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The Difficult Challenge, Exploring the Secondary School Head Teachers: Leaders or Managers?

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Abstract

Management and leadership are terms that are frequently used interchangeably, however, they are not the same thing. The purpose of this article is to outline the differences between leadership and management in relation to school Head teachers. Management and leadership are important for the delivery of good health services in the secondary schools. Although the two are similar in some respects, they may involve different types of skills, and behaviours. Whilst the distinction between management and leadership may have been useful in drawing attention to the strategic and motivational qualities required during periods of change, the representation of managers and leaders as completely different people can be misleading and potentially harmful in practice. The author's conclusion is that these two educational fields are different in terms of context and style, but each field does carry almost the same responsibility. Good managers should strive to be good leaders and good leaders, need management skills to be effective.

Keywords: Leadership, Management, Bureaucratic, Head teacher, charge.

Introduction

It has become common over recent years to distinguish leadership from management however increasing evidence indicates that this distinction may be misleading. Some scholars argue that although management and leadership overlap, the two activities are not synonymous (Bass, 2010). The degree of overlap is a point of disagreement (Yukl, 2010). Leadership and management entail a unique set of activities or functions. There is a continuing controversy about the difference between leadership and management. Not all managers exercise leadership. Often it is assumed that anyone in a management position is a leader. Not all leaders manage. Leadership is performed by people who are not in management positions.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this article is to briefly outline the differences, often cited in literature, between leadership and management in relation to head teachers in secondary schools.

Literature Review

Zalenznik (1977) began the trend of contrasting leadership and management by presenting an image of the leader as an artist, who uses creativity and intuition to navigate his/her way through chaos, whilst the manager is seen as a problem solver dependent on rationality and control. Since then the leadership literature has been littered with bold statements contrasting the two. Bennis and Nanus (1985, p.21), for example, suggest that managers "do things right" whilst leaders do "the right thing" and Bryman (1986, p.6) argues that the leader is the catalyst focussed on strategy whilst the manager is the operator/technician concerned with the "here-and-now of operational goal attainment".

Central to most of these distinctions is an orientation towards change. This concept is well represented in the work of John Kotter (1990) who concluded that "management is about coping with complexity" whilst "leadership, by contrast, is about coping with change" (Kotter, p104). He proposed that good management brings about a degree of order and

consistency to organizational processes and goals, whilst leadership is required for dynamic change. The distinction of leadership from management as represented by Kotter and his contemporaries clearly encourages a shift in emphasis from the relatively inflexible, bureaucratic processes typified as ‘management’ to the more dynamic and strategic processes classed as ‘leadership’, yet even he concludes that both are equally necessary for the effective running of an organization: “Leadership is different from management, but not for the

reason most people think. Leadership isn't mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having charisma or other exotic personality traits. It's not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment.” (Kotter, 1990, p103)

Leadership and Management

Table 1 (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004, p 718 - based on Kotter, 1990)

	Leadership functions	Leadership functions
Creating an agenda	Establishing direction: Vision of the future, develop strategies for change to achieve goals	Plans and budgets: Decide action plans and timetables, allocate resources
Developing people	Aligning people: Communicate vision and strategy, influence creation of teams which accept validity of goals	<i>Organizing and staffing</i> : Decide structure and allocate staff, develop policies, procedures and monitoring
Execution	Motivating and inspiring: Energize people to overcome obstacles, satisfy human needs	Controlling, problem solving: Monitor results against plan and take corrective action
Outcomes	Produces positive and sometimes dramatic change	Produces order, consistency and predictability

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the information presented in Table 1. First, good leaders are not necessarily good managers, and good managers are not necessarily good leaders. Second, good management skills transform a leader’s vision into action and successful implementation. Some scholars believe that effective implementation is the driving force of organizational success, especially in relatively stable, “domesticated” organizations (Lunenburg, Thompson, & Pagani, 2010). Third, organizational success requires a combination of effective leadership and management. Furthermore, team-based organizational structures are extending leadership functions to work groups and cross-department teams in most modern organizations. Thus, there is greater opportunity for more input from group members at all levels of the organization (Lunenburg, 1983). Despite the popular appeal of a distinction between leadership and management, however, there is some doubt as to whether they are really quite as separate as this in practice. Firstly there is increasing resistance to the way in

which such analyses tend to denigrate management as something rather boring and uninspiring. Joseph Rost (1991), for example, highlights the need for consistency and predictability in many aspects of management and leadership behaviour and concludes that “down with management and up with leadership is a bad idea”. Gosling and Murphy (2004) similarly propose that maintaining a sense of continuity during times of change is key to successful leadership. Thus the leader must ensure that systems and structures remain in place that offer workers a sense of security and balance, without which it would be hard to maintain levels of motivation, commitment, trust and psychological wellbeing. Other academics have also presented noteworthy papers on the similarities and differences between leadership and management. Bennis (1989) is one such author. Adapted from Murray (2010), the key differences that are presented between managers and leaders can again be reviewed in the table below

Table 2: Management and Leadership According to Bennis

Managers	Leaders
The manager administers current ways of working.	The leader innovates to find new ways of working.
The manager copies what has been done before and is proven to be effective.	The leader provides original solutions that can be utilized.
The manager places emphasis on structure and systems in the organization.	The leader places emphasis on the people in the organization.
The manager deals with issues that are short term in nature.	The leader tends to focus on longer term problems that exist.
The manager will ask questions like “How?” and “When?”	The leader will ask questions like “What?” and “Why?”
The manager continually reviews the bottom line.	The leader continually reviews the horizon.
The manager sticks with the status quo and works within it.	The leader prefers to challenge the status quo.
The manager can best be described as a “classic good soldier”.	The leader can best be described as “his or her own person”.

