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ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities have a unique organizational culture that influences the decision-making processes used by leaders of higher education. This paper presents findings of a study that attempted to identify the theoretical frameworks that administrators of higher education use to guide their decision-making processes. The following theoretical frameworks were used to analyze leadership processes: (1) power and influence theory; (2) behavioral theory; (3) trait theory; (4) contingency theory; and (5) symbolic theory. Interviews were conducted with 10 higher education administrators from one university and one community college. Findings indicated that their implicit leadership styles comprised a mixture of integrated frameworks. They overwhelmingly used influential and behavioral frameworks to describe effective leadership. Good leadership was seen in terms of a leader empowering a follower for personal and professional success, and in terms of a leader's positive behaviors inspiring followers to achieve organizational goals. A majority of the administrators used a traditional approach; they were directive and held high authority, yet consulted with staff. A small group emphasized consensual decision making and advocated a group approach to leadership. Appendices contain survey correspondence, the interview format, and samples of interview responses that illustrate each theoretical framework. (LMI)

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IMPLICIT THEORETICAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORKS OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

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Running head: THEORETICAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORKS

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## IMPLICIT THEORETICAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORKS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

Organizational leadership is comprised of a multitude of complex dimensions that integrate cultural and human phenomena (Bolman & Deal, 1991, Covey, 1991). Leadership within an organization is therefore difficult to define rationally or objectively (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Tierney (1989) contends that "theorists have used the perspective that organizations are socially constructed and subjective entities" (p. 153). Because of this unique subjective, interpretive aspect of leadership, the study of "leadership" as a focus is very difficult. There are no clear boundaries from which to provide consensus concerning definition, measurement, assessment, or related outcomes. This elusiveness is also because leadership in action is founded ultimately from the uncertainty, subjectivity, and dangers built into the human condition (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Even more critical is that there are no clear guidelines for distinguishing leaders from nonleaders or effective leaders from ineffective leaders (Birnbaum, 1989). Trying to narrow the field of leadership, although difficult, continues to be a concentrated effort for researchers exploring both business and educational settings. The potential insights into leadership strategies applied in the higher education environment leads researchers to an even more complicated challenge.

The study of leadership at the higher education level has become a central theme in our research for seeking the unique properties espoused by these individual leaders. As leaders develop and apply administrative style through their decision-making practices, a question arises about the possible influence of any historical basis and/or if teleological antecedents hinge or

impinge on actual processes that can be noticed within verbal responses and actions of the leaders. Are these leaders aware of and influenced by the original beginnings of the concept of "university," or are they simply managers of organizations whose leadership styles echo a particular theory to its utility of keeping the budget in order? What underlying beliefs about organizational leadership frame the actions of the person?

### The Role of Leaders and Followers

Higher educational leadership research studies bear witness to a dual complexity between administration and professional authority. The competing administrative "philosophy" dictates control of professional faculty duties for teaching, research, and service. This coupled with unclear goals has postulated a unique structural entity for professional organizations. Most interactions between leaders and followers constitute and define the context of "leadership" for that organization (Covey, 1991). However, within the walls of higher education, a clear hierarchy of authority is resisted and the pattern from subordinates to executives normally conveyed by organizations is misplaced. The unique atmosphere and culture of higher education reflects more clearly that the followers or faculty are more the constituents to the leaders, and therefore have a voice in how they *want* to be led rather than how they *will* be led. This two-way conversation between leaders and followers is deeply influenced by the leader's decision-making process and how this process emulates the leader's definition and role of leadership (Hirsch, 1987). Analyzing the leadership strategies as related to the implementation of these strategies through the decision-making practices gives insight into the actual leadership behaviors.

This paper focuses on leadership in higher education by examining various university and community college administrative roles, their

definition of leadership, and their reflections of personal decision-making processes related to their definition of leadership. These definitions are crucial in establishing various, yet personal leadership models implicit to the institution they serve. How these leaders interpret their roles also effects their daily decision-making processes, which inevitably effects the day-to-day flow of events within the university itself (Hirsch, 1987, Birnbaum, 1989, Senge, 1990).

### Theoretical Leadership Frameworks

The *power and influence, behavioral, trait, contingency, and symbolic theoretical frameworks* were selected to analyze and categorize responses from higher education administrators interviewed. These theoretical frameworks were also the foundation through which the research of Birnbaum, Bensimon, and Neumann (1989) interviewed and analyzed responses by university presidents.

For the purpose of the specific study conducted by Birnbaum (1989), organizational leadership research data was grouped into five broad categories in order to analyze, categorize, and synthesize higher education administrator's interview responses. These categories are by no means intended to be set by distinct boundaries, and therefore encompass a vast array of overlapping concepts and assumptions that are acceptable by emergent leaders (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Since "few leaders are representative of any one type at all times for all people," we have provided a potpourri framework of theoretical leadership types for convenience (Fincher, 1986, p. 159).

### Power and Influence Theoretical Framework

The first of the categories for analysis of leadership used is *power and influence theories*. This framework attempts to explain the interaction of the

leader-follower relationship through the amount of power attained by the leaders, and how that power is exercised over the followers, whether by unilateral or reciprocal interactions (Bolman, 1991; Birnbaum, 1989). Covey (1991) breaks down the categories of power as coercive, utility, and legitimate. Others acknowledge the power theories as a force and cycle to be broken (Hirsh, 1987). Power has two essentials, motive and resource, and they are political in nature (Burns, 1978).

