

The Problem with Leadership Research



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In R.Kaiser (chair) *Unconventional Thinking about Leadership*. Panel Discussion presented at the annual conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology in San Francisco. (2008, April).

Overview

- The state of the field is disappointing
- To advance, a major overhaul is needed
- A modest proposal for taking the field to the next level





Applied Leadership... *Science?*

- Practice largely ignores research
 - Many practitioners lack formal education in leadership or social sciences
- *Real* evaluation is rare
- Organizational consumers don't know what they don't know



O Leadership How Do I Love Thee...

- Trait Approaches
- Ohio State / Michigan Style Approaches
- LPC Contingency Theory
- Path-Goal Theory
- Situational Leadership Theory
- Leader-Member Exchange Theory
- Substitutes for Leadership
- Cognitive Categorization (ILTs)
- Charismatic / Transformational



Leadership as a Brand

- Performance Appraisal
vs. *360° Feedback*
- Training
vs. *Leadership Development*
- Selection
vs. *Succession Planning*



What is Leadership Effectiveness?

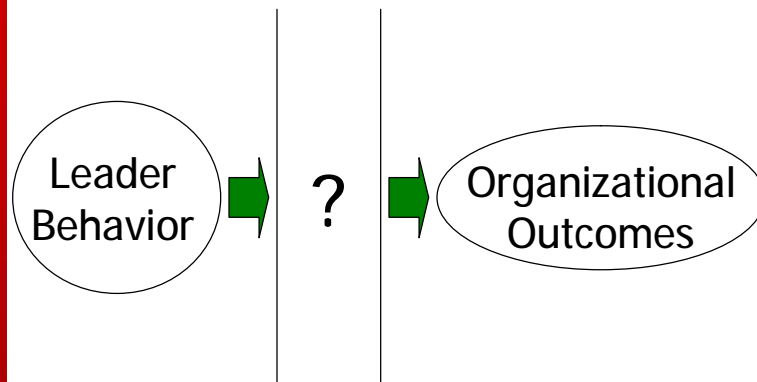
- Individual level
 - Emergence
 - Approval
- Group level
 - Process
 - Outcomes

(Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008)



Back to Basics

- Organizations exist to achieve group goals (Katz & Kahn, 1977)
- Leadership roles are adaptive features of organizations
- Therefore leadership effectiveness should be defined in terms of *organizational outcomes*





What Leaders Do

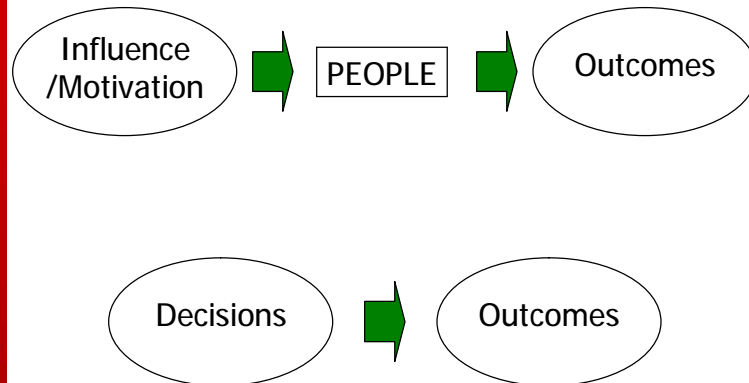
- Exchange information
- Develop/maintain relationships

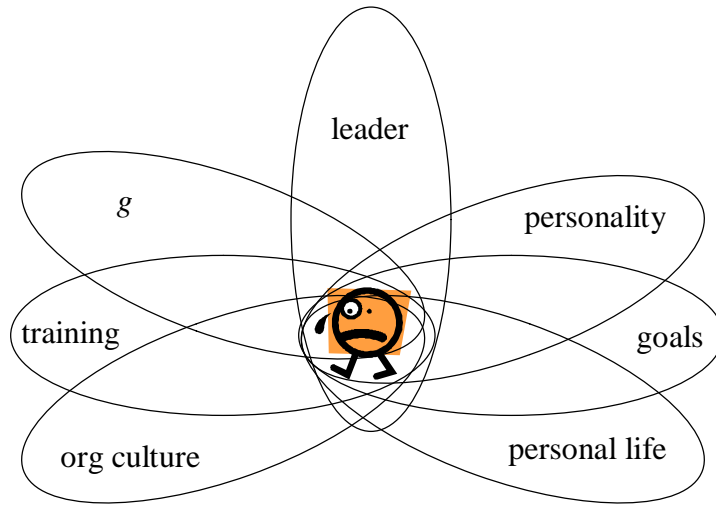
- Influence others
- Make decisions

(Yukl, 2005)



Two Paths





A Modest Proposal

- Refocus research and theory on group outcomes
- Recognize fundamental distinction between interpersonal and unilateral leadership behaviors
- Bring other knowledge bases to bear

Integrating Leadership Theories Under a Motivation Framework



- Update/revise Expectancy Theory (e.g., Dynamic Outcome Valence)
- Leadership works by manipulating VIE
- Leadership becomes just one of many motivational forces, from the followers' perspective