LEADERSHIP, POWER, AND POLITICS

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Leadership, Power, and Politics

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, scholars have sought to understand what it takes to be an effective organizational leader. Much of the theory and research on effective leadership involves the effects of leadership behavior on outcomes such as subordinate attitudes and performance. It has been common practice to define and measure leadership behavior in terms of broadly defined constructs or "metacategories." The focus on one or two metacategories in most studies on leadership behavior has weakened results and made them more difficult to interpret. Other limitations in much of the behavior research include confounding of behavior with leader traits and values, reliance on weak research methods, and insufficient attention to situational variables and explanatory processes. In this chapter, we will briefly review what was found in decades of research on prominent behavior metacategories. Then, the weaknesses that have limited progress in the behavior research are described, and suggestions are presented for improving future research on effective leadership.

RESEARCH ON BEHAVIOR METACATEGORIES

In the early period of leadership theory and research from 1955 to 1980, the dominant metacategories were task-oriented behavior and relations-oriented behavior. From the early 1980s to the current time, much attention was devoted to research on charismatic and transformational leadership. In the past decade, there has been growing interest in ethical leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership. Each type of leadership behavior is described, along with findings in the research on it.

Task-Oriented and Relations-Oriented Behavior

The relations-oriented metacategory includes behaviors that are primarily intended to improve interpersonal relations between the leader and a subordinate or among subordinates in a group. The task-oriented metacategory includes behaviors that are primarily intended to improve task performance by an individual or group. The labels used for the two metacategories varied for different scholars; examples include Consideration and Initiating Structure (Fleishman, 1953; Halpin & Winter, 1957), Supportive and Instrumental Leadership (House, 1971), Employee-centered and Production-centered leadership (Likert, 1961), and Task-oriented and Relations-oriented leadership (Yukl, 1971). The specific component

behaviors for each metacategory also vary somewhat for different scholars and measures.

Examples of component behaviors for the relations-oriented metacategory include doing personal favors for a subordinate, listening to a subordinate's problems, defending a subordinate, and treating a subordinate as an equal. Later research also identified other component behaviors such as providing praise and recognition for subordinate achievements and contributions, and facilitating the development of skills relevant for a subordinate's career success. Some versions of the relations-oriented metacategory include giving subordinates influence over leader decisions that affect them.

Examples of component behaviors for the task-oriented metacategory include assigning tasks to subordinates, clarifying role requirements, setting goals for individual or group performance, monitoring performance, and resolving problems that disrupt the work. In research on leadership in teams, additional task behaviors include planning, organizing, and coordinating team activities. Task-oriented and relations-oriented behavior can also occur in interactions with people outside of a leader's work unit, but these behaviors were seldom examined closely in the early research, and they are also part of a different metacategory called external behavior (Yukl, 2012).

Many studies were conducted to determine how the two metacategories are related to leadership effectiveness (Bass, 2008). A meta-analysis of the results from the survey research using behavior description questionnaires found that both types of behavior are related to follower satisfaction, motivation, and job performance (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). The strongest and most consistent finding is a positive correlation between relations-oriented behavior and subordinate satisfaction with the leader or leader-member relations. Results were weakest for studies with independent measures of subordinate or work-unit performance.

Unmeasured situational differences within and between studies are one reason for lack of stronger, more consistent results in research on task and relations metacategories. After the importance of the leadership situation was recognized, several contingency theories were proposed to explain how situational variables can enhance or limit the effects of a leader's task-oriented and relations-oriented behaviors. The contingency theories based on behavior metacategories include Path-goal Theory (House, 1971), Leadership Substitutes Theory (Kerr & Jermier, 1978), and Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Many studies were conducted to test these contingency theories, but little support was found for them (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Ahearne, & Bommer, 1995; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009; Wofford & Liska, 1993).

Charismatic and Transformational Leadership

The lack of progress in research on effects of task-oriented and relations-oriented behaviors encouraged leadership scholars to examine other types of leadership behavior, and much of the subsequent research involved testing theories of charismatic and transformational leadership. Charismatic leadership theories attempt to explain how leaders influence followers on an emotional and ideological level (Conger, 1989; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; House, 1977; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Conger and Kanungo (1998) proposed that charismatic behavior includes articulating an innovative strategic vision, taking personal risks and making self sacrifices to attain the vision, and identifying threats and opportunities in the external environment. The behaviors emphasized by House (1977) and Shamir et al. (1993) include articulating an appealing vision, emphasizing ideological aspects of work, communicating high performance expectations, expressing confidence in subordinates, showing self-confidence, modeling exemplary behavior, and doing things to increase identification with the team or organization. Some versions of the theory emphasize the importance of situational variables for attributions of charisma to a leader, but few empirical studies were designed to assess the effects of situational variables.