The power and influence theory has two orientations: a) one-way attempts through various sources of social power used to influence others, and b) two-way attempts through social exchanges which result in the mutual influence of followers. As leaders use various sources of social power in a one-way attempt to influence others, they can exercise at least five different forms of power over others: 1) legitimate power -- influencing others by the office held, authority provided by social and legal systems 2) reward power -- implemented through the rewards provided by leaders 3) coercive power -- exercising threats or punishment 4) expert power -- influencing others through perceived expertise 5) referent power -- charisma gaining affection from others simply through positive feelings towards the leader.

The two-way attempt through social exchange which results in mutual influence of followers is gained through the leaders' interactions with followers who provide the needed services to a group in exchange for the group's approval and compliance with the leader's demands. The influence is a process of exchange involving shared concepts of responsibility, assimilation of goals of others, and the articulation of these goals. The only constraint on the leader is the expectations held by the followers (Birnbaum, 1989).

### Behavioral Theoretical Framework

The second leadership theory framework is *behavioral theories* which illicit day-to-day behavior patterns of the leader, which in turn influence those around them (Bass & Stodgill, 1990). Expressing goals and motivating others to action are the main criteria of behavior theory (Birnbaum, 1989). This motivation and goal setting parallel the "collegial framework" of Bensimon's (1987) work, The Meaning of Good Presidential Leadership: A Frame Analysis, where presidents seek to inspire, motivate, stimulate, and encourage people. Leaders motivate people to get things done by persuasion (Bolman, 1991). Covey (1991) insists this motivating behavior is "being a light, not a judge..." (p. 81).

Expressing goals and motivating to action are seen through behaviors referring to the institutional goals and behaviors concerned with moving people to actions in support of these goals. Managing and providing psychological support and inspiration are exhibited in behaviors that provide administrative support to achieve goals (managerial activities), and behaviors that provide the psychological support which encourage, challenge, and give a sense of achievement to the followers.

### Trait Theoretical Framework

The third of the categories used for analysis of leadership style is the *trait theory*. This theoretical framework suggests that a leader is endowed with specific identifiable qualities, traits of personality and character, that help a person function successfully as a leader (Bass & Stodgill, 1990). James MacGregor Burns classifies trait theories of leadership as a part of psychological matrixes, particularly, as a "cocoon of personality" (Burns, 1978). People who have the innate ability to lead are guides on a journey, but

leadership is built into the human condition because that is where the need exists (Bolman, 1991). Personal mastery is the key to leadership (Senge, 1990). Qualities of creativity and honesty are visible. Both person and the situation have to be included to explain the emergence of leadership (Bass & Stodgill, 1990).

### Contingency Theoretical Framework

*Contingency theory* is the fourth framework used for analysis.

Contingency theories assess leaders as task oriented, according to the way they judge a groups' performance, based on situational factors (Bass & Stodgill, 1990). The significance of the context commands what a leader must do, there is not an attitude of only *one way* (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Leadership situations are not simply aloof unconnected categories, but a part of some cultural or societal puzzle (Hirsh, 1987). These leaders are task oriented based on situational factors, implying the need for skills as environmental analysts. Contingency theory is closely related to the Adaptive Strategy, a model which analyzes the environment. The Adaptive strategist monitors demands, opportunities and thrusts, then changes the organization's program to meet the perceived needs (Neumann, 1989). The task performed by a group together with the external environment are keys in understanding the leadership decision-making context in which the environment plays a major part.

### Symbolic Theoretical Framework

The fifth leadership style framework is *symbolic theory*. This framework advocates leadership on the basis of socially naive assumptions. These assumptions infer cognitive outcomes to the causes of behaviors as personal traits of the leaders observed (Bass & Stodgill, 1990). Leaders are to manage the culture of the organization by sustaining symbols, myths and

maintaining sagas (Bensimon, 1987). Symbolic leaders are the high priests of the organization, managing the culture, myths, and maintaining the sagas. Not only are they the vehicle of the culture or myth of the organization, the culture actually resides in them. These leaders are the tabernacle of the organization, and their symbolic acts bring meaning to the organization (Tierney, 1989). Symbolic leadership is of the elevating variety (Burns, 1978).

### Summary

There is a unique university or college culture to be cognizant of as a leader in the higher education organization which influences decision-making processes. The role of the higher education leader as it is impacted by the role of faculty and staff create a relationship between leader and follower which is different from other organizational environments. Does this uniqueness impact the theories of *power and influence, behavioral, trait, contingency, and symbolic*? Or, are there similar frameworks also present in this unique environment? If so, which theories seem to express individual university leadership decision-making styles? And, which galvanizes followers to an overall mission of broader proportions and followership? Birnbaum (1989) states that,

Studying leadership in colleges and universities is even more difficult than in many other settings because of the dual control systems, conflicts between professional and administrative authority, unclear goals, and other properties unique to normative, professional organizations. . . But in higher education, there is a strong resistance to leadership as it is generally understood in more traditional and hierarchical organizations, and it is often more accurate to think of faculty as constituents rather than followers (p. 125-126).

