



Personal Leadership Philosophy for the 21st Century: Integrating Theory, Experience, and Perspectives

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Abstract

Leaders must adapt to globalization and technological advancements, assessing the effectiveness of their leadership style and its impact on teams. They align with evolving needs and challenges by remaining conscious and making informed adjustments. This paper examines and evaluates a variety of leadership ideas and provides a summary of the theories, emphasizing their main ideas, benefits, and drawbacks. It has also examined the leadership theoretical framework as well as the appropriate leadership style that best fits the framework and the current context. This paper will also explain how transformational, adaptive, and servant leadership has influenced my leadership philosophy. My leadership philosophy and how it has evolved over time have been discussed in the paper. It has emphasized previous perspectives that shaped my understanding of leadership while presenting my current leadership philosophy, emphasizing the key tenets that guide it. Finally, the paper will discuss the relationship between my leadership philosophy and the discussed leadership styles and theoretical framework. Furthermore, explain how this leadership philosophy will help me fit into the context of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: *Personal Leadership Philosophy, 21st Century, Integrating Theory, Experience, Perspectives*

1.0 Introduction

Leadership is a topic that has a broad appeal and is quite complicated. Since it takes into account several factors and is open to interpretation, the notion of leadership may be difficult to define (Klingborg et.al.2006). Leadership, according to Bass & Stogdill (1990), is one of the oldest concerns and has been a major force behind innovation for a very long time. He comes to the conclusion that leadership may be defined in a variety of ways and should be done so according to the definition's intended outcome. Yukl (2020) defines leadership as the process of envisioning a better future, creating a compelling vision, and empowering others to achieve it. Maxwell (2017) argues that leadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts, but about one life influencing another. He goes further to say that leadership is not dependent on formal positions or organizational structures, instead, it emphasizes the essence of leadership, which is the impact and influence that one person can have on another. The ability to motivate, incite, move, mobilise, and engage people to achieve a shared goal or purpose while sustaining commitment, momentum, confidence, and bravery is known as leadership (Munroe, 2018). According to Northouse (2020), leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality through effective decision-making, communication, and inspiring action in others. Northouse (2016) defines leadership further as having four components. First, is a process when a single person persuades a group of others to pursue a shared objective. Instead of focusing on the characteristics of the leader, leadership as a process emphasizes the connection that develops between the leader and the followers. Leadership is also a continuing process rather than a one-time event (Northouse, 2016). A great leader appreciates that continued interaction with followers is what builds the relationship. A leader with self-mastery patiently undergoes and appreciates this process because their own development was a process. Drucker (2008) says that great leaders go through a process of self-mastery, discovery and sharpening their strengths and values because they can only lead based on what they know and can do well.

Secondly, according to (Northouse, 2016), the essence of leadership lies in the leader's ability to influence their followers. Influence is considered indispensable for effective leadership. While supporting this view, (Bass & Stogdill,1990) describe leadership as the skill of managing human nature and persuasively guiding a group of individuals to adopt a specific course of action through personal example or persuasive communication. He pointed out that this should not be confused with drivership which is compelling a body of people through intimidation. Kouzes& Posner (2012) on the other hand, assert that leadership is a dialogue and not a monologue. It is not about who you are but it's about what you do. He outlines five principles of exemplary leadership, which include setting a positive example, inspiring a collective vision, embracing challenges, empowering others to take action, and fostering a supportive and encouraging environment. Leaders who have self-mastery understand the value of influence and they lead based on clear and predictable values (Kreamer, 2011). Their high self-monitoring skills allow them to apply different values to different situations appropriately while their internal locus of control helps them to know that the change they implement positively affect their followers (Neck et al., 2019). Notably, Padilla et al. (2007) caution that such influence may either cause destructive leadership which brings harm, or constructive leadership which is for the common good. A great leader's self-mastery will determine the values they uphold.

Third, as noted by (Sims, 2021), leaders are intrinsically linked to their followers, and (Northouse, 2016) emphasizes that leadership is contingent upon the ability to influence a group of individuals

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who share a common objective. This highlights the relational nature of leadership, where leaders exist within a specific group context. Neck et al. (2019) advocate for team self-goal setting where people in the team identify their individual goals within the context of the shared purpose. In this way, the team is self-led. Only a leader with self-mastery will be able to guide the team in this process and encourage people to share in decision-making. This level of shared leadership requires a leader who embraces teamwork because they are secure in who they are (Gaulden & Hemby, 2021). Northouse (2016) concludes that leadership includes attention to common goals ensuring that leaders and followers have a mutual purpose. Bandura (1995) says that shared purposes should transcend self-interest. Power in the hands of a leader should not be monopolized as is the case for personalized power. Rather, it should be created and shared with followers as socialized power (Wren, 2013). Only leaders with high levels of self-mastery can put aside their interests to pursue the group's shared purpose (Bandura, 1995). Uniquely, another leadership perspective points out the importance of leaders influencing organizational value systems that create a lasting impact and promotes the image of the organization. Organizations can achieve maturity by instilling values within them. Values serve as the fundamental guiding principles that shape our lives (Žydzūnaitė, 2019).

Riggio (2020) emphasizes that leadership cannot simply be described from the viewpoint of the leader, in contrast to definitions that are leader-focused. To capture the interactive nature of leadership involving leaders, followers, and the context, it becomes essential to incorporate followership within the definitions of leadership. The definitions of leadership that place an emphasis on others rather than the leader, as per Eddy et al. (2023), which include followership. The importance of followership has grown, according to (Chaleff, 2009), particularly in recent years due to increased technological connectedness. Now, a leader cannot lead without the consideration of those they are leading. The follower's thoughts and opinions matter too. In the same way that leaders bear responsibility for the actions and performance of their followers, followers also bear responsibility for their leaders (Chaleff, 2009). By extensively sharing their opinions, followers may utilize unofficial platforms of influence to spread information and affect ideas. They must, however, do so in a responsible manner if they want leaders to pay attention to them (Chaleff, 2009). It's therefore evident that the leader, the process, the followers, and the outcomes are the common themes that connect the majority of the leadership definitions. This paper aims to evaluate and examine various leadership theories and approaches by conducting a literature analysis. The primary emphasis lies in evaluating the practical implications and real-world applications, along with determining the most suitable leadership styles for effectively navigating the ever-changing business landscape. The paper is organized into separate sections, beginning with a literature review that explores existing leadership theories. The subsequent section explores a theoretical framework of leadership and identifies the most suitable leadership style to address present challenges and emerging trends in the business realm of the 21st century. The final segment delves into past perspectives that have shaped my leadership approach and elucidate my current leadership philosophy, which enables me to adapt and thrive in the 21st century business environment.

