

**Articulating a Personal Philosophy of Leadership to Fit in the Context of 21st Century**

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**ISSN: 2616-8421**

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**How to cite this article: Barrack, N. (2025). Articulating a Personal Philosophy of Leadership to Fit in the Context of 21st Century. *Journal of Human Resource & Leadership, 9*(1), 88-102.** [**https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t3128**](https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t3128)

# Abstract

Leadership in the 21st century demands agility, innovation, and collaboration. Transformational leaders are needed to help companies reach their goals, solve complex problems, and create positive change. This paper articulates a personal philosophy of leadership in the context of the 21st century, reflecting on theoretical frameworks and experience, and exploring how this philosophy can enable leaders to succeed in the 21st century workplace. The literature review of empirical studies and the theoretical framework provide the background of how leadership is defined before and after taking the course on leadership. The author's leadership philosophy aligns with the 21st century workplace dynamics, emphasizing diversity, collaboration, adaptability, and continuous learning. It acknowledges the evolving nature of work and the importance of multiple perspectives and innovative approaches. By fostering open communication, embracing change, and empowering the team to think creatively and take intelligent risks, the author aims to create an inclusive culture that drives organizational success in today's dynamic environment.

**Keywords**: *Personal Philosophy, Leadership, 21st Century*

## 1.0 Introduction

Davies (2002) argues that the past two decades have seen a remarkable change in the expectations, roles, and dynamics of leadership. The 21st century is an era that demands agility, innovation, and collaboration in order to stay ahead of the constantly changing business landscape. Complex societies are relying on transformational leadership models to help companies reach their goals, solve complex problems, and create positive change (Onyalla, 2018). Those who embrace and embody these qualities and understand their implications have the ability to become effective and inspiring leaders in all aspects of their work, be it in the corporate boardroom, or the public sector. In this paper, I will articulate my personal philosophy of leadership in the context of the 21st century and how this philosophy has evolved since I engaged in the course. I will discuss the development of my core values, beliefs, and attitudes, and how these have enabled me to better understand and adapt to the changing leadership paradigms of the 21st century. Finally, I will reflect on how this philosophy has enabled me to thrive in the 21st century context and how it has shaped and impacted my journey into leadership.

## 1.1 Background to the Study

According to DePaul (2015), the 21st century has posed numerous challenges to the concept of leadership. To succeed as 21st century leaders, it is necessary to be reflective and aware of current issues, such as the increasing demands of globalization, multiculturalism, and rapidly changing technology. In such a complex environment, there must be an understanding of how leadership can be used to shape the present and future of our societies. To effectively lead, an individual must make informed and ethical decisions, while articulating their personal philosophy of leadership (DePaul, 2015).Meade (2019) asserted that the concept of leadership has been discussed in a multitude of theoretical frameworks, such as servant-leadership, transformational leadership, and authentic leadership. Most of these models look at the leader's ability to influence, motivate, empower, and cultivate trust in order to achieve objectives in an ethical and effective manner. To be successful, any leader must be able to foster shared purpose and purposeful collaboration, while engaging and empowering their fellow employees (Meade, 2019). Thus, leaders need to develop a culture of trust and respect within their team, while also adapting to the changing dynamics of the 21st century.In an increasingly complex and competitive 21st-century world, it is important to have strong personal philosophies of leadership embedded in ethical values and reflective practice. As a leader, I strive to create an environment of respect, support, and collaboration, enabling those around me to be their true selves and achieve their highest potential (Davies & Ellison, 1997). Thus, understanding one's own philosophy will help a leader to focus on various aspects of organizational and behavioural changes. This will also enable the leader to reflect upon their achievements and failures, and to adjust according to the changing environment.

## 2.0 Literature Review

The study reviewed articles that provided information on personal philosophy of leadership and how this philosophy will enable me to fit in the context of 21st century based on literature studies. Relevant theories were used to understand the relationship as well as empirical evidence were provided for the study. When reviewing the literature, the study followed a quantitative analysis which sought scholarly databased and publishers which include: springer, google scholar, SSRN, Oxford journals, etc. The key words used in the search were philosophy of leadership, leadership theories, and leadership in the context of 21 centuries. The relevant articles from the databases selected were reviewed to establish the information sought for leadership philosophies and in the context of 21 centuries. The main empirical areas review on empirical evidence are; how a well-articulated and informed personal philosophy of leadership will fit into the context of the 21st century, factors that defined my leadership before and after the course, personal philosophy of leadership, and how this Philosophy Fits into the Context of the 21st Century. Further, the study reviews the influential theoretical frameworks learned and conclusions were made based on the study findings.