With this in mind do leaders of colleges, universities, university departments and divisions have the development of intellectual and spiritual youths firmly in mind (Bloom, 1987)? It would seem that a leader's theoretical decision-making framework might show where and what their focus is as a leader, and how their actions carry out that focus, when responding to interview questions concerning their personal definition of leadership and decision-making strategies.

#### Description of this Study

For the purpose of this study, the researchers chose to focus on implicit leadership styles of higher education administrators. The researchers grouped the data on organizational leadership into five theoretical frameworks: power and influence theory, behavioral theory, trait theory, contingency theory, and symbolic theory. In doing so, the researchers were able to analyze and categorize college/university leadership styles and determine how these leadership styles reflect various theoretical models. The one basic question guiding the research was the following:

1. What theoretical frameworks do higher education administrators use to guide their decision-making processes?

#### **Methodology**

In order to select potential participants for the study, the researchers selected colleges and universities based on local geographic location and ones that would represent diversity in campus size and setting (urban, suburban, and rural). From this selection, the researchers identified presidents, deans, and directors among the college/university leadership arena. The small selected and non-random administrative sample chosen was diverse in ethnicity and gender. The study concluded with administrative participants

from one university and one community college, and selection was based on convenience.

Initial contact with each administrative participant was made by an introductory phone call, followed by an explanatory memo (Appendix A) which reiterated the research project's objectives, the pre-approved interview time, and a consent form (Appendix B). Ultimately, the participating higher education administrators who agreed to take part in the study included: one university president, three university vice-presidents, two university deans, one university assistant vice-president, one university director, one college vice-president, and one college dean.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in person by one of the three researchers at the participating administrator's school site. A set of six standardized open-ended interview questions (Appendix C) focusing on decision-making and leadership styles guided the interview, which lasted approximately thirty (30) minutes in length. Responses to the semi-structured interview questions were script recorded. Interviews were conducted over a five-week time period between March and April, 1994.

### **Data Analysis**

The responses given by higher education administrators were typically ranging from one to two pages long. The researchers separated these long responses into thematic words and phrases. The thematic response components were then compared with the five theoretical frameworks of leadership styles (Appendix D) to determine how many, if any, were reflected in the higher education administrators views.

It should be noted that even though theories implicit to a higher education administrators' leadership and decision-making responses will affect how s/he delegates on a daily basis, people do not always "walk their

talk." And that some responses may have been professionally dictated for self-serving purposes or because the answer sounded professional. It is also possible that distortions for responses occurred because of hand recorded transcriptions and misinterpreted data analysis. These data are therefore not reflective of a higher education administrator's actual everyday behavior.

**TABLE 1**  
**Implied Theoretical Leadership of Ten**  
**Higher Education Administrators**

<b>Theoretical Frameworks</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Power & Influence	10	100
a. one-way	9	90
b. two-way	9	90
2. Behavioral	9	90
a. institutional goals	8	80
b. motivate to action	5	50
c. administrative support	3	30
d. psychological support	4	40
3. Trait	5	50
4. Contingency	7	70
5. Symbolic	1	10

### **Results of Administrator Leadership Components**

The distribution of implicit theoretical leadership frameworks of higher education administrators is shown in Table 1: From this distribution, power and influence theories, behavioral theories, and contingency theories encompass the majority of implicit leadership responses held by the higher education administrators. [Responses associated with trait theories and symbolic theories were fewest in number (50% or less).] It is important to remember that even though a higher education administrator didn't include traits or symbolism in the response, it doesn't imply that the administrator sees them as unimportant or nonessential in everyday decision-making processes.

#### Power and Influence Theory

The ten (10) higher education administrators who were interviewed gave a clear perception that leadership as well as decision-making processes consisted primarily as leadership influence, either as a one-way approach (social power), or a two-way approach (social exchange).

Of the ten respondents, nine (90%) defined leadership and decision-making processes as a one-way approach whose purpose was getting others within the organization to conform to or comply with the leader's directives by using various sources of social power. This power was more of a directive and controlling process in order to achieve personal and/or organizational desires. Higher education administrators commonly expressed these five influential sources of social power through phrases such as, "people use the power they have," "my staff are then told what must be done to accomplish this task," and "doesn't mean can always make decisions together," referring to a legitimate power approach. Expert power was also captured emphatically by several higher administrative leaders with expressions such as, "the power I bring is based on expert title," and "the impact of decisions and the responsibility for decisions rests with the vice president." Other social power approaches addressed by the leaders included referent power where common references included, "the ability to get people to act or do things you think needs to be done," and "you get the best information you can and make the decision." Two of the five sources of social power (reward and coercive) used to influence people within an organization were not articulated in the interview responses and therefore were inferred as being unethical or undesirable practices.

In the second orientation or two-way social exchange, nine of the ten (90%) higher education administrative leaders are less directive and more facilitative and supportive. There is more of a camaraderie between the

leader and their constituents. The higher education administrative leaders foster an empowering versus a controlling atmosphere where barriers are removed for individual success. One administrator referred to this by saying that a leader, "allows people to grow and gives them opportunities for leadership." Another leader expressed that, "you become a risk-taker; take chances on people when you empower them."