These encompass distinguishing between leadership as a trait or a process, discerning appointed leadership from emergent leadership, and comprehending the distinctions between power, coercion, and management in comparison to leadership. The task of defining leadership becomes challenging due to the multitude of perspectives on what encompasses effective leadership.

Different theories and models examine traits, situational factors, behaviors, leadership styles, follower roles, expectations, and the influence a leader exerts on their audience, leading to a multitude of definitions (Dinh et al., 2014). Leadership can vary depending on the context and leadership style employed (Al Khajeh, 2018). Cultural factors also impact leadership, further complicating its definition. Various cultures possess specific values and expectations regarding leadership (Munley, 2011). Moreover, the qualities and behaviors deemed essential in a leader may differ across industries, teams, or departments within the same organization (Mumford, 1986). Leadership is dynamic, continuously evolving in response to societal, technological, and economic changes (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Individuals interpret leadership differently based on their perspectives, values, and experiences (Foti & Luch, 1992). A leader who is highly esteemed by some may be considered ineffective by others. Similarly, an innovative leader may be viewed as visionary by some, yet reckless by others (Smith & Johnson, 2022). They poised that perception of leadership is inherently subjective, influenced by the individual's own interpretation and perspective. The subjective interpretations make it challenging to arrive at a universally accepted definition.

The leadership challenge revolves around equipping and motivating leaders to inspire their followers and achieve exceptional outcomes within organizations. main challenge lies in how leaders effectively translate values into actions, turn visions into tangible results, find innovative solutions to overcome obstacles, foster unity amid diversity, and turn risks into rewards (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Leadership is a highly sought-after quality and different corporations are seeking to employ great leaders who demonstrate good character with a view to creating a positive impact on the work environment (Brown & Williams, 2023). They noted that numerous individuals perceive leadership as a means to enhance their personal, social, and professional spheres. Presently, organizations are making significant investments to bolster their team leadership capabilities, as they firmly believe that such skills can bring valuable contributions to their establishments and ultimately enhance their overall performance and profitability (Northouse, 2016).

As stated by (Bass & Stogdill, 1990), leadership is recognized as the pivotal factor in the success of organizations, making it a crucial subject for study and research. Kouzes& Posner (2012) affirm this by indicating that leadership is important, for an individual or within an organization, but in every sector, in every community, and in every country. In order to achieve the desired outcomes, leaders must effectively align themselves with the organization's vision, mission, core values, and culture. This is why the demand for exemplary leaders is greater than ever before (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Although coercion has been frequently employed by individuals in positions of authority, it should not be regarded as the epitome of effective leadership. According to (Smith & Johnson, 2023), coercion opposes leadership because it neglects the collaborative nature of leadership, which involves working together with followers to achieve common objectives. Courageous followers recognize the importance of taking a stance that may differ from that of their leaders, as they are guided by a higher set of values. This may include refusing to comply with a direct order when necessary (Chaleff, 2009). Indeed, while leadership is about influencing followers to achieve shared goals, the follower also has a right to call out the leader should they feel convicted to do so.

Leadership, as a highly debated global asset, is divided between two distinct realms, leadership and management functions. While leaders and managers possess similarities in terms of their

capacity to influence others and utilize specific powers to accomplish objectives, there are significant distinctions between them. Leaders are characterized as visionary and catalysts of change, while managers are hired to maintain the existing state of affairs (Algahtani, 2014). Recognizing the distinction between leadership and management is crucial due to the frequent interchangeable use of these terms, despite their distinct meanings (Jones & Lee, 2023). According to Northouse (2016), management primarily aims to establish order and maintain consistency within organizations, while leadership fundamentally serves the purpose of driving change and fostering progress. He noted that management strives for stability and structure, whereas leadership focuses on adaptive and constructive transformation. Based on this differentiation and observations in numerous organizations, it becomes apparent that there is a shortage of leaders compared to managers, signifying a leadership vacuum (Brown & Lee, 2023). Consequently, there is a growing demand for leadership studies and research to address this gap. Looking at the differing views about leadership, it is true that organizations and institutions are falling apart due to a lack of organizational values, guiding principles proper and effective leadership and management styles hence the need for genuine leadership (Brown & Lee, 2023). It is clear from the definitions of leadership that different theories have different meanings of leadership, yet leadership continues to be a valuable resource in high demand across all communities and cultures.

2.1 Literature Review of Empirical Studies

Leadership is a subject that is approached from various perspectives by different scholars, who utilize different frameworks, contexts, and temporal perspectives (Smith et al., 2023). Despite the extensive body of literature on leadership, it remains a significant challenge for both practitioners and researchers seeking to comprehend its essence (Northouse, 2016). He noted that leadership has undergone continuous development without achieving universal agreement and researchers have adopted various perspectives to study leadership involving individual traits, behavioral, relational aspects, information-processing, cognitive processes, and relational aspects. The trait approach views leadership as inherent qualities, while the behavioural approach focuses on actions and behaviours. The information-processing perspective emphasizes cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, and decision-making capabilities. The relational standpoint emphasizes relationships, social dynamics, and interactions between leaders and followers. Researchers have used both qualitative and quantitative methods to study leadership, allowing for in-depth exploration of its complexities in specific contexts (Johnson & Brown, 2023). They noted that qualitative methods, such as interviews, case studies, and observations, provide an in-depth exploration of leadership traits, behaviours and outcomes in specific contexts.