## 2.1 Leadership Philosophy in the 21st Century

Young (2019), defined leadership is a dynamic process that involves influencing and guiding others towards a shared goal or objective. Leaders typically are the ones to set the direction of the team and organization, encouraging motivation and inspiring action. It is also important for leaders to build strong relationships and foster trust amongst their team in order to succeed. Effective leaders are able to identify the strengths and skills of each individual on their team and strategically bring them together to achieve a desired outcome. Additionally, Meade (2019), explained that good leaders are able to rally and rally their team in order to stay on track and focused on the task at hand. They also set an example for their team, leading by example when engaging in difficult conversations and tasks. Leadership is also seen as the ability to influence others on a particular issue, thought or behaviour. This means that while leaders are guiding and influencing team members, they are also attempting to foster positive changes in behaviours and attitudes. According to Norton (2002), the 21st century is the era of unprecedented population growth, technological advancements and globalization. It is the time of innovative approach towards leading the organization and people. While managing the organization, people and technology, leadership needs to play a very significant role. It is this leadership that would decide the direction and drive the organization towards achieving the objectives. Leadership is about major transformation on how the organization and people works, think and move. A well-articulated and informed personal philosophy of leadership can help the leaders to fit in any particular context and succeed.

The 21st century poses unique challenges for those in leadership roles; from leading a multinational team to addressing the rise of technology governance, understanding the leadership nuances of this era is critical to success. A well-articulated and informed personal philosophy of leadership for the 21st century will consider the context and environment of the organization, the needs of the community, and the role of technology in leading (Rost Joseph, 1993). Through this holistic approach, a leader can identify the opportunities and challenges of each situation and leverage them to develop and execute practical and successful strategies. A personal philosophy of leadership can provide the framework for understanding the nuances of 21st century leadership. This philosophy should be based upon the depth of understanding of the global digital age, ethical considerations, cultural sensitivity, technological literacy, and most importantly, modern leadership frameworks such as servant leadership. According to DePaul (2015), at the fundamental level, a personal philosophy of leadership should include values that demonstrate a commitment to integrity and respect for all involved. This includes cultivating relationships built on trust and understanding, and treating people equitably. Additionally, a personally informed leadership approach should strive to create an environment that emphasizes collaboration and open communication. In this regard, teams should be made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds to allow for the leveraging of varied perspectives and opinions. In a digital world, having an ability to use technology and apply data to define problems and develop solutions is essential (DePaul, 2015). Therefore, a personal philosophy of leadership should also include openness and the willingness to embrace new ways of thinking and working. In a quickly changing world, leaders must be ready to accept innovative tools and approaches to reach desired results.

## 2.2 Factors that Defined My Leadership Before and After the Course

Prior to the course, my leadership was largely characterized by an emphasis on authority. I saw the most effective form of leadership as one where clear expectations and rules were established and rigorously enforced. I thought the primary purpose for a leader was to set a vision and then drive it forward. This view of leadership is likely rooted in the traditional authoritarian style leadership popularized by various theorists such as Henry Fayol and Max Weber (Schein, 2015). They emphasized the importance of a hierarchical structure with a strong leader at the top. Such an approach is premised on the idea that the leader is the source of power and authority. As such, the leader must provide clear guidance and directions to ensure that all tasks are completed in a timely and efficient manner. This approach to leadership is often referred to as the “command and control” style of leadership. In terms of literature, there is a large body of research that underscores the importance of authority in effective leadership. Study Schein (2015), transformational leaders use their positions of authority to set a clear vision, shape expectations, and drive results. For example, Bass argues that successful transformational leaders should “display a powerful presence, give clear direction on tasks to be accomplished, challenge followers, and serve as role models.” This vision of leadership is largely focused on authority and is what I believed to be the most effective form of leadership prior to the course.

However, overtime as I studied the course, my view on emphasis on authority has changed. Study by Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié (2015), pointed that the traditional, authoritarian approach to leadership has its advantages as it can be effective in ensuring structure and order, and providing guidance and direction to followers. However, it can also be problematic as the approach can lead to a lack of motivation and creativity among followers, as well as an over-reliance on the leader. Furthermore, it does not take into account the power of collective decision-making and the importance of adapting to changing circumstances. Recent years have seen the emergence of a different type of leadership that emphasizes shared control and responsibility. This approach is often referred to as transformational leadership, and it relies on building strong relationships, inspiring followers, recognizing and rewarding achievement, and helping followers reach their fullest potential (Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié, 2015). This approach is more inclusive, empowering followers to take ownership of their own tasks and decisions as well as fostering creativity, initiative, and collaboration. Thus, my experience in the course has taught me the value of transformational leadership. I now recognize the importance of acknowledging and utilizing the strengths and capabilities of followers, as well as cultivating relationships and inspiring creativity. By encouraging collaboration, open communication, and collective decision-making, transformational leadership can create an environment where followers can reach their fullest potential.

