A Review Of Contemporary Leadership Theories For Today's Headteachers In Zambia

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ABSTRACT: This study was motivated by the premise that no school grows further than the quality of its Headteacher. The purpose of this theoretical article is to examine the Leadership theories for todays Headteachers in Secondary Schools. This article evaluated recent theoretical developments in the study of educational leadership. It begins with the overview of the leadership theories, before settling on a leadership theory that was relevant to Headteacher, A briefly review of various leadership theories was done.Although it appear that elements of these theories are present in one's leadership style, for Headteachers the focus is on the transformational theory. This article concludes that although much of the current research indicates that the most effective form of leadership reflects transformational or facilitative approaches, most would caution any Headteacher who attempted to focus solely on one leadership style.
KEY WORDS. Headteacher,Leadership, Servant leadership Theories, Transformational.

I INTRODUCTION

Theoretical trends and long history of research can be found in the literature on leadership theories. According to Dinh et al. (2014), a total of 66 different leadership theory domains have been identified in this millennium. The study of leadership theory directly relates to the position of school Headteacher

(Cooper, 2012, pp. 5-6). " the specific interactions and behaviors displayed by school leaders while directing an individual or group of individuals to complete tasks for the common good and/or for the purpose of achieving school goals and/or outcomes is classified as their style of leadership."

Before settling on a leadership theory or theories that are relevant to Headteacher, I will briefly review various leadership theories. By familiarizing themselves with these theories, Headteachers can select and adapt the most suitable approach for dealing with different situations. Briefly, the various leadership theories will be examined.

II PURPOSE

The purpose of this theoretical article is to examine the Leadership theories for todays Headteachers. This article evaluated recent theoretical developments in the study of educational leadership in relation to headteachers.

III LITERATURE REVIEW

The Great-Man theory argues that "a few people are born with the necessary characteristics to be great" (Marriner-Tomey, 2004, p. 168). According to Heifetz (1994), this theory values the history-maker, the person with extraordinary influence, and often portrays great leaders as heroic, mythical, and destined to rise to leadership when needed. The term "Great Man" was used because, at the time, leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, especially in terms of military leadership (Cherry, 2012). This theory posited that the rise to power is rooted in a "heroic" set of personal talents, skills, or physical characteristics (Heifetz, 1994, p. 16).

The Trait theory is similar in some ways to Great Man theory and it assumes that people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them better to for leadership (Cherry, 2012). Marriner-Tomey (2004, pp. 169, 170) maintained that traits are inherited and can also be obtained through learning and experience. The Trait theory often identifies particular personality or behavioral characteristics shared by leaders (Cherry, 2012).

The Situational theory suggests that the traits required of a leader differ according to varying situations (Marriner-Tomey, 2004). This approach departs from the great-man theory by suggesting that instead of being born with the gift, sometimes the gifts are thrust upon someone—that is, certain people emerge to prominence

because the times and social forces call them forth (Heifetz, 1994). It also proposes that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variables. Different styles of leadership may be more appropriate for certain types of decision-making (Cherry, 2012).

According to Heifetz (1994), the Contingency theory examines which decision-making style fits which situational contingency in order for the decision-maker to maintain the control process. Marriner-Tomey (2004) identified three aspects of a situation that structures the leader's role: (a) leader-member relations, (b) task structure, and (c) position power. It is called contingency because it suggests that a leader's effectiveness depends on how well the leader's style fits the context (Northouse, 2004, p. 109). The Contingency theory emphasized the importance of placing leaders in situations that suited their preferred style of leadership; hence, different situations required different styles of leadership (Doherty & Horne, 2002, p. 208).

The Transactional (also known as "management theory") leadership style is an exchange posture that identifies the needs of followers and provides rewards to meet those needs in exchange for expected performance. It is a contract for mutual benefits that has contingent rewards (Marriner-Tomey, 2004). It also focuses on how influence is gained and maintained (Heifetz, 1994). Northouse (2004, p. 170) put a premium on transactional leadership by referring to the bulk of leadership models which focus on the interactions that occur between leaders and their followers. This theory is often used in business. When employees are successful, they are rewarded. When they fail, they are reprimanded or punished (Cherry, 2012).

Participative leadership theories advocate that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. These leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process. In participative theories, however, the leader retains the right to allow or disallow the input of others (Cherry, 2012).

The Transformational Theory (also known as the relational theory) focuses upon the connections formed between leaders and followers (Cherry, 2012). It also refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that increases the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. The leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help them reach their maximum potential (Northouse, 2004, p. 170). He is also a role model who uses individualized consideration, provides a sense of direction, and encourages self- management (Marriner-Tomey, 2004). Transformational leaders must be proactive rather than reactive in their thinking (Doherty & Horne, 2002).