2.1.1 Traits Theory

Penney et al. (2015) highlight the trait theories of leadership as originating from the 'great man' approach to leadership. They argue that people who possess indices of leadership are more likely to emerge as an effective leader compared to individuals lacking in search traits. Northouse (2016) pointed out that earlier studies have emphasized leadership as a feature, concentrating on people with certain traits that make them leaders. This perspective limits leadership to those who have certain traits but this paper will highlight other theories that imply leadership is a skill that anybody can master. Zaccaro et.al. (2004) identified leader traits as stable personality characteristics, including temperament, motives, cognitive abilities, skills, and expertise, creating a consistent

performance pattern across various group and organizational situations. Extensive research conducted by scholars such as Stogdill (1948), Mann (1959), Stogdill (1974), Lord et.al.(1986), Kirkpatrick & Locke (1991), and Zaccaro et.al. (2004) has focused on examining leadership traits and characteristics. These studies have identified several key attributes, including intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability, that are associated with effective leadership. Although further research on these qualities is still needed, there is a considerable convergence among studies indicating their significance in effective leadership. According to (Penney et al. 2015), consensus regarding the precise traits that define a leader remains elusive. However, the combination of these traits can significantly influence the likelihood of an individual emerging as a leader or being perceived as an effective leader.

According to (Smith et al. 2023), the traits approach in leadership primarily centers on the leader themselves, rather than considering the followers or the specific circumstances surrounding leadership. The approach does not specifically state what sort of a leader is required in a certain circumstance; rather, it emphasizes the leader and the leadership qualities. The approach however provides relatively enduring and stable characteristics of an individual while identifying traits that provide a basis for developing a selection system for potential leaders (Smith et al., 2023). By cultivating a deeper understanding of their strengths and limitations and their alignment within the organizational structure, leaders have effectively employed the traits approach to enhance self-mastery. Given how important good leaders are to organizational outcomes and success understanding the influence of good or bad traits on a leader's emergence and effectiveness is therefore of critical importance (Penney et al., 2015).

2.1.2 Skills Approach

The skills approach, akin to the traits approach, adopts a leader-centered perspective on leadership. However, it emphasizes the acquisition and development of skills and abilities, as outlined by (Johnson & Lee, 2023; Northhouse, 2016). Instead of defining leadership solely based on behaviors, it is more appropriate to characterize it in terms of the capabilities, expertise, and skills that contribute to effective leadership, as suggested by (Mumford et al., 2000). According to Mumford and colleagues, the skills-based model of organizational leadership is primarily a cognitive model that highlights the importance of an individual's capacity to devise and implement solutions to complex social problems. They argue that this process necessitates a diverse range of skills. Katz (1955, as cited by Northhouse, 2016) identified three crucial personal skills in leadership, technical, human, and conceptual skills. Katz differentiates these skills from the inherent qualities or attributes of leaders, emphasizing that skills pertain to the capabilities and actions of leaders. Leadership skills are described by (Smith & Johnson, 2023) as the ability to successfully utilize one's skills and knowledge in order to accomplish certain goals or objectives. The skills approach to leadership places more emphasis on the knowledge and skills that allow effective leadership than it does on leaders' only their actions. (Mumford et al., 2000; Zaccaro et.al., 2004). Mumford and colleagues' skill-based model comprises five dimensions of a leader's performance, with three core competencies at its center, knowledge, social judgment skills, and problem-solving abilities. Leadership skills are influenced by human traits, professional experiences, and environmental factors. However, these three qualities stand out as the primary predictors of effective problem-solving and overall performance in leadership roles. The researchers highlight that leaders can enhance their problem-solving skills and leadership effectiveness through work experience and training.

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2.1.3 Behavioral Approach

The behavioral approach of leadership examines the actions and conduct of leaders, broadening the study to include how leaders interact with their followers in various situations and contexts ((Jones & Lee, 2023; Northouse, 2016). Leadership is a phenomenon that is validated by the followers rather than being based solely on the claims of an individual (Demirtas & Karaca, 2020). They argue that the leader's meaningful presence is contingent upon the existence and acceptance of followers. Similarly, (Maxwell, 2019) emphasizes that leaders cannot exist in isolation because they depend on the presence and support of followers.

According to Northouse (2016), the behavioral approach to leadership offers a comprehensive framework for understanding leadership, focusing on two main types of behaviors, task behaviors and relationship behaviors. This approach differs from Stogdill's traits and skill approach, which emphasizes the personality traits and capabilities of the leader (Northouse, 2016). Task behaviors are geared towards accomplishing goals and helping group members achieve their objectives, while relationship behaviors aim to create a comfortable and supportive environment for followers (Northouse, 2016). Several notable studies have been conducted within the behavioral approach, including those carried out at Ohio State University, the University of Michigan, and the Blake and Mouton managerial grid (Demirtas & Karaca, 2020; Northouse, 2016). The Ohio State University research identified consideration and initiating-structure behaviors, while the University of Michigan studies identified job-oriented and employee-oriented leadership behaviors. The Managerial Grid focuses on the concern for production and people and has been refined over time, finding extensive application in leadership training and development programs. It enables managers to assess their task and relationship behaviors towards followers, thus enhancing their overall leadership effectiveness (Demirtas & Karaca, 2020; Northouse, 2016).

The behavioral approach encounters two primary challenges (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Firstly, research has not adequately demonstrated the linkage between leaders' actions and performance outcomes (Smith & Johnson, 2023; Bryman, 1992; Yukl, 1994). Secondly, it has not been successful in identifying a universally applicable management approach that would be effective in any given situation (Smith & Johnson, 2023; Bryman, 1992; Yukl, 1994). Nonetheless, it suggests that the combination of high relationship and high task orientation in leadership tends to be the most effective approach (Northouse, 2016).