The majority of administrative leaders saw themselves as informed communicators, trying to unlock the doorway to full staff participation and engage in consensual decision-making. Common expressions that exemplified this included, "ensure all staff and co-workers full participation," "communication continues daily and you discuss the information in the meeting," or "to communicate well and in a timely fashion, inform me so there are no surprises," and "emphasis is on communication, sharing decisions; sometimes can't share decisions."

Other higher education administrative leaders referred to the "team approach" where, "people feel valued so can go back and change, be more facilitative and make needed changes," or "involve everyone in the decisions to be made," and "no one person is not important; the student is important, the lowest staff person is important."

Leadership for the two-way social exchange expressed a consensual reciprocity between leader and follower, fostering honesty, openness, and mutual respect. The driving force is seen not as the leader, but as the follower. Here the constituents are entrusted with the freedom and power to make decisions and as one administrative leader remarks, "the reins to do whatever they need to do." Thus, the leader transcends those followers willing to accept a joint partnership in the higher education decision-making process.

### Behavioral Theory

The second theoretical framework found to be expressed by nine of the ten (90%) higher education administrators within this study was the behavioral theory. The data of this study revealed that eighty percent (80%) of the higher education administrators focused on institutional goals, highlighting various influential sources used implicitly or explicitly in everyday decision-making processes. One of the influential sources identified was, "shared-ownership," and "resolution by consensus." This source of influence stressed the leader and follower as partners in a common purpose. The second source of influence fostered by the administrative leaders was identified as "vision," "future direction," and "defining goals." These phrases catered to a leader whose followers desired a "consistent direction," where "decisions are made on the vision of the organization." Thus, the leader in higher education has a leader-directed responsibility as set forth by the followers. Therefore, university goals tended to manifest the majority of responses in the leadership behavioral framework even though organizational goals are seen as the most difficult constructs to define and implement.

Fifty percent (50%) of the higher education administrative leaders using the behavioral framework expressed their ideas in motivational terms such as "create an environment where you take the organization in that direction and no other!" or "getting people to commit one way or the other," and "creating an effective workplace for everyone--nurturing and challenging." These behaviors were used to motivate and uplift the followers in order to make decisions happen.

The least expressed area responded to by the administrative leaders in the behavioral framework was the administrative support area. Only three out of ten (30%) leaders made reference to these behaviors. Common statements included, "utilizing resources," "the people most directly involved or impacted, I ask those persons about their ideas concerning the issue," and "you make the best informed decision."

The fourth area higher education administrators expressed in the behavioral framework was psychological support (40%). Phrases included "you inspire people to do the things," "celebrate their accomplishments," or "serve as a motivator and role model," and "your behavior shows each person they are valued and important." These behaviors exemplified by the leaders created a nurturing and safe environment for the followers while "bringing stability or room to think."

When summarizing behavioral frameworks and the utterances of the administrative leaders who participated in our study, it would seem that our participants viewed the practicality of shared ownership, vision, motivation, and nurturance as management or administrative tools as well as lofty ideals. The administrator's specific behaviors tended to channel the followers' activities, whether it be leading them in a specific direction, or supporting them in consensual decision-making processes. Thus, these findings support the dual relationship found at the higher educational level between leaders and followers and parallel the findings of the original Institutional Leadership Project conducted by Birnbaum (1989).

#### Trait, Contingency, and Symbolic Theories

The distribution of participant responses fell mainly in the *power and influence, and behavioral* theoretical frameworks. Being cognizant that the responses and theoretical philosophies of the respondents overlap, and the

researchers were forced to make explicit choices per category, the main emphasis of reporting findings tended to lie in the first two theoretical frameworks. However, approximately thirteen interview responses were labeled in the final three theoretical frameworks: *trait*, *contingency*, and *symbolic*. It is not to be concluded that these three theories are unimportant, and are not a part of each interviewees philosophy guiding their decision-making processes.

The *trait* theoretical framework focuses on the leader's responses dealing with, or referring to, creativity and honesty in their response to the six interview questions. Such responses as ". . . that they not be concerned with self. Honesty, diligence and openness about their disagreements. Also an openness to working things out and/or consensus," shows a cognizance for honesty as an important part of a leader's thinking. Honesty and ethics as a concern was reflected in another response, "reduce suspicion because the rumor mill thrives on suspicion," and ". . .strong ethical leaders are effective communicators."

Creativity was expressed through responses such as, "in a university have to have leadership style that allows for creative individuals to create a better mousetrap." Also getting at this combination of skills and talent is a quote, ". . .leadership comes out of the heart and management from the head." This whole concern for creativity becomes more important as the unique qualities of a university/college context is taken into account. The creative nature of expectations for professors to study, research, experiment, explore, synthesize, publish findings, try new efforts are a major part of the higher educational environment. The tolerance for and encouragement of creative talent and intelligent exploration is an important charge for higher

education leaders who work closely in a collegial relationship with their followers.