Transformational leadership theories describe how some leaders influence subordinate task motivation (Bass, 1985). The component behaviors vary somewhat for different scholars and even for the same scholars at different points in time. A majority of the studies on transformational leadership have defined it in terms of four component behaviors identified by Bass and Avolio (1990). Idealized influence involves setting an example of task commitment and making self-sacrifices that benefit followers or the work unit. Intellectual stimulation involves encouraging others to view problems in a new way and find creative solutions. Individualized consideration involves providing support, encouragement, and coaching. Inspirational motivation involves articulating an appealing vision and attempting to inspire commitment to the mission of the team or organization. Another measure of transformational leadership (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990) included six component behaviors: articulating an appealing vision, modeling appropriate behavior, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, fostering acceptance of group goals, and communicating high performance expectations. These behaviors were assumed to be relevant for all leaders, and few studies on transformational leadership have included situational variables.

Many leadership scholars regard charismatic and transformational leadership as equivalent constructs and use similar measures for them. Meta-analyses of this research find positive correlations with outcomes such as subordinate satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance,

and work-unit performance (DeGroot, Kiker, & Cross, 2000; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). However, the results in studies with independent measures of leadership effectiveness were much weaker than studies with same-source measures, and some studies failed to support the theories (van Knipenberg& Sitkin, 2013). For example, research using case studies of chief executives found that charismatic leadership was not required for effective organizational performance (e.g., Bennis & Nanus, 1985), and sometimes it resulted in weaker performance or a failed organization (e.g., Finkelstein, 2003; O'Connor, Mumford, Clifton, Gessner, & Connelly, 1995). In a longitudinal study of CEOs, ratings of charismatic leadership were correlated significantly with a company's past financial performance but did not predict future performance (Angle, Nagarajan, Sonnenfeld, & Srinivasan, 2006).

Studies on transformational leadership sometimes include another behavior metacategory called transactional leadership, which includes using reward contingencies to motivate subordinates, monitoring their performance, and taking corrective action when poor performance is found. Some measures of transactional leadership include examples of relations-oriented behavior (providing praise and recognition) and task-oriented behavior (active monitoring). Research on the effects of transactional behavior suggests that it can have a positive effect on subordinate performance in some situations, but negative effects can also occur (Lowe et al., 1996). Bass (1985) proposed that effective leaders use a combination of transformational and transactional leadership, but few studies have examined how the two metacategories jointly influence independent measures of work-unit performance.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership has been defined in many different ways, and the construct usually includes a combination of values and behaviors (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). One key attribute of ethical leadership behavior involves acting in a way that is as consistent with widely accepted ethical standards. Behaviors commonly regarded as morally correct include treating people fairly, providing accurate information and honest answers to questions, keeping promises and commitments, observing the same rules and standards applied to others, and acknowledging responsibility for mistakes while also seeking to correct them.

Another type of ethical leadership behavior involves attempts to influence the ethical behavior of others (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Examples include leader statements about the importance of ethics;

dissemination of ethical guidelines for members of the organization; modeling ethical behavior to set an example for others, including ethical behavior in the assessment of performance; and criticizing or punishing unethical behavior. A limitation of this aspect of ethical leadership involves questions about the extent to which it is appropriate for leaders to set moral standards for others in the organization or to make subjective judgments about the morality of subordinates.

Research on the consequences of ethical leadership is still limited, but several studies have found more employee satisfaction, task commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, willingness to report problems, and ethical behavior (e.g., Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2011; Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010; Walumbwa, Morrison, & Christensen, 2012; Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan, & Prussia, 2013). However, most measures of ethical leadership include a diverse set of leader traits, values, and behaviors, and most studies only examined how the composite score on the measure was related to subordinate attitudes and behavior. How ethical leadership is related to objective measures of performance has not been closely examined, and some case studies found evidence that short-term company profits were increased by unethical practices (e.g., Sims & Brinkman, 2003).

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership includes nurturing, defending, and empowering followers (Greenleaf, 1977), which are examples of relations-oriented behavior. Servant leadership also includes aspects of ethical leadership. Servant leaders must listen to followers, learn about their needs and aspirations, and be willing to share in their pain and frustration. Service includes nurturing, defending, and empowering followers. Trust is established by being completely honest and open, keeping actions consistent with values, and demonstrating trust in followers. The servant leader must stand for what is good and right, even when it is not in the financial interest of the organization. Social injustice and inequality should be opposed whenever possible. Different questionnaires have been developed to measure servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), but the best way to define and measure this construct has not been resolved. Most measures require respondents to make difficult judgments about a leader's integrity, authenticity, and stewardship.