2.1.4 Situational Approach

The situational approach has emerged as a response to the challenges posed by the traits, skills, and behavioral approaches by focusing on leadership within specific situations (Anderson & Johnson, 2022). It is based on the belief that different situations necessitate different leadership styles (Northouse, 2016). This approach emphasizes the importance of leaders adjusting their level of directive or supportive behavior to meet the evolving needs of their followers, considering that followers' abilities and motivation can change over time. Effective leaders must assess and adapt their leadership style to suit the requirements of different follower situations and evaluate their followers' competence and commitment to achieving a particular goal. The situational leadership approach argues that leadership behaviors and characteristics should be combined with situational factors to achieve optimal results (Demirtas & Karaca, 2020). The situational approach underscores the need for leaders to effectively manage both directive and supportive components within a specific context (Anderson & Johnson, 2022). By considering the abilities and motivation

of their followers, leaders must assess their followers' competency and dedication. Situational leadership suggests that leaders should modify their directive or supportive approach to align with the changing demands of their followers (Northouse, 2016).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks of leadership provide a foundation for understanding and studying leadership from various perspectives (Smith & Johnson, 2023). They noted that several prominent theoretical frameworks have been developed to explore different aspects of leadership. Some of the key theoretical frameworks include:

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a theoretical model that highlights the capacity of a leader to inspire and motivate followers towards achieving outstanding performance and personal development (Brown & White, 2023). This leadership approach surpasses mere transactional exchanges and concentrates on establishing a compelling vision, encouraging innovation, and cultivating robust relationships grounded in trust and mutual respect (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Bass & Riggio (2006) and Northouse (2016), propose four crucial dimensions that contribute to the effectiveness of transformational leaders. The first dimension is idealized influence, where leaders serve as exemplary role models and earn the trust and respect of their followers. High moral standards, integrity, and a clear sense of purpose are shown by these leaders, and this motivates their followers to model their behaviour. The second dimension is inspirational motivation, characterized by transformational leaders who inspire and motivate their followers by presenting a compelling vision and clear goals. These leaders effectively communicate their vision with enthusiasm and passion, motivating followers to actively work towards a common goal in spite of their own self-interests. The third dimension of transformational leadership, is intellectual stimulation. This dimension entails challenging followers to think critically, explore new ideas, and find innovative solutions. Transformational leaders encourage intellectual curiosity and establish an environment where followers feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions. This fosters creativity and continuous improvement within the organization.

The fourth dimension is individualized consideration. In this dimension, transformational leaders demonstrate a genuine emphasis on the unique requirements and development of their followers. They offer personalized support, mentoring, and coaching, considering the distinctive strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations of each follower. By providing such individualized attention, followers are empowered to enhance their growth, develop their skills, and unlock their full potential. Judge and Piccolo (2004) conducted research that established a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Similarly, (Wang *et al.*, 2011) conducted a study that indicated a link between transformational leadership and increased levels of employee creativity and innovation. Transformational leadership therefore serves as a theoretical framework emphasizing a leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers through a compelling vision, personalized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence. This leadership approach has consistently demonstrated positive impacts on follower outcomes and organizational performance (Brown & White, 2023).

2.2.2 Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the dynamic and the collaborative character of leadership, emphasizing the skills of leaders to facilitate change and adaptation in complex environments (Smith et al. 2022). It involves mobilizing individuals and organizations to address adaptive challenges through innovative approaches and learning (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Figure 1 presents the adaptive leadership model, which is based on the extensive work of (Heifetz et al., 2009). This visual representation encompasses the key components of adaptive leadership, including situational challenges, leader behaviors, and adaptive work. The model, derived from works of Heifetz (1994), Heifetz & Sinder (1988), Heifetz et al. (2009), Heifetz & Laurie (1997) and Heifetz & Linsky (2002), serve as a foundational framework for comprehending the adaptive leadership process. Furthermore, it provides guidance for empirical research aimed at validating and refining the concepts and principals involved (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz et al., 2009). One key aspect of adaptive leadership is its emphasis on the role of leaders in establishing a secure and encouraging atmosphere so that followers may confront problems and explore new possibilities (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leaders provide a "holding environment" where individuals can experiment, take risks, and learn from failures without fear of retribution (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). This concept recognizes the importance of psychological safety and trust in fostering adaptive behaviors and promoting growth.

Adaptive leadership also involves identifying and confronting the underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs that hinder progress and innovation (Heifetz et al., 2009). Leaders encourage open dialogue and challenge existing norms, encouraging followers to examine their deeply held beliefs and consider alternative perspectives. By addressing adaptive challenges at their root, adaptive leaders stimulate transformative change within individuals and organizations (Smith et al. 2022). Under the framework of adaptive leadership, several key leader behaviors have been identified to effectively address adaptive challenges. First, leaders are encouraged to "get on the balcony" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002;Northouse, 2016), which involves taking a step back to gain a broader perspective. By distancing themselves from the day-to-day details, leaders can observe patterns, dynamics, and trends that inform their understanding of the adaptive challenge. The next behavior is to "identify the adaptive challenge" (Heifetz, 1994), which requires leaders to diagnose the underlying causes of the challenge and differentiate between technical problems and adaptive challenges that require new learning and change. This involves examining systemic factors and understanding the deeper issues at play.

Another important behavior is to "regulate distress" (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Leaders must provide support, manage expectations, and create a safe space for individuals and groups to express their concerns and emotions. This helps individuals cope with the adaptive demands and navigate through the discomfort that arises during the change process. Maintaining disciplined attention is also critical (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Leaders must stay focused on long-term goals and vision amidst distractions and pressures (Smith et al. 2022). They emphasize that by keeping attention on the adaptive work, leaders ensure that actions align with the larger purpose and avoid getting sidetracked by short-term fixes. Further, leaders should "give the work back to the people" (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Instead of providing all the answers, leaders empower individuals and groups to contribute their insights and ideas in addressing the adaptive challenge. This fosters ownership, creativity, and collaboration, as people feel valued and involved in finding solutions. Lastly,

leaders need to "protect leadership voices from below" (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). By creating an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are heard, including those from subordinate levels, leaders tap into valuable insights and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the adaptive challenge (Smith et al. 2022).

