



Is a Title Necessary to Become an Effective Leader?: A Theoretical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

There has been a lot of talks lately about the need for a title/position to be a true leader among academics and researchers. Likewise, most people are confused about the title and the action of a leader in an organization. The words on the street are that most of the leaders believe in their titles, not in their actions, as well as in most of the research on leadership are characterized by fragmentation and conflicting nomenclatures. These confusions and conflicts must be solved through adequate reviewing and research studies. The primary goal of the study is to find out if the title is needed to be a leader and to identify the key qualities to be an action-oriented leader. The review is a stand-alone literature review conducted using the electronics databases such as EBSCO, DOAJ, RESEARCH LIFE, EMBASE and Google Scholar. The information on leadership, effective leadership positions and qualities of effective leaders was obtained after reviewing relevant research papers from these different journals. The present review shows some rough ideas on how to be an action-oriented leader without a title. It also showed that communication skills, trust, pragmatism, and relationship building are the most important qualities of leaders to enhance the personal power to gain organizational power, to be the most effective and dynamic leader, the present review suggests some requirement of additional skills such as trust, compassion, stability, hope, relationship and influential skills to make an impact in the 21st century leadership environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The position of a leader is the topic that is explored in this review. It is defined as a leader's privilege to have full control and direction over others in relation to an organization's roles and mandates. The effective leader follows followers and knows their power to lead people in the workplace. One of the most topical topics of discussion in the field of leadership is the title or position of a manager in an organization. Plus, most people also confuse it with leadership and title. Likewise, as some have argued, most people have a mixed approach to the subject. Some believed that the position is necessary for a leader to be effective, while some see it the other way around. This creates a great deal of confusion about the title or position of an executive for many business leaders around the world.

Until recently, most business leaders conflated leadership with titles or positions because of their different ideas. In addition, the modern leadership model pays more attention to action rather than name, which provides more motivation for action. The point of the argument presented here is that some people say that a title is not required to be a leader, while others believe that a title is still important to be a leader of an organization.

The main objectives of this review are to assess the relevance of the position to effective leaders and to determine the qualities of action-oriented leaders in leadership. To achieve these goals, the researcher explored the past studies' opinions, knowledge, and viewpoints expressed by various researchers and scholars across the world.

All relevant literature reviews on the leadership title are highlighted to support the actual theme of the review. The review covers all the different aspects of the arguments and statements made by various scholars. They have demonstrated many insights and opinions based on their research and insights on a particular topic. In addition, the loopholes identified by each author were also cited to provide the arguments for the leadership title of the executives in the management field.

1.1 Leadership and Effective Leadership

Different researchers defined leadership in different ways, however, its definition has always

been a continuous process of social influence which is still the common denominator of all definitions. It cannot be defined exclusively by one's position rather it is the ability to establish a course of direction and recognize actions that need to be taken to move forward on the established path.

Patterson [1] claimed that leadership is the act of balancing competing desires. It has been further claimed that leadership can learn from people who may have needs and compete with others in groups with similar needs. Quinn & Spreitzer [2] also defined leadership as the process by which a person influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours of others. Leaders give instructions to subordinates to help them understand to achieve organizational goals.

Similarly, Aldrin & Gayatri [3] also indicated that leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve organizational goals so that the organization is led by leaders more consistently and coherently. Beliefs, values, moral qualities, knowledge and skills are the most important qualities. There must be a leader in the process of influencing others. He/she should lead and motivate employees with lofty dreams and lofty visions. Another definition is given by James Prewitt [4] is "the ability to influence others by setting an inspiring example. An example motivates people to pursue goals that benefit the organization. Typically, leadership involves creating a vision of the future of the organization, developing a strategy to achieve this vision and communicating this vision to everyone, especially the members of the organization.

In parallel with other definitions, Ejimabo [5] stated as the behaviour of a person influencing others to achieve their goals. Leaders are not like everyone else as they don't need "the right things", and these things are not equal to everyone. He claimed that leadership is a demanding and unrelenting job that required extra effort and talent.