I failed to see the value of having multiple approaches to achieving a given goal. I instead preferred to focus on a single approach that had the highest probability of success. I thought that diverging from this approach would compromise the chances of success and result in unnecessary delays. Study by Davies (2002), revealed that limited diversity approach often resulted in my failure to recognize the value of the contribution of different individuals in the team. As leaders, we have access to a variety of approaches and by utilizing them, we can often achieve greater success. As the course progressed, I came to understand the significance of having a diverse range of approaches. I was able to appreciate the potential benefits of different perspectives and draw upon a range of ideas and strategies to maximize effectiveness. Having a diverse team allows for more efficient decision making and provides greater opportunity for team collaboration.

Literature supports the idea that having diversity in approaches is beneficial for organizational improvement. Study by Davidson et al. (2007) found that leadership effectiveness was reduced when leaders showed lack of acceptance of multiple approaches. The study concluded that overall the effectiveness of the leader may be affected if they are not willing to include a variety of approaches to address a given problem. Furthermore, Jean Lau Chin & Trimble (2014), found that diversity in approach was associated with greater levels of innovation in organizational performance. Studies have also shown that having a diverse approach leads to higher levels of profitability and productivity. Finally, there is research that supports the notion that diversity in approaches can be beneficial to leadership effectiveness. For example, a study by Lumby & Coleman (2007), suggested that diverse approaches provide the potential to create value-adding outcomes and that it enables leaders to address a wider range of problems. The study concluded that a greater diversity in approaches is likely to lead to an increased level of success when addressing various challenges. Thus, after the course, I realized that limited diversity in approaches can have a negative impact on leadership effectiveness. This highlights the importance of incorporating a variety of approaches when addressing a problem and the potential benefits that this can provide. Before enrolling in the course, my leadership approach was largely cantered around my own ideas and beliefs, without taking into account the advice and experiences of others. I believed that my ideas were the ones that mattered, and that I did not need to solicit input from my team members or from external sources. The consequence of this approach was that I encountered difficulties while trying to achieve common objectives with my team, as my decisions were met with passive resistance. I failed to understand that leadership is a complex role that requires developing successful relationships and managing performance. Thus, to become the best leader, a leader must be open to feedback and willing to refine their skills accordingly.

There are several important factors that can be linked to lack of consideration for feedback. According to Atwater & David Andrew Waldman (2008), it can be rooted in a resistance to change, where individuals are more likely to act according to their own beliefs and ideas, rather than listening to those of others. This type of behavior can be seen in the fixed mindset described by Carol Dweck, where individuals with fixed mindsets prefer ‘sticking to the plan’ that they have already established, rather than looking for external, or even internal feedback, as it challenges their existing beliefs. It can also be linked to decision-making bias, such as the confirmation Bias, where leaders tend to seek out information which confirms their prior beliefs, and ignore the opinions of others. Furthermore, Poor Emotional Intelligence has been linked to resistance to feedback, as individuals may become too emotionally invested in their ideas to recognize the advantages of considering the advice of others. Study by Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié, (2015), has identified the importance of soliciting feedback from all stakeholders involved. The framework is based on the idea of ‘listening to the edges’; listening to the voices of those who are furthest away from the centre of power and influence, regarding their influence on the final decision. This provides both leaders and those at the fringes of decision-making an opportunity to reflect on the decisions being made, and to adjust or adapt accordingly. Further, a leader must establish a climate of trust and communication to help build a strong team. This includes acknowledging that there are valid perspectives other than one’s own and that it benefits all members to hear different viewpoints. Leaders must efficiently and attentively absorb and interpret feedback and then decide how best to act on it (Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié, 2015).

In addition, course materials now place more emphasis on Emotional Intelligence, and its importance for effective leadership. It is typically considered a core skill for successful leaders, and allows for progress through perspective. The concept of Situational Leadership by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard has further highlighted the importance of being receptive to feedback, understanding the interpersonal dynamics of the team, and demonstrating an appropriate combination of task- and relationship-oriented leadership styles (Norton, 2002). Taking all of these factors into consideration, it is clear that lack of consideration for feedback is a major detractor from effective leadership. It prevents successful progress, minimizes opportunities for innovation, and squanders opportunities for learning and development. As such, it is important for potential leaders to develop a culture of open dialogue and willingness to listen, in order to foster a successful team of people.