These leader behaviors support the adaptive leadership process by fostering learning, collaboration, and distributed leadership (Smith et al. 2022). They create a conducive environment for addressing adaptive challenges and enabling individuals and organizations to navigate through complexity, change, and uncertainty. Adaptive leadership further recognizes that effective solutions to complex challenges emerge through collaboration and collective intelligence (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Adaptive leaders engage diverse stakeholders and create opportunities for shared decision-making, leveraging the collective wisdom and expertise of the group. This approach not only generates innovative ideas but also fosters ownership and commitment among followers. Research has highlighted the effectiveness of adaptive leadership in various contexts. For example, in a study by (Virtanen et.al., 2018), adaptive leadership was found to positively influence organizational agility, enabling organizations to respond and adapt to rapidly changing market conditions. Similarly, a study by (Kijima et.al., 2018) explored adaptive leadership in healthcare organizations, highlighting its role in promoting continuous improvement and learning.

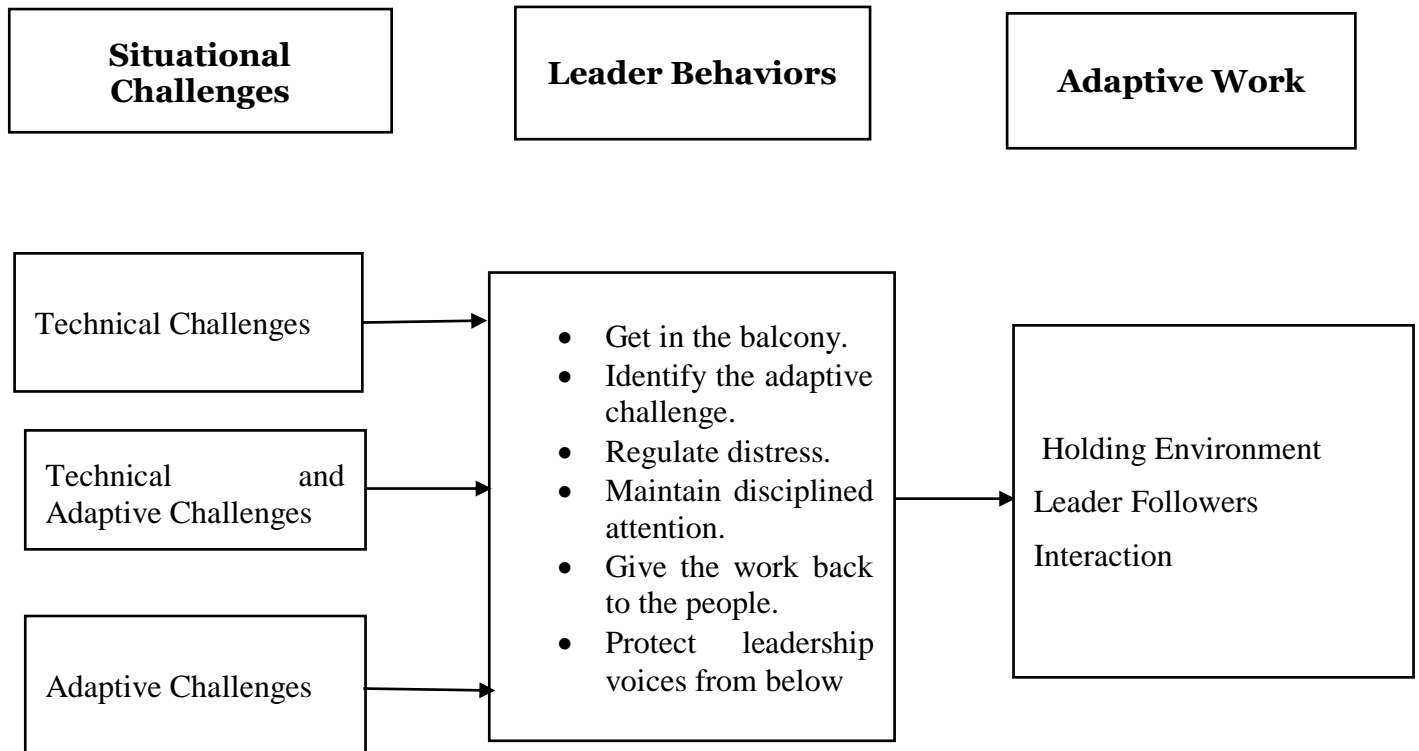


Figure 1: Adaptive Leadership

2.2.3 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the leader's commitment to serving others and prioritizing their needs above their own self-interest (Johnson & Thompson, 2021). This approach places emphasis on empowering and nurturing followers, cultivating a collaborative and supportive work environment, and prioritizing the well-being of all individuals involved. Northouse, (2016) posited that servant leaders exhibit qualities such as empathy, humility, listening skills, and a genuine concern for the growth and success of their followers

Greenleaf (1970, 1977), the pioneer of the concept of servant leadership, highlights that a servant leader possesses a profound desire to serve others and assumes a strong sense of responsibility towards their followers. The principal objective of a servant leader is to support and nurture their followers, enabling them to realize their maximum potential. By prioritizing the needs of others, servant leaders foster a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect within the organization (Northouse, 2016).