On the other hand, Yukl [6] defined leadership as unlike management, it is not dependent on position, title or privilege; rather, it is an observable, understandable and learnable configuration of skills that can be mastered by anyone willing to take the time and make the effort to learn it. Patterson et al. [1] emphasized that leaders seek to create an environment

conducive to competing demands and to maintain a balance between the individual's competitive desires in the organization. Avolio [3] also coined that it is difficult to find general models of leadership development in the leadership literature. Specifically, the question such as "what evidence exists to support whether one or more specific leadership theories can be used to develop leaders or leadership skills? Such question prompts researchers to work together to explore whether leaders

Cooper [7] defined effective leadership as the exercise of the successful personal influence by one or more people who make it possible to achieve objectives and delight the people involved. The author opined that such a definition may create confusion to the people because different contexts are missing such as the measurement of the effectiveness of a leader. It might be true only at interpersonal levels.

It is learned that effective leadership is not an easy task as it may need to include a wide range of concepts, methods and experiences related to leadership practices. The most effective leaders are those who can successfully influence others in the workplace. Ulrich [8] supplemented the leadership concepts above and outlined five management principles such as shaping the next generation, leading things, attracting today's talent, and investing in leaders as effective leaders. He proclaimed that these five principles are essential to being an effective leader in any organization. He further emphasizes that effective leadership can easily guide the team to follow certain principles, ethics, ideals, and norms.

According to Broome & Hughes [9] today, effective leadership is commonly viewed as central to organizational success and places more importance on leadership development than ever before. Vojta(n.d) [10] arises with the fundamental ability to believe in oneself to incorporate maturity, conviction, and experience that translates into purpose and direction. He claims that an effective leader with a clear vision will gain the confidence to lead his team by motivating, guiding and building self-esteem and teamwork. Furthermore, Oracle [11] coined that an effective leader can make a business plan a success, while a bad leader can destroy even the best strategy. Because of this, training effective leaders through a consistent talent management program can deliver important results at all stages of the system. He also indicated that an

effective leader contributes to increasing organizational power by having a trusting demeanour and developing a high level of expertise within the organization. This increases the respect of the subordinates and develops a trusting attitude towards him/her including the employees' performance and the ability to set organizational standards. Futher Madanchain et al. [12] indicated that effective leaders have certain characteristics that indicate behaviour or type of leadership. They create the scene of a conducive working environment through the use of capabilities and processes.

An effective leader empowers others and colleagues more than a boss encourages respect, relationships, and a family culture among employees effective leaders recognize and take the initiative to reward people who help achieve company goals. Effective leaders encourage participation, solicit input, and involve people in decision-making, recognizing those who have the greatest impact on corporate goals. Effective leaders build loyalty and goodwill in others because they do it with integrity and trust leaders with the quality of effective leadership grow with the organization and with the development of others.

1.2 Leadership Position

Finding the right leadership position is a personal experience. It is individual for each person and depends on many factors. Betkowski [13] coined that to determine the right leadership position for a person, one needs to consider two aspects of leadership: power and influence [14] In this contemporary world, some of the famous business leaders and social activists such as Robin Sharma, Daniel and Adrenson argued over the insignificance of titles and power in leadership management. They explained how leadership positions cause damage, hinder roles and confuse the team in an organization to achieve the goals. For instance, Sharma [15] coined that leadership has less to do with a person's position but more to do with their influence. It's about doing an excellent job, getting the most out of it, and leaving people better than they found them to be and it's also about untitled leadership.

[14] had mixed views on a leadership position and devised leadership as a relationship, about care, and what one does to achieve the goal, but not about a position or a title. They also claimed that great leaders consciously choose their

leadership positions and then master them to make a choice based on the results ones want and natural style. The leaders in a natural position will be the most influential and the most enjoyable. However, sometimes leaders must choose a leadership position that suits the situation—even if this is not a position they would naturally choose. It is important to remember that great leaders can fill part of multiple positions according to their situation and style, however, mastering any leadership position requires years of practice.

Further, Sharma [15] [proclaimed that the idea of being a leader with no title or position in an organization, regardless of the responsibility a person takes to achieve the company's goals and argues that it is only a person's physical existence to be a leader to become necessary, but not a position. If a person has existed, then, he/she can fulfil the roles of a leader through actions and obligations even without a position. It makes sense for people in the workplace; rather, personality and action count the most. It has another supportive statement that real leadership is not conferred by the title or location of the office, however, it is demonstrated through day-to-day actions and the way one influences the lives of others.