Research on the consequences of servant leadership is still limited, but several studies found positive outcomes such as more subordinate

commitment, self-efficacy, and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2008; Mayer, Bardes, & Piccolo, 2008; Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011; Walumbwa, Hartnell, & Oke, 2010). However, the research seldom included independent measures of work-unit performance, and the objective of serving followers is sometimes inconsistent with the objective of improving performance. How leaders can resolve tradeoffs in benefits for different stakeholders remains an unresolved question.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership theories have been proposed by several scholars (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; George, 2003; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). The definition varies somewhat across different versions, but they all emphasize the importance of leader integrity. Authentic leaders have positive core values (e.g., honesty, kindness, fairness, accountability, and optimism) that motivate them to do what is right and fair for followers. These leaders create a special type of relationship that includes high mutual trust, transparency, shared objectives, and emphasis on follower welfare and development. Core component behaviors include keeping leader actions consistent with espoused and actual values, articulating an appealing vision, modeling appropriate behaviors, and expressing optimism and encouragement when there are problems in accomplishing task objectives. With regard to other leadership behaviors, there is less agreement among the different versions of the theory. The measures of authentic leadership include leader traits and values such as self-awareness and an internalized moral perspective in addition to observable behaviors. As with ethical and servant leadership, it is not clear to what extent each attribute is necessary for effective leadership or is only an ideal that any leader should strive to attain (Caza & Jackson, 2011).

The amount of research on authentic leadership is still limited, but a recent review by Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, and Dickens (2011) showed that it was related to follower job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, few studies included objective measures of performance or identified the independent effects and relative importance of the values and behaviors that define authentic leadership.

LIMITATIONS OF THE BEHAVIOR RESEARCH

Several conceptual and methodological limitations in much of the behavior research have made it more difficult to find strong, consistent results that

explain how leaders influence individual, group, or organizational performance. The limitations include varying content for a metacategory, overlap among metacategories, unique and joint effects of component behaviors, confounding of behavior with traits and values, weak survey studies, failure to examine curvilinear relationships, failure to examine lagged effects, lack of attention to explanatory processes, lack of multiple independent criteria, and lack of attention to situational variables.

Varying Content for a Behavior Metacategory

Most of the behavior metacategories used in the leadership research lack a clear definition and adequate criteria for identification of relevant component behaviors. One basis for grouping specific behaviors into a metacategory is that they have the same objective. The task-oriented and relations-oriented metacategories are examples of a taxonomy based on leadership objectives. A limitation of this approach is that some specific types of leader behavior can be used to achieve more than one objective, and attempts to create measures of mutually exclusive metacategories may result in the deletion of these effective behaviors. Another limitation is ambiguity about what objectives should be considered when developing a behavior taxonomy. Behavior metacategories with important objectives such as facilitating change and influencing outsiders were not included in the early behavior research. The problems created by behaviors with multiple objectives and exclusion of relevant behaviors can be minimized by using accurate measures of specific behaviors likely to influence all important outcomes for the type of leader studied and by focusing attention on these relationships rather than on results for the metacategories. Unfortunately, this type of leadership study is very rare.

The component behaviors for a metacategory are not the same for different versions of a leadership theory, when the measures are developed by different researchers, or when the definition of the metacategory changes over time as more is learned about it. For example, the early definition of relations-oriented behavior did not explicitly include some of the component behaviors found in more recent measures of this metacategory (e.g., providing praise and recognition, increasing member confidence, encouraging cooperation among subordinates, empowering subordinates). It is more difficult to compare results from different studies or to interpret results from a meta-analysis of many studies when the same component behaviors are not used in each study and only the composite score for a metacategory is used in the data analyses.

Overlap Among Metacategories

Conceptual overlap among supposedly different metacategories is a related problem in leader behavior research (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). Sometimes the same component behavior is included in different metacategories. For example, providing praise and recognition has been included in some measures of relations-oriented behavior, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership. When the metacategories included in a study have some of the same content and only composite scores for the metacategories are used in the analyses, it is more difficult to interpret the results. A related problem occurs when the metacategory in a study includes some component behaviors from unmeasured metacategories. For example, measures of transformational leadership include some relations-oriented behaviors (e.g., supporting and developing subordinates) and some change-oriented behaviors (e.g., articulating an appealing vision, encouraging innovative thinking). Research that examined results for a broad range of specific behaviors found that the effects attributed to transformational leadership can be accounted for primarily by relations-oriented and change-oriented behaviors (Michel, Lyons, & Cho, 2011).

Unique and Joint Effects of Component Behaviors

Most leader behavior studies use only the composite score on a metacategory to assess the effects on outcomes rather than examining the unique effects of specific component behaviors. Broadly defined categories of leader behavior have limited utility for understanding how leaders can influence work-unit performance. The component behaviors are not equally relevant for influencing performance; they have different relationships with mediating variables, and they may be affected in different ways by the context. For example, clarifying goals and problem solving are both task-oriented behaviors. However, clarifying goals helps to ensure that subordinates know what to do, how to do it, and the expected results; whereas, problem solving is used to deal with disruptions of normal operations and member behavior that is unsafe or illegal. Supporting and developing are both relations-oriented behaviors. However, supporting is used to show positive regard, build cooperative relationships, and help people deal with stressful situations; whereas developing is used to increase subordinate skills and confidence. Sometimes effective leadership involves using a combination of complementary behaviors from the same metacategory or from different metacategories (Piccolo et al., 2012). The relatively small number of studies