## 2.3 Personal Philosophy of Leadership

My main leadership philosophy is based on three core principles: compassion, consistency, and communication. Study by Norton Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié (2015), emphasized on the importance of compassion as essential to effective leadership because it provides a sense of trust, safety, and understanding for those who support me and are impacted by my decision. Further, consistency is important because it creates a sense of familiarity and security for followers, which helps them feel more comfortable with taking direction from me. Finally, communication ensures that everyone is on the same page, allowing us to discuss tasks, goals, and progress in a civilized, professional manner. These leadership principles are also based on providing clear expectations and a clear path for success that allows followers to understand their roles and responsibilities in order to reach our collective goals. My approach to tasks involves developing strategies that often involve problem-solving and critical thinking. Therefore, effectively cultivate an environment that empowers my followers to take responsibility for their own growth and development (Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié, 2015).

My personal brand of leadership is based on promoting collaboration and flexibility in order to create a condition for success. The approach involves fostering an environment of cooperation through open and honest dialogue. While I recognize that sometimes decisions must be made swiftly, I strive to allow time for discussion and to create a safe space for those involved to voice their opinions and perspectives to inform those decisions. My personal philosophy of leadership has been informed by a variety of sources, notably within organizational behavior, management, and psychology literature. Specifically, I draw strongly from path-goal theory, which identifies how leaders can motivate and assist followers in achieving their goals (Meade, 2019). This emphasis on providing support to team members acknowledges that different people approach tasks differently, and provides a space for creativity and problem-solving. Additionally, my approach is influenced by the concept of leader-member exchange Davies & Ellison (1997), which posits that when a leader form trusting and reciprocal relationships with their followers, they form loyalty and commitment that further strengthens the team and produces better results.

Studies by Rampersad (2009), identified several key themes related to effective leadership styles, a leader’s performance is shaped by his/her ability to incorporate different leadership styles, and by the use of transformational behaviors. This study further suggested that relational leadership, which focuses on developing relationships between the leader and followers, is an important factor for successful leadership. Lumby & Coleman (2007), looked at the impact of cultural context on leadership styles, finding that while some leadership styles are more effective than others, the most successful styles are those tailored to a specific cultural context. Thus, leadership is a dynamic process, shaped by the behavior of both the leader and the followers. Finally, it is essential to consider the experiences of followers when evaluating a leader’s performance. Research by Ulrich et al., (2014), has found that two-way communication, a shared sense of purpose, and trust are critical components of successful leadership. Building a trusting relationship between a leader and his/her followers helps to create an environment of mutual respect, engagement, and collaboration.

According to King (2019), holistic leadership is based on the premise that every individual within the team brings a unique perspective or skill set that, when combined, can contribute to a shared goal. It is essential that leaders focus on the health and well-being of individuals and the team as a whole. This could include creating an atmosphere that is emotionally safe and open, as well as providing access to resources and support to ensure that each individual’s skills are maximized and supported. Active listening is a central component of any holistic leadership approach. Leaders should be attentive and present, engaging in meaningful dialogue and exchange with individuals and teams to ensure that voices are heard, appreciated, and responded to. In addition, Dhiman (2017), pointed that holistic leadership encourages the leader to approach decision making from a collaborative perspective, where dialogue, active engagement, and consensus-building are paramount. Holistic leadership also stresses the need to be consciously aware of biases, power dynamics, and other systemic barriers that may be present within the environment, so that they may be proactively addressed and open communication is maintained. Numerous studies have found that holistic leadership approaches to leadership are linked to higher levels of team satisfaction, job performance, and overall success. A study conducted by Mitsuru Kodama (2017), analysed the effects of holistically-oriented leadership behaviors on the levels of team commitment and goals alignment among a group of newly appointed managers. The results of this study showed that the managers who exhibited higher levels of holistic leadership behaviors were more successful at aligning team members' shared goals and creating a culture of commitment to the team, as opposed to those who relied upon more traditional forms of management. Study by Dhiman 2017), pointed that emphasis on dialogue and open communication, consideration of multiple perspectives and respectful and receptive to feedback guides holistic leadership.