Many people assume that leadership is all about titles, positions, money, and fame. However, leadership is not an actual position or title. It is about the action one takes and sets an example for others. Leadership is the ability to influence others; it's about the impact that a leader has on others. It has nothing to do with titles or titles. It's about influence, inspiration, achieving results, and creating an impact about spreading a passion for work [16].

On the contrary, corporate leaders like Quinn and Shapiro [2] disagree with the above statements of leadership positions. Instead, they cited that a title is necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of the day-day activities of the organization. They insist that leadership is critical to maintaining the main roles and responsibilities in an organization, affirming that assuming a leadership position means ensuring vision and mission, commitment to leadership, people to take on additional responsibilities, the risk of loss or the failure and acceptance of recognition for the success of the organization. Hence, they concluded that a leadership position is extremely necessary to achieve all of the major

activities, strategies and plans of the executives working in the organization.

On the contrary, Betkowski [13] indicated that there are five different leadership positions as leading from above, behind, below, beside and leading from the front. He also argued and cited three reasons why that leadership position matters in an organization. They emphasized that a leadership position helps to determine the outcomes and helps to determine satisfaction.

Similarly, Vidula et al. [17] supported their views on the importance of the title in leadership which is considered as one of the most important factors in reaching the pinnacle of success in an organization. The numerous plans, activities, programs, strategies, designs and many important changes are being driven under the influence of the leadership positions in an organization. They concluded that a leadership position of a person in any organization is more important as it promotes the effectiveness of an individual. However, Anderson [18] indicates that leadership development has nothing to do with position. It is about our attitude towards our direction and towards ourselves. Moreover, Briscore [19] also supported Anderson's statement and stated that leadership is not about impressive job descriptions and fancy positions. It is about influence. It is about responsibility and contribution to the common good. Further, he claimed that we live in a world obsessed with titles and too many people want the leadership "title" instead of the leadership "job." And he emphasized that leadership is not for performance, but service. In addition, he depicts that everyone is a leader irrespective of title. He puts some of the strategies to lead without a title; helping hand, speak up, bring ideas to the table, and possess a good attitude which is extremely relevant in this contemporary world.

Payne & Cangemi(n.d) [20] argued that they build trust with subordinates, initiate innovations, mobilize an organization's resources through personal power rather than relying on the job title. Similarly, Shapiro [21] claimed that every employee with a title must always be in a leading position and required good leadership development skills, regardless of position to become an effective leader. Sanborn [22] reasoned that a title can't make anyone a leader rather it just confirms the critical roles of a person. In short, he argues that the title may not confirm leadership ability, other than reflections of job responsibilities.

On contrary, Yukl [6] believed in the insignificance of possessing a title or position of a leader to control employees. Guiding an employee without a title hardly works and tends to lead to conflict. They argued that efficient leaders generally rely on people who have a formal position and authority because this makes employees simply obey the orders of the authorities.

1.3 Qualities of an Effective Leadership

The modern era is overshadowed by several leaders of different styles, with all the traits and qualities that are so necessary to become a successful leader. The question, however, is how many of these leaders become effective and outperform others in terms of their performance. A true leader admires their colleagues and brings a positive atmosphere to the organization.

The qualities of an effective leader are about the weighty to develop organizational power to assess the people on whom a leader in an organization depends, management functions such as planning, organizing, budgeting, staffing, control, and leadership are the most important factors to consider (Fuqua, Payne, & Cangemi, n.d) [23].

In parallel with other scholars' ideologies, Kouzes & Posner [24] emphasized that the best leaders have proven to be lifelong learners and take the time to make themselves and those around them better people. The most remarkable and special leadership qualities include listening, empathy, consistency, hard work, focus on results, and being proactive. These traits help draw attention to the skills needed for successful leadership and choice of the leadership position.

