



Week 4 Reading – Leadership Eras

Citation

Martin, G., & Jenkins, S. (2008). *Leadership Eras*. Lamar University.

Preface

The *Leadership Eras* paper provides an overview and synthesis of leadership theories and trends identified by your course professors. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive paper covering every angle of leadership history and theories. Instead, the focus is on describing leadership trends that continue to impact institutional leadership and management. As you read and examine each era, you are encouraged to note examples of real-life leadership and management that you have observed or experienced, and how it might fit with particular historical eras, theories and trends. Most importantly, it is hoped that you recognize the leadership theories and trends you would most like to embrace and practice as an effective twenty-first century leader.

Scientific Management Era: 1910-1935

The Scientific Management Era is sometimes referred to as the *Classical Era* in recognition of the foundational role it played for contemporary management practices. It was during this period that the first general theories of management began to evolve, including Administrative Theory. Prior to this timeframe, most managers and workers within industrial organizations selected for themselves the best methods for completing their assigned tasks and coordinating activities with others. Classical theories emphasize the one *best* way to structure tasks and operate organizations to increase production and efficiency.

The classical theory of organization is concerned almost entirely with the design and structure of the organization, not with people. The chief tool is the organization chart and the focus is on the underlying structure and job functions of the people in the organization. Of prime interest to this school of thought are the levels in the hierarchy, chain of command, job duty or role, division of labor, centralization, numbers of employees at each level of the hierarchy, line versus staff relations, and size and shape of the organization.

Significant Theorists and Their Influence

Fredrick Taylor. The Scientific Management approach to industrial organizations is most frequently associated with Frederick Taylor, a mechanical engineer whose own experiences in the steel industry led to his concepts of standardized processes. In his book, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), he wrote about change needed in management structures in the large and complex industries – “in the past the man had been first and in the future the system must be first.”

A sampling of his ideas reveals the flavor of his managerial theory:

EDLD 5311 Fundamentals of Leadership

- *A large daily task:* Each person in the establishment, high or low, should have a clearly defined daily task. The carefully circumscribed task should require a full day's effort to complete.
- *Standard conditions:* The worker should be given standardized conditions and appliances to accomplish the task with certainty.
- *High pay for success:* High pay should be tied to successful completion.
- *Loss in case of failure:* Failure should be personally costly.
- *Expertise in large organizations:* As organizations become increasingly sophisticated, tasks should be made so difficult as to be accomplished only by a first-rate worker" (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 9)

He believed that there was a one best way for a job to be done and this could be accomplished by breaking down tasks into basic components, studying them scientifically, and then selecting the right worker and training him to do the task. Piece rate and time-studies are associated with his theory. He saw cooperation and clear division of labor as important to the supervisor/worker relationship.

Henri Fayol. Another aspect of the *Classical Management* approach is Administrative Theory, which describes efforts to define universal functions managers perform and principles that constitute good management practice. The major contributor to administrative theory was a French industrialist, Henri Fayol. In his *top down* and *one best way* approach to management thinking; he proposed that all managers perform five management functions:

- Planning – activities and future actions
- Organizing – materials and human resources
- Commanding – people and their activities
- Controlling – unity and conformity to policies
- Coordinating – all aspects of organization to promote unity and harmony

He considered the practice of management to be distinct from other typical business functions and stressed the importance of inspirational leadership and the need for flexibility. In his book, *General and Industrial Management* (1929), Fayol argued that colleges and universities should teach management and then outlined 14 principles of management that could be taught. They involve: division of work, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination of individual interests to the general interests, remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, and equity, stability of tenure personnel, initiative, and esprit de corps. These principles had a direct influence on the study and practice of communication in organizations today, especially related to decision-making following the chain of command.

Max Weber. Max Weber (pronounced vay-bur) is being included in this era because his work in bureaucracy fits with Scientific Management. However, much of his work was not translated until the late 1940's and was therefore generally inaccessible to the academic community in the United States until that time. Max Weber was a German sociologist who, because of his writings in the sociology of religion, the development of capitalism, and political sociology, is considered one of the founders of modern sociology. However, most pertinent to this discussion, are his theories of bureaucracy and authority.

Weber was the first scholar who tried to comprehend the character of bureaucratic systems. He assumed that authority should rightfully be distributed among individuals at the top of the organization (pyramid) where the greatest amount of specialized knowledge resided and that rules could ensure the rational and impersonal behavior of organization members. The intention of his theory was to make organizations more rational, efficient, fair, stable, logical, impartial,

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- Schein, E.H. (1999). *The corporate culture survival guide: Sense and nonsense about culture change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
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- Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., and Hyde, A. (1998). *Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishing.

Additional Recommended Readings on Educational Leadership

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Murphy, J. & Louis, K. (Ed.) (1999). *Handbook of research on educational administration: A project of the American Educational Research Association*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

English, F. (Ed.) (2005). *The Sage Handbook of educational leadership: Advances in theory, research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Any of the yearbooks of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration* – each yearbook addresses a contemporary educational leadership trend – example:

Lemasters, L. & Papas, R. (Ed.) (2007). *At the tipping point: Navigating the course for the preparation of educational administrators*. Lancaster, PA: Pro-Active Publications.

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Essential Leadership Skills. Four skills enable leaders to learn from adversity: 1. Engage others in shared meaning. Leadership crucibles can take many forms. Some are violent, life-threatening events. Others are more prosaic episodes of self-doubt. Without trust there is no leadership. But building trust takes time and conscious effort. Here is how. Consistency is key to great leadership. Consistency of acts, behaviors, moods, expectations. I've worked for managers before who would be happy one day and infuriated the other, who would set out one path one day and totally change it the next day. Start studying Leadership - Eras. Learn vocabulary, terms and more with flashcards, games and other study tools. Trait Era (1800s-1940s). There was a strong belief that innate qualities shape human personality and behaviour. It was commonly believed that leaders, by virtue of their birth, were endowed with special qualities that allowed them to lead others. Such qualities pushed them toward leadership regardless of their context.