Responses associated with the *contingency* framework numbered approximately seven. The situational factors in a higher education environment obviously are taken into consideration as leaders assess information and analyze the context decisions will impact. The contingent nature of leadership suggests that there is no one right answer to anything, merely differences to be implemented depending on situations. Such responses as, ". . . depends on the situation and context". . . "it depends on who's affected by the decision," reflects that need to adjust the decision-making style to meet the needs not only of the people involved, but also the uniqueness of each situation encountered. This also provides a loophole for those leaders strongly advocating collaboration and input from followers, but who really are concerned about maintaining control. The needs of the situation can be a fall-back rationale for not following the leader's espoused decision-making style.

Certain categories of decisions tended to fall into the contingency framework. Decisions concerning budget, personnel dilemmas, different stakeholder expectations, bureaucratic and political processes which need to be followed, caused a change in the leader's decision-making plan. The "style changes with the situation, everybody is situational to an extent," clearly illustrates this situational context. As one of the interviewees put it so well, "Leadership means knowing what a political environment is and using it in a constructive way."

The one response categorized as *symbolic*, "I look at running a tight ship," does not reflect the probable environment encouraged and reinforced through a leaders' influence on the setting and culture of the followers.

Many leaders subtly use symbols to keep organizational myths alive without realizing the impact or role they are playing. Holidays, tangible symbols in the environment, specific places where they sit at meetings, subtle chain of command inferences to followers, pecking order, all help to manage the culture, myths, and maintain the sages of an organization. Sometimes these subtle climates created and maintained tell more about a leader than actual actions. The results of our study did not include field notes about the affective and physical environment of each leader. Such information would have been helpful in order to respond more to the symbolic theoretical framework characteristics of the interviewed leaders, as well as the other frameworks.

### **Conclusion**

Our research indicates that no theoretical leadership framework applies to all situations for daily decision-making processes of higher education administrative leaders. Their implicit theoretical leadership styles are, not surprisingly, a potpourri of integrated frameworks that overlap and are facilitated under daily situational contexts.

The higher education administrative leaders in this study, based on our data analysis, overwhelmingly identified leadership as influential and behavioral. Effective leadership was seen as an influential relationship between the leader and follower; the emphasis being on empowering the follower for personal and professional success rather than on exclusive mutual reciprocity. Good leadership also emphasized a leader's positive behaviors that inspired followers to achieve specific organizational goals. The leader's behavioral support also fostered shared ownership in a common purpose for the institution.

A majority of the higher education administrative leaders represented a traditional approach to leadership. These leaders assumed responsibility for directing the flow of decision-making in order to accomplish the vision of the institution. Although the followers participated to a degree in the decision-making process, in the end, the followers conformed to a higher authority; a leadership influenced by various sources of social power.

While these traditional leaders were directive in their approach, they also felt compelled to ensure communication and full participation from their followers. Here, the leader's style was more consultative, gaining various staff perspectives and opinions, at the same time being committed to the administrative governance. While these leaders listened to the team players, it was obvious that the administrative leaders were responsible in delegating the final verdict.

A small group of higher education administrative leaders emphasized a more "genuine" side to good leadership. This encompassed ethical accountability of leaders willing to work things out as a group in order to reach consensus. It involved all the stakeholders reaching a consensual decision in order to make a difference. Different situations needed different approaches, not by one individual, but by everybody at stake. Clearly, this group of leaders and followers possessed moral traits with a common purpose, whose institutional goals were facilitated as a group approach rather than a single dictated leadership.

#### Recommendations For Future Research

There were a number of areas in our research that limited the full scope and richness of this leadership study. One such limitation was script recording the higher education administrators' responses instead of using a tape or video recorder. By using another medium to record the leaders'

responses, a fuller description of observed physical behaviors as well as verbal inflections could have been applied to the interviewee's responses, giving a more accurate picture. These observations would have had a tremendous impact for implied accountability between what was said versus what was observed. Therefore, a shift in methodology for future studies would be advantageous to ascertain levels of congruency of administrators espousing the high ideals of the theoretical frameworks.

Another limitation to our study was the short amount of time available to conduct the interviews. Running fieldnotes as well as confirmatory interviews with co-workers, or shadowing the administrator over a period of days would have added a robust confirmation to our data. The additional information would have also allowed for a comparison of staff perceptions of their leader's styles with that of the leader. This would have enabled a wider angle view of the administrative leader "walking their talk." Clearly, by conducting triangulation methods of research in the future, further comparison analysis of interview responses could be actualized.

Our sample size, being small and non-random, posed another limitation to the study. For future studies and time permitting, a large random sample should be used, giving more significant and generalizable data.

Last, but not least, a follow-up interview with the higher education administrative leader would have allowed our research team to examine possible insights and changes that the leader may have orchestrated in response to the interview. This would have enabled our research group to visualize first hand, if at all, how leaders do reflect on their implicit leadership styles, and that at a conscious level, have the power to engage in

small but long-term institutional transitions; ones that foster direction and empowerment in the spirit of unity.

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MEMO

TO: Vice President  
FROM: Kim Lees, Judy Christian, and Don Smith  
DATE: March 17, 1994  
RE: Leadership Research Project Interview

As per our phone conversation on March 10, 1994, our research team would like to confirm the approved interview pertaining to the Leadership Research Project. Six questions will be asked during the interview focusing on leadership and decision-making processes. The length of the interview will be approximately thirty (30) minutes. The interview will take place at 9:00 a.m. in the office of the Vice President.