The Path-Goal Theory is about how leaders motivate subordinates to achieve designated goals. The stated goal of this theory is to boost employee performance and employee satisfaction by concentrating on employee motivation (Northouse, 2004, p. 123). In this theory, the leader facilitates task accomplishment by minimizing obstructions to the goals and rewarding followers for completing their tasks (Marriner- Tomey, 2004, p. 173). The underlying assumption of the Path-goal theory is derived from the expectancy theory, which suggests that subordinates will be motivated if they think they are capable of performing their work and if their efforts will result in a certain outcome (Northouse, 2004).

Servant Leadership Theory .Robert K. Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership is now in its fourth decade as a leadership theory, and continues to grow in popularity around the world (Spears, 2004). According to Laub (1999), servant leadership is:

An understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization (p. 83).

The servant leader possesses a mindset and behavior to serve others as a requirement of leading a good and moral life (Greenleaf, 1991). The servant leader is someone who first is service orientated and then finds themselves in leadership positions. Greenleaf (1970) states an individual in a position of leadership and authority does not choose servant leadership as a method or style of leading. Rather, ―the servant-leader is servant first‖ (Greenleaf, p.7). Servant leadership theory is unique because unlike other theories it focuses on self development and self reflection of the leader as a human person first. ―Typical models of leadership do not begin with an analysis of leader motivation, and Greenleaf's concepts in this regard are unique‖ (Smith, Montagno, &Kuamenko, 2004). Spears (2004), provides 10 characteristics central to the development of servant leaders: (a) listening; (b) empathy; (c) healing; (d) awareness; (e) persuasion; (f) conceptualization; (g) foresight; (h) stewardship; (i) commitment; and (j) building community. This list is not exhaustive but illustrates the type of characteristics that servant leaders posses.

It is easy to list the characteristics or what a servant leader is suppose to do, the challenge is how you help individuals grow in this area. Barnabas, Paul, and Anbarasu (2010) suggest that leadership and management programs in colleges and universities should include servant-leadership within the syllabi of one or more of the courses comprising these programs.

Although it may appear that elements of these theories are present in one's leadership style, for headteachers the focus is on the transformational theory or Facilitative leadership. Early forms of headteachers

leadership focused on the headteachers ability to manage school processes and procedures related to instruction and supervision. However when considering the recent educational changes, it is understandable why Headteachers must retool and acquire new knowledge and leadership skills. Considering recent research there appears to be general agreement between researchers that there are several leadership styles a Headteacher could use to effectively lead today's secondary schools. However, the most effective leadership style would require less command and control, more learning and leading, less dictating, and more orchestrating (Dufour&Eaker, 1998). In fact, effective headteachers have been viewed as transformational leaders that focus on establishing a vision and utilizing leadership skills such as innovation, influence and consideration for the individual in the school improvement process (Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004).

Connelly and Goldman state, "initially transformational leadership was viewed as a personal quality or ability to inspire employees to look beyond self-interest and focus on organizational goals" (as cited in Lashway 1995). However, as leadership theories have continued to be researched another form of transformational leadership has evolved termed "Facilitative Leadership". Facilitative leadership is defined as "the behaviors that enhance the collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems, and improve performance" (Connely& Goldman, 1994). In this style, the facilitator's role is to foster the involvement of employees at all levels. In other words, a leader should create a school that promotes collaboration, involvement, and empowerment of teachers and the school community. In contrast, any form of leadership that focuses on manipulating teachers and school culture to reach a personal vision or agenda will only create a climate and culture that detracts from the district's vision. Stolp (1994) contends, "Healthy and sound school cultures correlate strongly with increased student achievement, motivation, and with teacher productivity and satisfaction" (p.l).

IV CONCLUSIONS

Although much of the current research indicates that the most effective form of leadership reflects transformational or facilitative approaches, most would caution any Headteacher who attempted to focus solely on one leadership style. Thomas Sergiovanni (1994) suggests that organizations, like people, exist at different developmental levels. A school that has traditionally operated with strong top-down decision-making may not be ready to jump into a facilitative environment. In this type of environment, a leader may chose to wear two types of hats- leader and administrator (Starratt 1995). As leaders, Headteachers should not only foster the vision that expresses the school's values but also develop the structure and policies that provide support for the vision. Lashway (1996) adds, "In short running a school does not seem to require all-or- nothing strategic choices. Effective leadership is multidimensional" (p. 5). This means that, the headteacher should have the ability to choose or blend appropriate leadership theories..

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