Figure 2 shows the servant leadership model comprising three main components, antecedent conditions, servant leader behaviors, and leadership outcomes. The model aims to provide clarity and a framework for comprehending the complexities of servant leadership (Liden et al., 2008; Liden et al., 2014). The three antecedent conditions that influence servant leadership are context and culture, leader attributes, and follower receptivity. These conditions, while not exhaustive, are important factors that can impact the servant leadership process. Figure 2 middle component delineates seven fundamental servant leader behaviors that constitute the cornerstone of the servant leadership process. These behaviors have been identified through comprehensive research conducted by (Liden, et al.,2008) and are regarded as crucial dimensions of servant leadership. Each behavior contributes uniquely and significantly to the overall application of servant leadership. It is important to note that servant leadership not only emphasizes leader behaviors but also takes into account the outcomes it can generate. The results of servant leadership include the performance and development of followers, organizational success, and society effect as illustrated in Figure 2.

Greenleaf (1970) emphasized the need of developing strong organizations that foster individual development and improve organizational effectiveness, and ultimately generate a positive societal impact. Servant leadership has been associated with various positive outcomes in both organizational and non-profit settings (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Studies have demonstrated that servant leaders exert a positive influence on employee satisfaction, engagement, commitment, and performance (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders establish an environment that fosters open communication, shared decision-making, and personal growth, resulting in heightened job satisfaction and enhanced organizational effectiveness (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). One of the key strengths of servant leadership is its focus on ethical behavior and the greater good (Johnson & Thompson, 2021). They noted that servant leaders prioritize the needs of others and work towards the betterment of society. This ethical dimension of servant leadership aligns with the increasing emphasis on corporate social responsibility and ethical leadership in contemporary organizations (Sendjaya et al. 2008). However, it is important to note that servant leadership is not a one-size-fits-all approach and may not be suitable for all contexts or situations (Johnson & Thompson, 2021). The effectiveness of servant leadership may depend on factors such as organizational culture, followers' expectations, and the specific challenges faced by the organization (Northouse,

2016). The ethical dimension of servant leadership aligns with the current focus on responsible leadership and social impact (Sendjaya et al. 2008). Nonetheless, the applicability and effectiveness of servant leadership may vary based on the organizational context and the unique requirements of the followers (Johnson & Thompson, 2021).

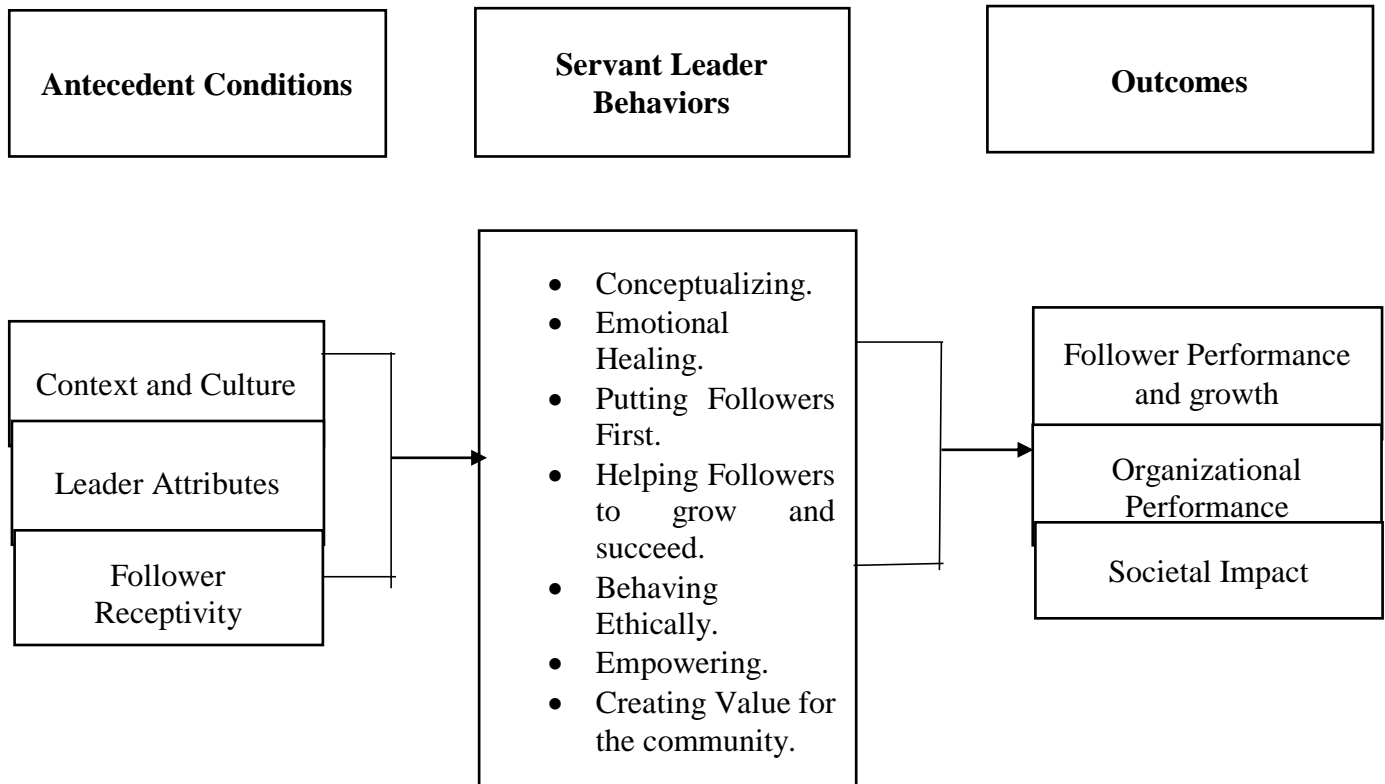


Figure 2: Servant Leadership

2.2.4 My leadership Philosophy before the course

Leadership is a process of influencing a group towards a shared objective (Northouse, 2016). Self-leadership, on the other hand, focuses on directing this process towards oneself (Neck et al., 2019). Bruce and Montanez (2012) emphasize the importance of self-mastery in effective leadership. Prior to this course, my leadership philosophy was shaped by my readings, experiences, beliefs, and convictions. Munroe (2018) emphasizes that our thinking influences our attitudes towards ourselves and others. He noted that our beliefs become our philosophy, which guides our thoughts, emotions, and actions. The biblical leadership paradigm, particularly exemplified by Jesus Christ, has profoundly influenced my ideal notions of leadership. Sanders (2017) highlights Jesus' principle of servant leadership, where true greatness lies in serving others rather than seeking personal gain. Jesus demonstrated this through acts of service, such as washing the feet of his disciples. Studying the lives of other biblical leaders, including Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Paul, Nehemiah, and Queen Esther, has also shaped my understanding of leadership. They had specific missions and goals, such as freeing their people, rebuilding, preserving, and spreading the gospel.