Thank you for your time in participating in our research project.

**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM  
FOR  
INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION**

- PROJECT TITLE:** Theoretical Frameworks For Administrative Decision-Making Processes.
- RESEARCHERS:** Judy Christian, Kim Lees, and Don Smith - Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
- DESCRIPTION:** If you consent to this semi-structured interview, you will be asked to respond to six questions regarding your leadership decision-making process. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes and your responses will be script recorded.

The responses to the interview questions will be held strictly confidential. No one besides the researchers involved in the study will be allowed to see or discuss the individual interview responses. Confidentiality will be protected by disassociating names from responses when the data are compiled and analyzed.

Risks to you are very minimal. You may feel pressured into giving a correct response, but be assured that a range of responses are appropriate for all higher educational leadership positions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewee's Initials

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS  
ON  
LEADERSHIP & DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

1. What does leadership mean to you?
2. How do you believe decisions should be made in your organization/division?
3. Are there certain circumstances or issues for which you might adopt different decision-making processes? If so, what are they?
4. How do these decision-making processes reflect your leadership style?
5. Who do you involve in your decision-making processes?
6. What are your expectations of co-workers/staff in the decision-making process?

## ANALYZING THEORETICAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORKS

### 1. Power and Influence Theories:

- Two orientations:** a) one-way attempt through various sources of social power to influence others  
b) two-way attempt through social exchange result in mutual influence of followers.

#### A. Leaders use various sources of social power in a one-way attempt to influence others:

1. Legitimate Power--Leaders influence others by their offices--authority provided by social & legal systems.
2. Reward Power--Ability for leaders to provide rewards.
3. Coercive Power--Leaders can threaten punishment.
4. Expert Power--Influence comes through leaders' perceived expertise.
5. Referent Power--Others personally identify and like the leaders.

#### Examples:

- Getting others to comply with or conform to the leaders' directives: "the power of persuasion"; or "getting people to act positively".

#### B. Leaders' interactions with followers result in mutual influence through social exchange (two-way).

- Social exchange theories emphasize two-way mutual influence and reciprocal relationships between leaders who provide needed services to a group in exchange for the group's approval and compliance with the leader's demands.

#### Examples:

- Influence is a process of exchange involving "shared concepts of responsibility," the "assimilation (of the goals of others) and the articulation of goals," or other mutual processes in which leaders and followers "collectively move the institution."

#### NOTES:

##### A. One-way

VP-#1 "take general concepts, goals, and implement them for the overall vision," #2 "impact of decision and responsibility for decision rests with the VP," #4 "they must be accountable to someone."

D-#3 "power I bring is based on expert title to make the organization stronger," #4 "I need to be better in delegating," #6 "people must participate when given the opportunity; engage in taking a stance-to say yes or no."

DIR-#1 "the ability to get people to act or do things you think need to be done," #3 "my staff are then told what must be done to accomplish this task," #6 "my expectations of co-workers is that they become a stronger participant."

D%2D- "Environment where I take responsibility ultimately. Coworkers make decisions and inform me, but I take the heat."

%3D-Total environment that I have charge of, need not be involved in every decision, unless overall welfare is at stake."

%3P-"When management team is unavailable, or when there is a significant crisis, you get the best information you can and make the decision."

%4P-"Don't tip hand too much. Pose and illicit contrary points. Listen and keep to the point. Frame questions."

\*2uv- Campus security, accounting procedures=should not have equal participation or involvement. One of the problems in higher ed. is to properly define roles, so a great loss of efficiency and time in the process

\*3uavp-More consultative or authoritarian on non-academic processes of the university

\*3uavp-People use the power they have

\*2cvp-Doesn't mean can always make decisions together, but the communication process in the end is important. Doesn't mean people will always be happy

\*6cvp-Leadership is being able to make hard decisions and not letting the fact that people like you or don't like them get in the way. No one wants to tell you it's not working.

\*2cd- This person will make the decisions for someone if they don't want to make the decision, as their supervisor  
If it is a serious problem and the person doesn't want to make the decision, they will step in (Example - firing someone)

### B. Two-way

VP•#1 "to bring services together to fit the needs of the students defined by the school's mission," #1 "help the campus move towards these goals," #3 "need a joint venture to have responsibility from both sides," #4 "give directors latitude and responsibility and give authority to act," #6 "reach a consensus to which is consistent with the vision," #6 "Ensure all staff and co-workers full participation."

D•#2 "you must weigh those decisions against others to see if you're getting closer to the vision," #4 "allows people to grow and give them opportunities for leadership," #4 "find someone to help in the delegation," #6 "communication continues daily and you discuss the information in the meeting," #2 "I get as much information from various people."

DIR•#2 "it must be a participative decision," #2 "information and knowledge helps in the decision-making process from others," #4 "you become a risk-taker; take chances on people when you empower them," #5 "I am more of a collaborative decision-making person," #6 "staff members have a responsibility to be well informed and knowledgeable and that they share that information to others."

%5P-"Management team and personal assistant."

%(P-"To be well informed, with no "sandbagging" and/or manipulation. I expect the management team members to say..."Let me take a quick look at this document, and then I'll join in the discussion", rather than, "I haven't seen this document, why wasn't I kept up to speed?"