While supportive of Kotter’s research in some ways, the work of Bennis does not particularly seem to espouse it in others. It seems to present a very black and white approach of what leaders and managers are, which in the real world of course may not be particularly accurate. Of course, it is likely that some people in key positions in organizations tend towards leadership skills as defined by Bennis, and some more towards management skills, however, it is unlikely that any one person fits well into the boxes of “leader” or “manager” that Bennis has provided.

In addition, at face value Bennis does not seem to support Kotter in the sense of supporting the idea that both sets of skills are needed within an organization. His work may be criticized in the sense that some aspects of it are clearly not accurate. For example, in real life organizational situations, it is not always just those in leadership positions that seek to change the status quo. Sometimes leaders, even good ones, want to retain the status quo because it suits them from a personal perspective – for example, if a leader has an excellent job with a great salary, and leads in every

sense proposed by Bennis other than “challenging the status quo”. It can be argued then, that personal factors may also affect the behaviour of leaders and managers sometimes, and so the case that Bennis presents is too basic.

Rost (1991:149) provides some interesting details relating to his view with regard to the differences between leadership and management, citing the following:

Leadership	Management
Influence relationship	Authority relationship
Leaders and followers	Managers and subordinates
Intend real changes	Produce and sell goods and/or services
Intended changes reflect mutual purposes	Goods/services result from coordinated activities

Rost explains that influence relationship versus authority relationship is an important distinction because these differ due to the use of coercion (or not). In his view, “influence” means that coercion should not be used, but he believes that “authority” will use it regularly to get things done. Interestingly, Rost describes how the leadership relationship is “multidirectional”. What this means is that leaders influence followers and followers influence leaders also, as well as leaders being able to influence other leaders, and followers influencing other followers. In management however, it is explained that the relationship is basically “top down” and there is little influence exerted aside from that. This is an interesting difference to consider.

In addition, Rost argues that with regard to the concept of leaders and followers versus managers and subordinates, it is explained that leaders are not the same as managers, but that followers can be managers, as can subordinates. It is described how being a leader does not automatically mean that person is in a position of authority, and indeed how this is often not the case.

Much research evidence implies that, far from being separate, the practices described as ‘management’ and ‘leadership’ are an integral part of the same job. From detailed observations of what managers do, Mintzberg (1973, 1975) identified 10 key roles, of which one was ‘leadership’ (see Figure 2). He concluded that far from being separate and distinct from management, leadership is just one dimension of a multifaceted management role.

Much of the difficulty and confusion that arises from contrasting leadership and management is the manner in which they are often mapped to different individuals. Thus, we talk of ‘managers’ and ‘leaders’ as if they were different (and to a large extent incompatible) people – we consider leaders as dynamic, charismatic individuals with the ability to inspire others, whilst managers are seen as bureaucrats who just focus on the task in hand. Such a view, however, does not coincide well with the lived experience of being a manager. People are generally recruited into ‘management’, rather than ‘leadership’, positions and are expected to complete a multitude of tasks ranging from day-to-day planning and implementation, to longer-term strategic thinking. None of these are done in isolation, and throughout, it is essential to work alongside other people to motivate and inspire them, but also to know when to relinquish the lead and take a back seat.

“Most of us have become so enamoured of ‘leadership’ that ‘management’ has been pushed into the background.

Nobody aspires to being a good manager anymore; everybody wants to be a great leader. But the separation of management from leadership is dangerous. Just as management without leadership encourages an uninspired style, which deadens activities, leadership without management encourages a disconnected style, which promotes hubris. And we all know the destructive power of hubris in organisations.” (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2003)

Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst the distinction between management and leadership may have been useful in drawing attention to the strategic and motivational qualities required during periods of change, the bipolar representation of managers and leaders as completely different people can be misleading and potentially harmful in practice. Indeed, if it is believed that leaders and managers are different people, one might well conclude that (a) it is necessary to change the management team regularly as circumstances change, and (b) it is not possible for managers to become leaders (and vice versa). Such a view is severely limiting and greatly underestimates the abilities of people in management and leadership roles. This is not to say, however, that all people will be equally adept at all aspects of leadership and management, nor that there is one profile that is appropriate in all situations. The author’s conclusion is that these two educational fields are different in terms of context and style, but each field does carry almost the same responsibility

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