Much of the research on personal philosophies of leadership with an emphasis on dialogue and open communication focuses on the role of transformational leadership. A holistic leadership approach discussed by King (2019), involves creating space for dialogue amongst those involved in the decision process, which then allows for capacity building among the different individuals involved. Holistic leadership sees everyone as interconnected and works to draw out meaning by engaging in discourse. This type of thinking plus practice can foster open communication by enabling systems-level thinking, growing the capacity of all involved and creating collaborative solutions. In line with this type of leadership, embracing ethical practices and dialoguing by creating space for two-way relationships can enable deep understanding and increased trust. This will ultimately give way to healthier and more open communication. Through this type of leadership, creative problem solving can be reached. Inclusivity is promoted and decision making is more mindful, as members are encouraged to share their perspectives. According to Dhiman (2017), holistic leadership puts innovation at the core of developing new ways of working. By encouraging the team to challenge itself and to explore different ways of leading, it nudges members to come up with something new and unique. As a result, solutions emerge that are not only creative but also come from an informed place. In addition, research has found that an effective leadership style for promoting dialogue and open communication is transformational-empowering leadership. Transformational-empowering leadership involves building relationships and mutual trust among a leader and their followers, while also providing support for followers to develop their voice (Rampersad, 2009). This creates an environment in which dialogue and open communication can occur, leading to better overall team performance.

Further research has explored how a holistic approach to leadership can foster trust, respect, open communication, and innovation within teams. Ulrich et al. (2014), argued that a holistic approach to leadership helps to create a collaborative environment that encourages dialogue between members and encourages them to share new ideas. This approach emphasizes the role of dialogue as a means of advancing team performance, rather than just as a tool for discussing and resolving problems. Therefore, I believe personal philosophies of holistic leadership is centred around creating a space that is truly inclusive and encourages open communication. By establishing an environment where everyone is heard, encouraged, and respected, meaningful relationships can be formed. This way, decision-making becomes more mindful, and creative solutions initiated. My personal philosophy of leadership is that I should aim to develop a holistic approach to leadership, considering all aspects and multiple perspectives. Rather than focusing on one single area of leadership such as authority, power, or decision-making, I believe that the leader should take into account the contributions of followers, the group as a whole, the mission of the organization, and the strategic environment (DePaul, 2015). In this holistic approach, the leader should consider multiple perspectives, including the views of managers, staff, customers, shareholders, and other stakeholders in order to achieve desired outcomes. Additionally, I believe in the importance of fostering a shared vision and sense of purpose throughout the entire team in order to motivate and engage employees. I believe that understanding the strengths and weaknesses of my team is the foundation of successful leadership. Through interacting with and engaging with members of my team, I am able to cultivate a team dynamic and environment that is conducive to the inclusion of different perspectives and ideas.

Research in the area of leadership has in fact shown that allowing for the inclusion of diverse perspectives increases productivity. Additionally, providing the opportunity for a wide range of skills to be utilized not only results in more innovative solutions, but fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance within teams (Norton, 2017). Consequently, it is my belief that a leader should strongly consider multiple perspectives in order to make an effort to be inclusive and endearing towards team members. To ensure that my followers have a say in the decision-making process, I strive to practice active listening and communication. I make sure to give both positive and constructive feedback to everyone on the team so that every voice is heard and respected (DePaul, 2015). I also create an environment in which all stakeholders can freely present their ideas and opinions without fear of retribution. Furthermore, I encourage collaboration among the parties involved in order to come up with creative solutions that take into account multiple perspectives. Research supports the notion of using a holistic approach to leadership, a meta-analysis conducted by Noha El-Bassiouny et al. (2023), found that leader performance is improved when leaders have an expansive view of their context and take into consideration the perspectives of others. Additionally, a study by Komives et al. (2005), concluded that follower motivation and engagement were significantly higher when leader took into account the needs, values, and perspectives of followers. These results show that the use of a holistic approach to leadership can be beneficial not only for the leader, but also for the followers and organization as a whole.

Study by Noha El-Bassiouny et al. (2023) pointed that a holistic leader needs to be aware of the diverse perspectives that exist in their environment and seek to engage all stakeholders to find a resolution. This requires understanding the goals and motivations of various parties, demonstrating respect for those perspectives, and creating a safe environment of collaboration in which all voices are heard. Leaders must also have a willingness to accept and act upon constructive feedback from team members, as this allows the leader to refine their approach and action plan and better align it with the goals of the team. It is a style of leadership that places emphasis on taking the entire perspective into account when working with others. It is an approach based on maintaining balance between all aspects of life, including physical, mental, and spiritual health (Komives et al., 2005). I believe this style of leadership is essential to cultivating an environment of respect, collaboration, and growth. According to Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié, (2015), respectful and receptive to feedback is equally important for any leader, as a leader, it is my belief that constructive feedback from stakeholders helps me to identify areas where I can adjust and improve, as well as recognize areas in which I am doing well. To ensure that I am being responsive to feedback, I ensure that I create an open space for honest and constructive dialogue by listening attentively and avoiding criticism of the feedback being offered. Additionally, I strive to address any issues raised in the feedback quickly and with sensitivity, as this allows me to maintain trust and respect from my team members. The implication is that respectful and receptive attitude to feedback are essential components of my personal philosophy of leadership. By being open to the varied perspectives of all stakeholders, and by creating an open and engaging environment in which feedback is seen as beneficial, I am better able to identify and resolve the complex challenges faced by the team in order to enable success.

