliefs may be changed. Future advice on this would be quite beneficial to organizations. Again, more advice on strategies for dealing with supervisors who do not make the change to self-managing work teams is needed, and would be well-worth future study. Also useful would be to know about the new role of these supervisors, once the team makes it to the point where they can be successful with an elected team leader. Finally, an integrated model of the strengths of each of the six theories reviewed here would be extremely helpful.

The role of an external team leader is extremely complex! This paper explored the complexity via utilization of existing leadership theory to enlighten external leadership of teams on some techniques that can be used to support effective teams. The next steps are to discover what organizations do to support external team leadership, and to support teams beyond changing authorized leadership behaviors. Substitutes for leadership research, as well as research on the context of effective teams (e.g., Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; Hall, 1998; Sundstrom, 1999), attempt to operationalize and identify effective components of team context. The context of organizations can be seen as an even broader form of leadership, and the efforts to evaluate context will lead leadership theories into the next millenium.

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Table 1

A list of practical tips for getting started with SuperLeadership

- Develop an understanding of the new, challenging management/leadership role (coach, facilitator, coordinator).
 - Ask questions rather than giving answers.
 - Listen!
 - Allow people to make mistakes in the spirit of learning and progress.
 - Require teams to solve their own problems.
 - Require teams to do things their own way.
 - Provide guidance and teaching in the beginning. Then back off.
 - Be open and honest. Share all important information that affects the employees.
 - Provide key learning and training opportunities.
 - View your own success through the success of followers.
 - Personalize and apply the key strategies for SuperLeadership.
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Note. From Company of Heroes (p. 136), by H. P. Sims, Jr., and C. C. Manz, 1996, New York: John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 1996 by Henry P. Sims, Jr. and Charles C. Manz.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Roedder's (1999, p. 13) model of leadership emergence.

Figure 2. The team boundary (Fisher & Fisher, 1998, p. 198).

Figure 3. The boundary manager focus areas (Fisher & Fisher, 1998, p. 200).

Figure 4. Pearce and Sims (1999, p. 37) conceptual framework for shared leadership.