COMPARING AND CONTRASTING CONSTRUCTIVIST LEADERSHIP AND THE SYNERGISTIC LEADERSHIP THEORY

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CHALLENGES TO LEADERSHIP THEORY

For over two decades, theories in leadership and management have been challenged for failure to include the female presence and voice in theory development (Brown & Irby, 1994; Shakeshaft & Nowell, 1984). These same leadership theories did not particularly include other minorities. Thus, such theories are not socially just.

- Achieving the 21st Century demands for social justice in educational leadership requires that equity in leadership theory be addressed.

- Equitable leadership theory acknowledges experiences of both genders and a variety of ethnicities and cultures.

- Significant to the need for a socially just or equitable leadership theory is the fact that Hoxby and Leigh (2005) pointed out 5 years ago 75% of the pool from which entry level administrators will be drawn through 2015 are female
- It is important to ensure that the theory, the basis for guiding leadership actions, be socially just.

Historically, theories in leadership and management did not embrace the concept of social justice in that they failed to include the female presence or voice. Additionally, those theories would not have been able to address the current realities of schools and society.

Irby, Brown, and Trautman (1999) examined 24 familiar leadership theories and reaffirmed the allegation that the conceptualization of leadership theory was formulated through "a male lens" and was "subsequently applied to both males and females." These theories were examined for:

(a) the inclusion of the female experience or attitudes;

(b) gender as a significant variable in development of the theory;

(c) females in the sample population;

(d) use of non-sexist language, and

(e) generalizability.

PROBLEMS WITH LEADERSHIP THEORIES

- Theories run counter to goals of social justice.
- Theories traditionally included samples limited to males in corporate and military environments.
- Theories do not reflect currently advocated leadership practices or organizational paradigms.
- Theories are not relevant for all leaders.
- Theories perpetuate barriers that women and minority leaders encounter.
- Theories promote stereotypical norms for organizations.
- Theories fail to give voice to women and minorities; they do not consider the voice of diversity.

Type of theory	Name of theory	Primary writers
Organizational	Fusion process	Bakke (1953)
	Complex learning organizations	Etzioni (1975)
	Structure in fives	Mintzberg (1983)
	Learning organizations	Senge (1990)
	Organizational framework	Bolman and Deal (1991)
Organizational behavior	Social system theory	Homans (1950; Getzels and Guba (1955)
	Needs hierarchy theory	Maslow (1955); Porter (1964)
Management	Functions of executive	Barnard (1938)
	3-D theory	Reddin (1970)
	Theory Z	Ouchi (1981)
	Total quality management	Deming (1988)
	Strategic management	Nahavandi (1993)
Leadership	Iowa studies	Lewin *et al.* (1939)
	Leadership factors	Stogdill (1948)
	Ohio state studies	Halpin and Winer (1957) Hemphill and Coons (1957)
	Theory X&Y	McGregor (1957)
	Performance-maintenance	Misumi *et al.* (1958)
	Four-factor theory	Bowers and Seashore (1966)
	Michigan studies	Likert (1961)
	Contingency theory	Fiedler (1967)
	Leadership grid styles	Blake and Mouton (1968)
	Situational leadership	Hersey and Blanchard (1969)
	Path-goal theory	Evans (1970)
	Transformational leadership	Burns, 1978; Bass and Avdio (1994)

EXPANDING CURRENT LEADERSHIP THEORY

"Exposing our students solely to traditional leadership literature (including to leadership theories) essentially legitimizes traditionally male perspectives and delegitimizes the behavior and perspectives of women" (Young & McLeod, 2001).

EXPANDING CURRENT LEADERSHIP THEORY

"It is reasonable that because women's lived experiences as leaders differ from men's, new theoretical understanding of a leadership that is premised on social justice might emerge" (Grogan, 1998).

EXPANDING THE CURRICULUM TO INCLUDE SOCIALLY JUST THEORY

Expanding leadership curriculum to include female-inclusive (and ethnically-inclusive) theory:

(a) promotes social justice

(b) reflects currently advocated leadership practice;

(c) addresses the concerns, needs, and realities of women;

(d) reduces the barriers women encounter;

(e) and prepares women and men to create and work effectively in inclusive systems.

THEORY IN THE PAST 25 YEARS

- Over the past 25 years, we found that 15 leadership concepts, styles, models, or approaches which move toward social justice have emerged.

- Some have consciously included the experiences and perspectives of female leaders while some have not.