In the academic literature, the importance of respectful and receptive leadership is well documented. Jean, & Trimble (2014), argue that a leader’s ability to respond to feedback has a direct correlation to their success. Similarly, respectful and receptive leadership significantly reduces conflicts between team members, allowing them to work more cohesively and productively. Furthermore, Lumby & Coleman (2007), suggest that allowing stakeholders to contribute feedback and ideas leads to better overall decision-making and better alignment between the leader’s goals and the team’s goals. In order to cultivate this attitude of respect, I focus on both encouraging respectful dialogue and actively listening to new ideas. I value the perspectives of every team member and understand that collective wisdom can be greater than that of a single individual. My approach to leadership is based on fostering strong relationships with my team so that I am able to better understand their unique goals and needs while respecting their individual contributions. Thus, to achieve the most effective and efficient outcomes for my team, I strive to ensure that my leadership style reflects my personal philosophy and values (Spillane & Jean-Etienne Joullié, 2015). I strive to provide an open and trusting environment that invites collaboration and feedback. As a leader, I am willing to own my mistakes and work together with my team to come up with creative and holistic solutions.

## 2.4 Century Relevance of Leadership Philosophy in 21st Century

According to Birdie & Jain (2017), globalization and virtual working environments demand that team members around the world communicate and cooperate in order to produce successful results. Openness and dialogue are two concepts that can assist in creating an encouraging and collaborative working environment amongst these geographically and culturally diverse teams. Openness implies a willingness to listen to, consider, and accept viewpoints from all team members, including those from foreign countries. Dialogue is essential to the success of global teams since it encourages discussion and debate so that a consensus can be reached, ensuring that everyone's perspectives are heard and all team members can contribute to the team’s success. This philosophy is also in line with 21st century ethical standards. Increasingly, companies are beginning to pledge their commitment to ethical business conduct (Birdie & Jain, 2017). By fostering an environment of openness and dialogue, I can ensure that company policies and procedures are fair and just, and that employees are treated with respect and fairness regardless of their country of origin. A review of the literature indicates that these concepts are essential for successful global collaboration. Recent studies by Bolman & Deal, (2017), have found that open and honest debate helps increase team members’ understanding of a problem and often leads to better decision-making. Furthermore, the research suggests that effective communication and collaboration among team members from different countries is key for successful global projects. Additionally, some studies have found that the use of effective dialogue among global teams can raise the quality of decision-making processes and product outcomes (Cerra et al., 2012).

Evidence suggests that the open and collaborative approach that my leadership philosophy promotes is more effective in a virtual environment than traditional top-down models of management (Cerra et al., 2012). The open and inclusive atmosphere created by this leadership philosophy encourages participation from all levels, allowing for better understanding and cooperation between team members. This type of open dialogue can help to create more innovative solutions than the traditional hierarchical system. Furthermore, the transparency and trust that this philosophy creates contribute to establishing a strong organizational culture that is conducive to successful and innovative collaboration (Fang & Hassler, 2021). According to Norton (2002), global virtual work environments are characterized by a complex mix of cultural, geographical, and temporal differences. The open and collaborative approach of my leadership philosophy helps to bridge these gaps and encourages active participation and engagement from all parties. This approach also reduces the power distance by promoting a shared understanding of group objectives and allowing for equal input from all members. As a result, team members are more likely to remain engaged and motivated (Norton, 2002).

A key to success in these virtual working environments is developing strong relationships with colleagues in different countries. My leadership philosophy of openness and dialogue encourages trust and respect across cultures and boundaries. Establishing relationships with team members in different countries requires understanding cultural differences and values; this understanding allows us to work together more efficiently and effectively. Open communication also facilitates a greater sense of belonging among remote teams, fostering collaboration and helping to create a stronger sense of community (Fang & Hassler, 2021). My leadership philosophy also resonates with the concept of “learning from diversity”, which involves valuing and capitalizing on differentials in areas such as culture, gender, race, and capabilities. It encourages valuing the experiences, knowledge, and expertise that different team members from around the world can bring to the table. By embracing diversity, we can bring people together to share diverse perspectives and innovate. Such collaboration will inevitably bring us closer to meeting global objectives (Birdie & Jain, 2017).