However, Kolzow [14] argued that although questions are surrounding the validity of leadership theory, it is reasonable to assume that certain personality traits are related to leadership, while others are not. He indicated the findings of the various research over the years about the qualities of effective leaders. The common traits are intelligence, creativity, self-confidence, drive, relevant knowledge, credibility, motivation and flexibility. In addition, Aldrin & Gayatri [3] identified some of the best qualities of effective leaders as the ability to guide subordinates with inspirational impulses and to follow workplace ethics.

According to Sheikh [25], effective leadership in the 21st century requires a diverse and complex

portfolio of leadership skills. He indicated seven keys to effective leadership such as 1. Empathetic and Emotionally Intelligent, 2. Practice Self-Leadership with Authenticity, 3. Display High Integrity, Honesty, and Accountability, 4. Communicate Powerfully and Effectively, 5. Effective Leaders Inspire and Motivate Others, 6: Align Organizational Mission, Vision, and Values to Individuals' Goals and Values, 7. Build Relationships, Develop Others, Collaborate and Promote Teamwork.

Moreover, he also coined that an effective leader always invests in strengths, surrounds themselves with the right people to maximize the common goals and understands the needs of the followers. He also suggested that investing in strength is the first key to effective leadership. He affirms that effective leaders know their strengths to achieve consistency at work. He concludes that effective leaders are not well integrated but have used key strengths to their advantage. The key to effective leaders that he describes is the ability to involve the people around them through four leadership domains such as strategic thinking, influencing, relationship, and execution, which indeed increase the strengths, human values like trust, compassion, stability and hope. Hence, he concluded that these human values are the best way to describe effective leaders which are also considered as the best qualities of the leaders.

In addition, Notar [26] demonstrated the nine best qualities of a leader; Strategic thinking and action, understanding of teamwork, mastery of group decision-making, clarification of roles and responsibilities, subordinate associations, systematic evaluation of policies, time management and formulation of clear meetings rules and procedures, as well as learning attitude. Similarly, Muteswa [27] mentioned that self-confidence, tenacity and inspiration, the ability to communicate vision and values, the establishment of the appropriate culture in the organization, honesty, integrity and transparency are fundamentals of a leader's qualities in any organization. It has been also supplemented that to be an effective leader, one must be passionate about his beliefs and interests by expanding massive energy and paying great attention to whatever matters to him.

2. CONCLUSION

Even though there are mixed outlooks on the leadership title or position, the researchers' conclusion is, with position and authority, a

leader can become only the boss, but truly, position or title will not make an effective leader. A title only provides the potential to act as boss, but not a real leader rather it creates much confusion to the followers. The leaders must possess personal power and personal qualities to become effective leaders because such qualities strengthen the willpower and strength of the leaders, which help them in achieving organizational power and earn professionalism. As supported by many scholars and academics, theoretically a title or position is not imperative to become a leader in any organization. Everybody is a leader and there is a leader inside of every human being. Although one may not be the leader of a team or department or organization, one can still become a leader in those areas. Therefore, many argue that title doesn't matter the most in life, however individual mindset and critical thinking matters the most to become a leader.

More importantly, the concept of leadership in any organization always plays a vital role in the advancement of management and the development of management skills. Indeed, knowing the title and actions of leaders is pivotal in this competitive age. Modern leaders may have to be more proactive with the various changing situations of the working environment in any organization. Knowing the best qualities of effective leaders would augment readers with some benefits, ideas, and suggestions on how to become better leaders. This study is limited to the title of leadership and the qualities of effective leaders because most leadership theories, approaches and models are not discussed. The conclusion drawn from the findings on the leadership title is based on some reporting topics and previous research papers findings. Due to this shortcoming, as mentioned above, it couldn't represent a holistic overview of leadership.

Although the review reveals different opinions and reactions to leadership positions in order to become effective leaders, most scholars believed that there is nothing wrong to become a leader even without having a title. A leader should possess the ability to inspire and influence others through correct actions and to be a role model for others. Therefore, the conclusion is that being an effective leader has nothing to do with position or title, and anyone has the potential to become an effective leader. In addition, to become an effective leader in the field of leadership in the 21st century, a title is not truly required. People's

way of thinking needs to mature and change in the whole society in order to become effective and non-thematic leaders.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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