LEADERSHIP/ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPTS OR STYLES

- Authentic Leadership (Leadership Style—interactive leadership and the nature of the leader's impact) (Terry, 1993)

- Caring Leadership (Leadership Style– collectively achieve the organization's goals through forming connections and enhancing relationships) (Gilligan, 1982; Grogan, 1998; Noddings, 1984)

- Ethical Leadership (Leadership Style--honors personal integrity and responds to the needs of others in promoting justice) (Starrett, 2004)

- Feminist Leadership/Organizations (Leadership Style and Organizational Concept– participatory leadership in shaping rules, goals, and practices) (Tong, 1989; McCall, 1995; Morgan, 1994)

- Interactive Leadership (Leadership Style– effective in flexible, non hierarchical organizations; preferred by women) (Rosener, 1990)

- Learning-focused Leadership (Leadership Style— focus on teaching and learning) (Beck & Murphy, 1996)

- Power to and power with (Leadership Style—democratic and collaborative leaders view power as a property of the group; consider power as a collective action and the ability to get things done with others) (Brunner, 1999; Brunner & Duncan, 1998)

- Relational Leadership (Leadership Style—five attributes of leadership are collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision) (Regan, 1990; Regan & Brooks, 1995)

- Servant Leadership (Leadership Style– places good of others over self) (Greenleaf, 1977; Sergiovanni, 1992; Schlosberg, 2003)

- Value-added Leadership (Leadership Style– substitutes moral authority for bureaucratic leadership) (Covey, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1994)

- Visionary Leadership (Leadership Style– visioning for anticipation for change) (Nanus, 1992)

THEORIES/CONCEPTS/ MODELS

- Constructivist Leadership (Leadership Concept– embraces some female leadership behaviors, but not developed specifically to include female leadership perspectives) (Lambert, 1995; Shapiro, 2009)

- Organizational Framework (Organizational Model– embraces some feminist organizational characteristics, but was not developed specifically as a feminist organizational theory) (Bolman & Deal, 1991)

- Systems Theory (Organizational Theory– no specific mention of females, but schools are viewed as learning community) (Senge, 1990)

THEOHARIS ON APPROACHING A THEORY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP

- Focused on commonalities among principals who have attained social justice on their campuses through their actions

- Stressed the need for leaders to "…both enact and develop resistance in service of advancing social justice and educating marginalized / all students." (Theoharis, 2004, p. 60).

- Advocated a need for a leadership theory that is socially just

The First Leadership Theory of the 21ˢᵗ Century

- The Synergistic Leadership Theory (Leadership Theory– developed purposefully as a systems and postmodern theory to include the female voice and experience) (Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002)

THE SYNERGISTIC LEADERSHIP THEORY AS A 21ST CENTURY LEADERSHIP THEORY HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE:

- Non-hierarchical
- Nonlinear
- Situational
- Contextual
- Dynamic
- Holistic
- Systemic
- Transformative
- Socially Just
- Gender inclusive
- Relevant to both male and female leaders
- Cross-cultural
- Relational
- Promotes reflection
- Includes democratic, adaptive, collaborative, nurturing, and people-oriented leadership behaviors

THE SYNERGISTIC LEADERSHIP THEORY

- The theory is based on four equal factors:
  - -Attitudes, beliefs, and values
  - -Leadership behavior
  - -External forces
  - -Organizational structure

- The theory is modeled by a tetrahedron with six interactive pairs. Each factor is equal; no structural hierarchy exists, and each factor interacts with the others.