According to Mitsuru (2017), flattening organizational structures mean that decisions must be made quickly and often by groups rather than by just one leader. Leaders must shift from a command-and-control style to a trusted partner model, where decisions involve all stakeholders, and leaders optimize their impact by understanding stakeholders’ perspectives and bringing the groups of stakeholders together for common purpose. They must cultivate an atmosphere of trust, empowerment, and accountability, and work to resolve conflicts through collaboration and mutual respect. Reitzig & Springerlink, (2022), pointed that one of the most successful organizational models that supports a flattened organizational structure is Holacracy, which is based on decentralizing authority and decision-making. Holacracy has five main principles: striving for common goals, maintaining transparency, focusing on functional and process roles, iterative decision making, and individual ownership. Each of these principles is a reflection of my own philosophy. Common goals create a shared purpose, transparency helps build trust, emphasizing functional and process roles allows each team member to take ownership of their work, iterative decision making allows teams to adjust as needed, and individual ownership allows team members to take ownership of their roles and tasks (Reitzig & Springerlink, 2022).

A review of the scholarly literature in relation to flattening organizational structures in the 21st century provides support for my approach. A study by Robertson (2015), sought to investigate how a flattened organizational structure could contribute to a culture of collaboration and trust. The study found that a flattening of the organizational structure had a positive effect on employees’ sense of trust, with a high share of collaborative culture resulting from the strategy. Furthermore, the study found that organizational leaders and managers were more likely to adopt a leadership style that was more inclusive and open to collaboration, thus enabling greater engagement across the organization (Robertson, 2015). In the 21st century, a flattened organizational structure is the best way to foster collaboration and optimize the team. This structure allows for greater creativity, an inclusive environment, and enhanced problem-solving. My philosophy seeks to build relationships and foster trust, create collaboration, and develop a shared purpose among teams and leaders (Reitzig & Springerlink, 2022). In the flattened organizational structure, I will focus my resources and energy on building open communication, personal growth, individual ownership, and mutual respect for the benefit of the team and the organization.

Gut (2020), pointed that being able to effectively collaborate is essential for any successful organization today. It enables teams to take ownership of their work, to be better engaged and motivated, to produce better results, and to be innovative. As the world continues to move more and more towards digital transformations, collaboration is becoming increasingly necessary as organizations strive to stay ahead of the competition. My commitment to collaborative interaction is the foundation of my leadership philosophy. It is my belief that collaboration and inclusion should be embraced, encouraged, and implemented into every step of the process. This is especially true in the 21st century, where digital transformation is rapidly changing the way businesses operate. By fostering collaboration among team members, I am encouraging a culture where ideas are openly shared, discussed, and refined, leading to innovations and improved productivity. As collaboration increases, so does commitment to the project, increased job satisfaction, improved morale, and a better organizational culture overall (Gut, 2020). This commitment to collaborative interaction can give an organization a competitive edge in today’s fast-paced digital environment.

There is a considerable body of scholarly literature which supports the importance of collaborative interaction in the 21st century. Recent research by Kuenkel et al., (2020), has shown that organizations with collaborative cultures have increased levels of trust, greater decision-making capabilities, improved organizational climate, and more positive relationships with customers. Additionally, collaboration has been shown to increase morale, motivation, and job satisfaction among team members. It also has been linked to reduced time-to-market, improved documentation, and fewer errors, resulting in higher productivity and customer satisfaction (Kuenkel et al., 2020). Straus (2002) article on “*How to make collaboration work: powerful ways to build consensus, solve problems, and make decisions*” emphasizes the value of embracing change, engaging with stakeholders, and creating a culture of collaboration for organisations. Through this focus on collaboration, organizations can create a work culture and environment in which all stakeholders are able to work together to meet the mission of the organisation. This type of environment increases moral, creates better communication, and fosters team growth.

According to the research, these skills include problem-solving, communication, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and trust-building. By facilitating the development of these skills, organisations can develop an environment of collaboration that is successful and beneficial to all stakeholders. Davies & Ellison (1997), article on “*School leadership for the 21st century: a competency and knowledge approach*.” examines the concepts of Transformational and Emotional Intelligence leadership styles which can be helpful in creating a successful collaboration environment for stakeholders. Transformational leadership styles focus on creating an environment of passion and enthusiasm where stakeholders can share ideas and cultivate a culture of growth. Emotional Intelligence Leadership Styles focus on the development of personal relationships, trust, empathy, and understanding, which are integral components in collaborating with a team. Creating a collaborative culture in the 21st century is an essential component to organizational success (Davies & Ellison, 1997). By utilizing my leadership philosophy, I am able to commit to a collaborative atmosphere that brings together all stakeholders to create an innovative and successful environment.