%3VP-"Seldom, when there is no time or little time before a decision has to be made. Then informing the persons impacted as soon as possible, hoping that the prior relationship of having them involved on most decisions, strands the test of trust, that you performed in the best interest of them and the organization."

%5VP-"Management team."

%6VP-"To communicate well and in timely fashion, inform me so there are no surprises whenever possible. Error on the heavy information side not the I'm not sure this is worth bothering the him over, side."

\*2uvp-University is an institution of a democratic society, but isn't a democracy itself  
Faculty have certain kinds of rights which are different in a higher ed. structure  
Need for consulatory decision-making style for certain issues only, but not for all issues  
Faculty Senate = terms of employment = faculty need significant input

\*3uvp-To be consultative or participatory on issues pertaining to instruction and curriculum and standards of the profession and academic standards of the university  
With non-academic issues, can look at a university as a small city which is run as any proper business should be run

\*4uvp-Their style is consultative, learning towards participatory and authoritarian on issues and hope would have the wisdom to differentiate

\*5uvp- Tied to 2 things: A. Never ignore the organizational structure, B. Always have a mechanism for communicating with informal leaders,

\*6uvp- Consultative style, the expectations are to give advice

\*2uavp- Maneuvering the end result by people affected by those decisions made in terms of consequences

\*5uavp- People affected by the decision and others who may have had previous expertise; So much power in the consultative process

Can see different perspectives; Usually come up with a better decision because of this process

\*6uavp-They feel seldom as part of the process and feel free to offer their decisions and ideals

They feel free to offer dissenting views

They can be open and honest no matter what

Team approach, people feel valued so can go back and change, be more facilitative and make needed changes

\*1cvp-Involve everyone in the decisions to be made

\*2cvp-Emphasis is on communication, sharing decisions, sometimes can't share the decisions

Process:

1. First step is to communicate issues to people involved
2. Solicit opinions
3. Involve as many as possible
4. Communicating what was decided
5. Decisions should be evolutionary

"Be very clear and tell the truth."

\*3cvp- Example of replacing two directors with two entirely different set of circumstances

\*1cd- Leadership is being able to make decisions, to assign and delegate responsibilities

Being able to give people the reins to do whatever they need to do

Don't check up all of the time, make decisions and delegate

Respect people and will get respect back

Talk to them, don't get upset, then they can hear what they have to say

\*2cd- Decisions made with input from everybody affected by them

Don't make decisions sitting in the office, everyone needs to take part

On other hand, get a committee which gives input, but not making the decision

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People affected by the decision will make the decision

No one is not important, student is important, lowest staff person is important

\*4cd- What is best for the people affected

\*5cd- Anybody that is involved in or affected by the decision.

Decision what is best for the college, what is best for the student (Example of process used to change to a 4 day week)

\*6cd- Example of Octagon Group using representatives of each level of employed for group input process for decisions

## 2. Behavioral Theories--specific activity patterns, managerial roles, or behavioral categories.

**Groupings:** a) expressing goals and motivating to action.

b) managing and providing psychological support and inspiration.

### A. Expressing goals and motivating to action

#### 1. Examples: (behaviors referring to institutional goals)

- "setting direction," "setting goals," "providing vision," and "knowing where to go."
- the word "vision" is used frequently; its meaning not always clear.

#### 2. Examples: (behaviors concerned with moving people to action in support of the goals)

- "set the pace," "mobilize," "move people," "stimulate," or "serve as a catalyst."
- most common expression was to "motivate," or "to nudge."

### B. Managing and providing psychological support and inspiration

#### 1. Examples: (behaviors that provide administrative support to achieve goals; managerial activities)

- "choosing means," "mobilizing resources," "making decisions," "planning," "good communications," "providing structure and process," and "recruiting colleagues."

#### 2. Examples: (behaviors that provided psychological support)

- to "inspire," to "raise aspirations," to provide sense of achievement," to "made the institution feel good about itself," to "encourage," and to "challenge."

#### NOTES:

##### A. Institutional Goals

VP•#4 "direction must be set forth for setting some vision of the institution," #5 "recommendations are acted upon and adopted of decision may need to be altered-because its too narrow or just not a good fit," #6 "co-workers expect to consult frequently over broad range of topics-to make sure vision is represented in an appropriate manner," #6 "leadership and vision-goals and objectives make a difference...great university becomes great who has a leader of that caliber.

D•#1 "leadership is inspiring a vision to move beyond," #2 "vision is more encompassing to invest in a common purpose," #2 "future direction helps to lead an organization," #4 "they take the organization to move in a direction that's more effective," #6 "people need to see you with a consistent direction," #6 "effective leadership looks at systems view of an organization," #1 "leadership is based on ethical principles."

DIR•#2 "decisions are made on the vision of the organization," #2 "a leader must initiate that decision," #4 "leading them in a conducive, nurturing, and safe environment," #6 "they look to the vision and mission of our organization."

%1D-"Defining the goals and reminding people of what they are. Also, developing strategies to help them reach those goals."

%4D-"Try to get ownership from people on their decisions."

%1P-"Vision and focus. Create an environment where you take the organization in that direction and no other."

%2P-"Decisions should be made based on good facts and information. This is a result of framing good questions based on information gathered. Seek resolution by consensus and shared ownership. When there is conflict rather than consensus, you choose based on consistency."