THE TETRAHEDRAL MODEL

Organizational Structure

External Forces

Leadership Behaviors

Beliefs, Attitudes, Values
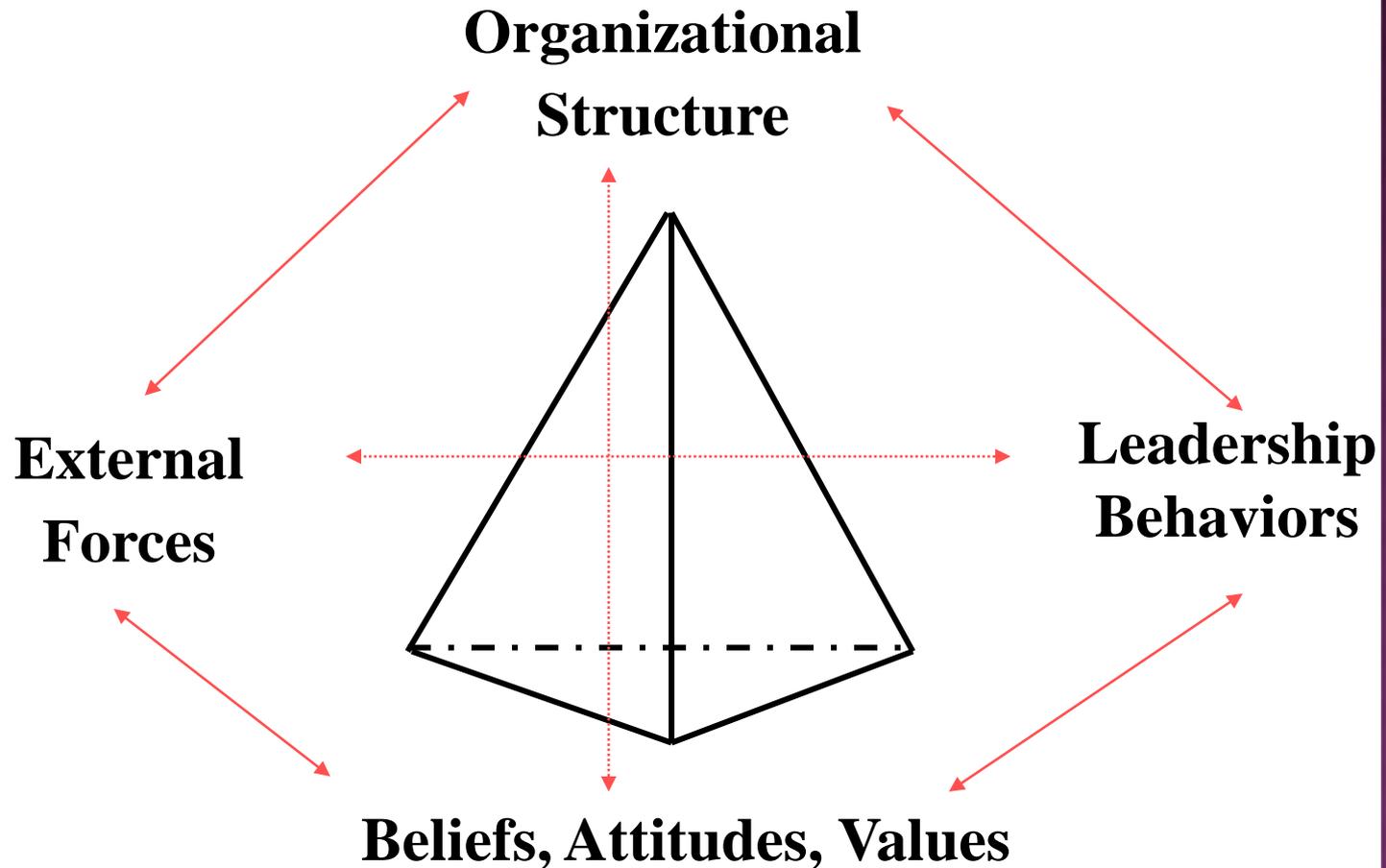
SLT: ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND VALUES

- foundation for guiding principals that "apply at all times in all places"
- values, ideas, norms, and teachings that are manifested in actions
  - Examples
    - values professional growth
    - open to change
    - values diversity
    - values integrity

SLT: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Range of behaviors from autocratic to nurturer

SLT: EXTERNAL FORCES

Influencers outside the control of the organization or the leader that interact with the organization and the leader and that inherently embody a set of values, attitudes and beliefs:

- local, national, and international community and conditions
- governmental regulations, laws
- demographics
- cultural and political climate
- technological advances
- economic situations
- policy-making board decisions

SLT: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The characteristics of organizations and how they operate:

-<u>Bureaucratic organizations</u>: division of labor, rules, hierarchy of authority, impersonality, and competence

-<u>Feminist organizations-</u> participative decision making, systems of rotating leadership, promotion of community and cooperation, power sharing

THE SLT

- creates a framework for describing interactions and dynamic tensions among leadership behaviors, organizational structures, external forces, and attitudes and beliefs

- focuses on the interconnected behaviors, beliefs, values, structures, and forces that impact the leader, the people within the organization, and the structure of the organization. Tension between even two of the factors can negatively impact the effectiveness of the leader or organization

- is descriptive of the holistic environment of leading and those who lead in the organization

- The Organizational and Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (OLEI) is a 96 item instrument designed to measure agreement or disagreement with particular indicators of each of the four factors of the SLT.