Some of the myths that shaped my leadership philosophy include the belief in the trait theory, which suggests that leaders are born and not made. It also suggests that leadership is influenced by inherent qualities or characteristics that individuals possess. According to this theory, effective leaders are believed to have certain traits, such as confidence, charisma, and intelligence (Penney et al., 2015; Northouse, 2016). However, research has shown that while these traits may be associated with leadership, they do not guarantee effective leadership on their own. I have come to understand that leadership is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves a combination of traits, skills, and behaviors. Drucker (2012) argues that leadership is a skill that can be learned and there is no specific "leadership personality" or set of traits. Another myth is the notion that only extroverts with forceful personalities and strong wills can be leaders. Northouse (2016), however, underscores this statement by noting that leadership can take various forms and does not depend solely on charismatic personality traits. The skills theory, which suggests that leadership is a result of specialized training and the development of specific skills (Johnson & Lee, 2023; Northouse, 2016), influenced my leadership philosophy. While having innate qualities may be beneficial, I have come to understand that effective leadership requires the development of technical, people, and conceptual skills (Johnson & Lee, 2023; Northouse, 2016). I have also learned that skills alone are not sufficient for leadership success. The situational context and followers' perceptions are important factors that influence leadership outcomes (Demirtas & Karaca, 2020).

I recognize the value of both the traits theory and the skills theory in understanding leadership. However, I now realize that they offer limited perspectives on the complexity of effective leadership. Leadership encompasses a wide range of traits, skills, behaviors, and situational factors. To develop my personal philosophy, I believe in adopting an integrated approach that considers the interplay between these elements and the specific context. My philosophy is shaped by the understanding that leadership is a learnable skill, influenced by self-leadership and the principles of servant leadership found in biblical examples. Although these myths initially influenced my views, I now embrace the idea that leadership can be enhanced through the acquisition of skills and embracing diverse leadership styles.

2.2.5 My leadership Philosophy after the course

My leadership philosophy has been shaped by the integration of principles from Blake and Mouton's Managerial (Leadership) Grid, transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, and servant leadership. These frameworks have influenced my understanding of effective leadership and guide my approach in leading teams. My leadership philosophy is now rooted in the Managerial (Leadership) Grid, emphasizing the balance between concern for people and tasks (Blake & Mouton, 1964). I will prioritize meeting the needs of my team while achieving organizational objectives while fostering a supportive and collaborative environment where team members feel empowered and motivated. My leadership style emphasizes efficiency, effectiveness, and a commitment to excellence. I aim to cultivate a highly effective team by striking a harmonious balance between people's needs and task completion. My goal is to create a culture of success, fulfillment, and continuous improvement where both individuals and the organization thrive.

Bass and Riggio (2006) and Brown & White (2023) propose transformational leadership, inspiring and motivating followers for remarkable performance and personal growth. It involves charismatic, visionary leadership, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and

inspirational motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2016). In my leadership philosophy, I aim to be a transformational leader, providing a clear vision, setting high expectations, and fostering innovation. By offering individualized support, challenging assumptions, and nurturing a sense of purpose, I will empower my team to achieve extraordinary outcomes.

Adaptive leadership, as proposed by (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Smith et al. 2022)), focuses on leading through challenging and uncertain situations that require adaptive change. It involves diagnosing the underlying issues, mobilizing stakeholders, and facilitating learning and adaptation. In my leadership philosophy, I recognize the importance of adaptability and agility in today's dynamic and complex environment. Embracing change and uncertainty, encouraging collaboration and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

By promoting adaptive behaviours and providing support during times of transition, I strive to lead my team through change and navigate through complex challenges. Servant leadership, as highlighted by Greenleaf (1970, 1977), emphasizes the leader's role as a servant to others, prioritizing the needs of the team and supporting their growth and development. It involves listening, empathy, and a commitment to serve others. In my leadership philosophy, I will embrace the principles of servant leadership, actively listening to my team members, showing empathy, and providing support and guidance. By creating a culture of trust, respect, and empowerment, I aim to serve the needs of my team members and foster their personal and professional growth. My personal leadership philosophy is grounded and integrated in the principles from Blake and Mouton's Managerial (Leadership) Grid, transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, and servant leadership. It emphasizes the importance of balancing people and tasks, inspiring and motivating individuals, adapting to change, and serving the needs of the team. By integrating these principles into my leadership approach, I strive to create an environment that promotes collaboration, growth, and high-performance.

2.2.6 The fit of my leadership philosophy into the context of the 21st century

My leadership philosophy in the 21st century is grounded on three key principles of servant leadership, adaptive leadership, and the managerial grid. As a leader, I understand that the definition of effective leadership has evolved, recognizing the impact of societal changes on the leadership process (Northouse, 2016). In response to the dynamic landscape of technology and socioeconomic dynamics, I embrace "smart leadership," which demands agility and flexibility to navigate modern complexities (Iannotta et al., 2020). Through adaptive leadership, I proactively embrace change and uncertainty, empowering my team to thrive in an ever-changing environment. I prioritize collaboration and inclusivity, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and utilized to drive innovation and achieve exceptional outcomes. Additionally, I promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement, ensuring my team stays ahead of industry trends and responds effectively to emerging challenges.