%2VP-"As much as possible, involve the persons the decision will impact in the decision making process. Or at least the heads of the division or unit when time does not allow for all parties to be included."

%4VP-"Uncomfortable with top decisions that exclude the impacted people,. Again however, good communication and timely after the fact of the decision or because of heavy work load, is important. Prior relationship and combination history is the bulwark to keep constituents from believing you left them out."

\*1uvp- Leadership - Harvard views management as the big term when think of leadership

At least 2 components to leadership in higher ed.: 1. Being able to identify the appropriate goals, appropriate direction; 2. Ability to allow people within a university to express, allow, and encourage visionary thought

Allows and lets people into the process and be a part of it

\*6uvp- Problem of the university, the university president is charged with the responsibility of keeping the visionary voice at the state level

Quality visionaries are excluded in the search process; Goal conflict versus goal confusion often typical at the university setting

\*1uavp- Leadership is being in a position where can help facilitate change in terms of the role of mission of the university, goals, visions, and missions; Taking responsibility, challenge, risks

#### **B. Motivate To Action**

VP•#4 "VP promotes growth within unit to assume increased responsibility and to see promotions," #6 "to get more people involved."

D•#4 "people need to feel comfortable but not too much or static sets in," #6 "the challenge is to get people to commit one way or the other."

DIR•#1 "creating an effective workplace for everyone--safe, secure, nurturing, and challenging," #4 "I want to be nurturing and challenging."

\*1uavp- Inclusive in decision-making process so whatever leadership is about, bringing in people affected by the leadership or change

Provide a vision for whatever leading towards or to

Difference between leadership and management (budget skills)

\*4uavp- Decision-making process is inclusive, include as many as can, gather information and data

\*1cvp- Leadership means working with people, the preposition is really important;

Working with people so that we have the best outcome for people

#### **C. Administrative Support**

VP•#1 "utilizing resources," #3 "look at institution as a whole to get best results for institution," #4 "directors consult with the VP for alternatives, and in order to make good decisions."

D•#2 "you make the best informed decision," #6 "task-meetings--it's based on intellectual power people bring to the meeting."

%5D-"The people most directly involved or impacted, I ask those persons' about their ideas concerning the issue."

#### **D. Psychological Support**

VP•#2 "Consultant model is used in reaching decisions," #6 "good leadership allows staff members to articulate differences of information," #6 "allow others to feel ownership in a decision--making process."

D•#1 "leadership is based a lot on situations they find themselves in-bringing stability or room to think," #1

"leadership is how you empower other people to be most effective in their roles," #1 "a view that's best for the organization."

DIR•#1 "the ability to empower them," #1 "you inspire people to do the things," #1 "celebrate their accomplishments," #1 "your behavior shows each person they are valued and important," #4 "honor them daily."

%1VP-"A vision (overall image) of your area of responsibility, get a feeling about what is happening then challenge your organization with the information you find out. Serve as a motivator, and role model, not someone who has all the answers, but someone who brings out the best in the followers and by hiring the best followers you can. Remove barriers for the followers by facilitating and problem-solving."

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### 3. Trait Theories

#### Examples:

- leadership related to traits as "creativity," and "honesty."

#### NOTES:

VP•#2 "need more accountability for those items that rest with the VP's jurisdiction."

D•#4 "strong ethical leaders are effective communicators," #5 "leadership comes out of the heart and management from the head."

%6D-"That they not be concerned with self. Honesty, diligence and openness about their disagreements. Also an openness to working things out and/or reach consensus."

\*1uvp- In a university have to have leadership style that allows for creative individuals to create a better mousetrap

\*5uvp- Never ignore the deans and maintain a relationship with the faculty who are strong leaders, otherwise would have an administrator who doesn't know what is out in the field and to reduce anxiety and suspicion

Reduce suspicion because rumor mill thrives on suspicion

\*4cvp- I like people, genuinely like people, and it will turn out all right. Can make the negatives into the positives.

### 4. Contingency Theories

#### Examples:

- the contingent nature of leadership suggests, "there is no one path to get there."

#### NOTES:

VP•#2 "higher education decisions that are lasting to make a difference must involve stakeholders of staff, students, and faculty,"

D•#3 "Decisions involve rational, bureaucratic, and political processes," #3 "depends on the situation and context," #5 "it depends on whose affected by the decision (certain people)."

DIR•#3 "there are different issues for different processes," #3 "I tend to be less sharing when it comes to overall budget agendas," #5 "when appropriate, I involve my superior, the VP."

\*6uvp- Higher education suffers tremendously from lack of leadership

Part of what is the overall environment doesn't allow for it

\*3uavp- Leadership includes being in a very political environment

Leadership means knowing what a political environment is and using it in a constructive way

\*4cvp- Style changes with the situation, Everybody is situational to an extent

\*3cd- Depends on the situation: Make a different decision depending on circumstances

Sometimes have to overrule someone in order to help a student

When I overrule, I take responsibility for what happened

### 5. Symbolic Theories

#### Example:

- leadership should "give meaning" or influence "by the symbolic things you do."

#### NOTES:

DIR•#3 "I look at running a tight ship."

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