- The OLEI has been validated in research conducted by Holtkamp (2001), Holtkamp, Irby, Brown, and Yang (2007), Hernandez (2004), and Trautman (2000).

ASPECTS PARTICULAR TO THE SLT

- female leaders were included in development

- the theory acknowledges a range of behaviors and organizational structures inclusive of those considered "feminine"

- female leaders may be impacted by external forces, organizational structures, and beliefs, attitudes and values in ways male leaders are not

- female leadership behaviors may interact with the factors in ways unlike the leadership behavior of males

- leaders at various positions or levels, i.e. teacher leaders to superintendents, may be impacted by the factors of the theory in different ways

THE SLT:

- assists leaders in understanding the political and cultural environment and in decision making

- is beneficial in determining why (or why not) a leader is perceived as successful

- assists in determining a candidate's congruence with a particular organization and cultural and political environment

- fosters reflective practice as individuals engage in self-assessment based on factors

"Applying the SLT, leaders construct or reconstruct themselves and their professional worlds. Through the analysis of the interactions of the four factors, leaders learn much about themselves, their constituents, and their organizations. Specifically they are able to analyze or consider their leadership behavior, the organizational structure, the beliefs, attitudes, and values, and the external forces as they impact **social justice**" (Brown, Irby & Lara, 2004).

VALIDATION STUDIES

The SLT has been validated across American ethnic cultures and geographic locations as well as internationally (Bamberg, 2004; Kasper, 2006; Hernandez, 2004; Holtkamp, 2001; Glenn, 2008; Justice, 2007; Trautman, 2000; Truslow, 2004; Schlosberg, 2003; Yang, 2010; Yang, Irby, & Brown, 2008).

VALIDATION STUDIES

Research indicates that the SLT:

- is gender inclusive (Hernandez, 2004; Irby et al., 2002; Schlosberg, 2003; Trautman, 2000)

- is contextual and situational (Bamberg, 2004; Irby et al., 2002; Kasper, 2006; Trautman, 2000; Truslow, 2004; Holtkamp, 2001)

- possesses explanatory power across a range of positions and by gender (generalizability) (Ardovinni et al., 2006; Glenn, 2008; Justice, 2007; Trautman, 2000)

- is practical and useful in understanding interactive systems (Bamberg, 2004; Kasper, 2006; Trautman, 2000)

- is parsimonious (simply integrates a large number of variables) (Holtkamp, 2001)

- promotes dialogue around a model that is cognizant of female, as well as male, realities (Trautman, 2000; Truslow, 2001)

- is a viable theory with implications for practicing and future leaders (Bamberg, 2004)

- exemplifies contemporary leadership theories. It is systemic, contextual, relational and contingent (Schlosberg, 2003)

- is a useful tool for understanding leadership practices and educational organizations in another culture (Irby et al., 2002; Schlosberg, 2003; Yang, Irby, & Brown, 2008)

- is a gender-inclusive theory that is applicable to female and male leaders (Hernandez, 2004; Trautman, 2000; Truslow, 2001)

- provides a current theoretical framework from which to examine the leader's context with regard to the four factors of the theory (Hernandez, 2004)

THE SLT

The SLT is a post-modern theory. It does not advocate a binary "either/or" criteria for the existence of new theories over old, but merely a co-existence or continuity of theories that are mutually co-dependent. Its purpose is not to replace the old, but to expand the knowledge base.

(1) add to existing leadership theory to include:

-a theory that addresses gender, cultural, and political issues

-a theory that directly addresses social justice

-a theory situated in post-modernism

-a theory reflective of females' leadership experiences

-a theory applicable to both men and women leaders

(2) enhance relevancy of theory presented in leadership programs for both females and males

CONCLUSION

As we reform leadership preparation programs, social justice goals for leadership cannot be ignored.

We must not limit reform efforts by merely addressing the charges of "too much theory" or of the lack of integration, relevancy and practice. *Nor must we merely continue to examine and teach the theories that currently exist.*

For the 21st Century, we must advocate new theory that:

- is founded in social justice

- specifically includes perspectives and experiences of all groups

- takes into account changing dynamics and needs of leaders and organizations

Acknowledging that leadership theory is not just, must we not demand that leadership theory for the 21st Century be socially just?

Subsequently, must we not insist that this socially just theory be promoted as assertively as have been 20th Century leadership theories which were reflective of only male voices yet were applied to males and females alike?

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