In the 21st century, effective leadership demands a diverse range of skills, attitudes, and behaviors, encompassing inspiration, motivation, influence, integrity, self-awareness, humility, self-control, and empathy (Johnson & Lee, 2023). To meet the complex challenges of contemporary leadership, I will integrate principles from Blake and Mouton's Managerial (Leadership) Grid, transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, and servant leadership into my philosophy. Additionally, I recognize the significance of emotional intelligence as a key trait for effective leadership. Goleman (2014) emphasizes that emotional intelligence distinguishes great leaders

from others, enabling them to understand and regulate emotions to solve problems and regulate behavior. Neck et al. (2019) and Drucker (2008) also support this argument, highlighting how emotional intelligence empowers leaders to connect with and inspire others. Scholars like Yulk (2003) and Goleman (2014) stress the critical role of emotional intelligence in leadership, fostering self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and strong social skills.

As a leader in the 21st century, I recognize that contemporary leadership is characterized by a set of unique challenges and opportunities. The rapidly evolving landscape of technology, globalization, and societal changes demands a leadership philosophy that is adaptive and dynamic. According to Smith and Chang (2022), these characteristics include leading in virtual or remote settings, managing diverse and global teams, and navigating ethical dilemmas arising from advancements in artificial intelligence, as well as responding to societal and economic crises. To effectively address the complexities of contemporary leadership, I will adopt an adaptive leadership approach. Adaptive leadership, as proposed by (Brown & Lee, 2021), emphasizes the dynamic and interactive nature of leadership that empowers leaders to navigate uncertain and complex situations, embracing change, and responding proactively to emerging challenges. Leading in virtual or remote settings presents unique communication and team dynamics challenges (Smith & Johnson, 2023). As an adaptive leader, I recognize the importance of fostering open and transparent communication, leveraging technology to enhance collaboration, and promoting a strong sense of team cohesion despite physical distance. I understand that building trust and maintaining strong relationships with virtual team members is essential to achieving organizational goals. In managing diverse and global teams, I acknowledge the significance of cultural intelligence and inclusivity. An adaptive leadership philosophy encourages me to embrace diverse perspectives, promote a culture of respect and appreciation for differences, and create an inclusive environment where all team members feel valued and heard. By doing so, I can leverage the collective strengths of a diverse team to drive innovation and achieve exceptional results.

Ethical dilemmas arising from advancements in artificial intelligence require leaders to possess a heightened sense of ethical decision-making and social responsibility (Singer, 2022). As an adaptive leader, I am committed to upholding ethical standards, engaging in continuous ethical reflection, and ensuring that the use of artificial intelligence aligns with the organization's values and principles. This approach fosters trust with stakeholders and safeguards the ethical integrity of the organization. Finally, responding to societal and economic crises requires resilience, adaptability, and effective decision-making. As an adaptive leader, I will be prepared to navigate uncertain and challenging situations, make swift and informed decisions, and provide a sense of stability and direction during crises. By demonstrating resilience and adaptability, I can instill confidence in my team and empower them to overcome adversities. My leadership approach integrates the principles of servant leadership, adaptive leadership, and the managerial grid, allowing me to lead with empathy, responsiveness, and efficiency in the 21st century. By combining these frameworks, I am equipped to guide my team and organization towards success and growth in the 21st century. As knowledge on leadership advances, it is expected that our appreciation for its multifaceted nature will grow, further refining our understanding of effective leadership in the 21st century.

3.0 Conclusion

Through the exploration of various theoretical frameworks, personal experiences, and perspectives, I have developed a well-articulated and informed personal philosophy of leadership. This philosophy acknowledges that leadership is not limited to a select few but is a capacity inherent in every individual. It recognizes the importance of self-awareness, integrity, empathy, and adaptability in effective leadership. True leadership stems from an internal disposition driven by a sense of purpose and a noble cause, rather than a desire for power or manipulation. It involves inspiring and influencing others rather than solely focusing on tasks (Munroe, 2018). He noted that leadership is about developing the courage and will to become a leader and embracing a transformed attitude towards life. It is influence through inspiration (Munroe, 2018). In the 21st century, my leadership philosophy embraces adaptability and agility, essential traits in the rapidly changing landscape. It prioritizes open-mindedness, embracing diversity, continuous learning, and inspiring others to achieve greatness. Aligned with evolving expectations, my approach emphasizes ethical leadership, inclusivity, and addressing complex challenges. By integrating these principles, I can effectively respond to the demands of the 21st century and contribute to positive change. The course has been instrumental in shaping my leadership philosophy by providing me with a solid foundation of knowledge and insights into different leadership theories, styles, and behaviors. It has broadened my perspective, challenged my assumptions, and equipped me with the tools to critically analyze and reflect on my own leadership practices. My leadership philosophy will enable me to fit in the context of the 21st century by embracing the dynamic nature of leadership, aligning with evolving expectations, and continuously learning and growing as a leader. While the discourse on leadership may have various definitions, theories, styles, and expectations, the importance of leadership cannot be understated. Leadership remains a valuable asset in all societies and cultures, meeting the demands of organizations and communities alike.

4.0 Recommendations

Leaders should embrace adaptability and agility. The world is changing rapidly, and leaders need to be able to adapt to change and uncertainty. This means being open to new ideas, being willing to learn, and being able to pivot quickly when necessary. Leaders should also prioritize open-mindedness, embracing diversity, and continuous learning. In order to be successful, leaders need to be able to understand and appreciate different perspectives. They also need to be able to create a culture of inclusion where everyone feels valued and respected. Continuous learning is essential for leaders in the 21st century, as the world is constantly changing. Further, leaders should inspire others to achieve greatness. Leaders should be able to motivate and inspire others to reach their full potential. They should create a vision for the future and help others to see how they can contribute to that vision. Lastly, leaders should emphasize ethical leadership, inclusivity and addressing complex challenges. In today's world, leaders need to be ethical and accountable. They also need to be inclusive and create a sense of belonging for all. Finally, leaders need to be able to address complex challenges and find creative solutions.

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