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework

### 2.5.1 Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

Originally developed by House (1971), the Path-Goal theory is based in contingency theory, which proposes that different kinds of leadership are most appropriate for different kinds of situations (Northouse, 2022) and according to the theory leaders must understand the situation they are in and modify their leadership style to address the situational needs of followers, aiming to provide a “path” from the current state to a desired goal and motivate followers by making their path easier and productive. The four leadership styles posited by the Path-Goal theory are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. Directive leadership involves the leader giving clear instructions and expecting followers to comply. This type of leadership is most appropriate in situations where there is a high degree of complexity or when there is instability and ambiguity (Northouse, 2022).

According to Gill (2011), supportive leadership involves leaders providing emotional and practical support to followers and is most effective when followers are highly motivated and job satisfaction is low. Participative leadership involves leaders building a team atmosphere where followers are actively encouraged to participate in decision making processes and is especially effective with experienced employees. Achievement-oriented leadership involves the leader setting difficult goals and pushing employees to meet them. This type of leadership is most appropriate where there is a need to increase performance and productivity. Thus, the theory is based on the premise that a leader’s behavior affects the performance and motivation of their followers. Northouse (2019), pointed that the theory emphasizes that a leader should use a variety of leadership styles to help their followers to achieve their goals. The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership has been heavily studied and is considered to be one of the most influential leadership theories. In addition, Path-Goal Theory has been used to describe and explain leadership behavior in various organizational settings, such as the military, government, and corporations (Northouse, 2019).

### 2.5.2 The Situational Leadership Theory

The Situational Leadership Theory has been widely researched by many scholars, and is known as one of the most influential leadership theories of all time. This theory focuses on the adaptation of the leader dependent on the maturity level of the followers as well as the context (Sadler, 2016). According to the theory, effective leaders are able to assess the needs of their followers and determine the most appropriate style of leadership given the unique situation. The goal of the theory is to create an environment in which leaders can assess their followers’ development level and apply the appropriate leadership style (Northouse, 2022). By doing so, leaders will optimise followers’ motivation and performance, and increase organisational effectiveness. The four main styles of leadership discussed in the theory include: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating (Northouse, 2022). Directing is the most directive leadership style with an emphasis on task accomplishment. Leaders use this style when employees have a low level of development, as it gives them clear expectations and directions. Coaching is a less directive style that allows employees to take more responsibility for their decisions and learn from their mistakes. This style is best used when employee development levels are somewhere in the middle: higher than the directing style but not yet ready for the highest level of autonomy (Northouse, 2019).

According to Gill (2011), supporting is an even less directive style of leadership, where the leader encourages employees to take more responsibility and works with them to come up with solutions to problems. This style is best suited for more experienced employees who have high levels of maturity and development. Finally, delegating is the least directive style of leadership, where the leader delegates tasks to the team and trusts them to take responsibility for the results. This style is best suited for highly experienced and developed teams. In general, the Situational Leadership Theory is an influential theoretical framework that has been utilized in a variety of organisational settings to improve overall effectiveness. The use of this theory encourages dynamic leadership that is tailored to the needs of the followers and the situation, thus optimising the performance of employees and increasing their job satisfaction (Northouse, 2022).

## 3.0 Conclusion

I believe that my leadership philosophy is well-suited for the 21st century because of the shifting dynamics of the workplace. Organizations today are increasingly diverse and innovative, and they require leaders who are capable of facilitating smooth collaboration between cross-functional teams, understanding multiple perspectives, and offering feedback and insights in order to foster a culture of openness and innovation. Additionally, as a leader, I believe it is important to understand that the dynamics of the workplace will continue to evolve and to be open to adapting my leadership style and approach accordingly. As a leader, I must be able to recognize that one perspective is not always the ‘right’ perspective and that there may be multiple solutions to a problem. Through encouraging discussion and exploring multiple solutions, I can provide more thoughtful and well-developed solutions. In addition, I must also be open to learning new ideas, approaches, or technologies in order to remain current in my field and to ensure that I remain a valuable asset to my organization. By taking the time to be receptive to feedback and to continuously learn new skills and knowledge, I can better equip myself to stay current and to lead with genuine confidence and a forward-thinking mind-set. Overall, my personal leadership philosophy seeks to empower my team to think creatively and to take intelligent risks that can have a positive impact on our organization. In doing so, I can foster a more inclusive culture that will in turn lead to more successful outcomes for my organization.

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