

Evolving Conceptualization of Leadership and Its Implication for Vocational Technical Education

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Abstract

Leadership has been conceptualized variedly in the literature with various implications for those who lead and the people and organizations they lead. In this paper a thorough appraisal of the literature on the evolving conceptualization of leadership and its specific implication for leadership in vocational technical education is presented. A case is made in the paper that though vocational technical education is part of general education, it differs in many significant ways, hence the need to assess its leadership uniquely from that of general education.

This study is particularly important because of the significance of vocational technical education as a conduit in the provision of practical know-how, first, for the good of the society, and second, for addressing the mass educated unemployment prevalent in many economies these days. Vocational technical education, no doubt, will fall short of meeting its mandate without effective leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership development, Effective leadership, Transformational leaders, Transactional leaders, Vocational technical education

1. Introduction

The concept of leadership carries many different connotations and is often viewed as synonymous with other equally complex concepts such as power, authority, management, administration, and supervision. Northouse (2001) defined leadership as a process whereby one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Placing this definition in the context of school management, it is possible to see its application to the heads of vocational technical institutions. This individual would influence the activities of organized groups, such as the staff, student, policy makers and employers, towards the goals of success and economic viability, all within the unique atmosphere of academia. Many leadership theorists have found that ineffective leadership in any organization seems to be the major cause of diminishing the organization's productivity (Yukl, 1994). Effective leadership therefore becomes an asset if any organization including the school wants to achieve productivity. This paper reviews various models of leadership with emphasis on the conceptual and empirical development of transformational leadership and its implication to school management and vocational technical education.

2. Models of Leadership

Researchers have examined leadership from a variety of perspectives leading to several systems of classification. In 2001, Lavazzoli reviewed the evolution of leadership and reported that initial investigations of leadership in the early 1930's considered leaders as individuals endowed with certain personality traits, which constituted their abilities to lead and therefore focused on finding universal traits that are common to all leaders. This led to the trait model, which tries to isolate leaders from followers. By this model, traits such as intelligence, self-confidence, ability to communicate, birth order, socio-economic status, and, child rearing and how they impact on a person's ability to influence others were investigated.

The focus of research changed from traits that fully differentiated leaders from followers to finding what key behaviour patterns resulted in leadership between 1950 and 1960 (Mendez-Morse, 1992). The behaviour theory of leadership then evolved. Leadership behaviours were categorized along two common dimensions: initiating structures (tasks-oriented behaviours) and initiating consideration (people-oriented behaviours). Initiating structures included activities such as

planning, organizing, and defining the tasks and work of people; how work gets done in an organization; and was also concerned with product. Initiating consideration addresses the recognition of the social and emotional needs of individuals, work satisfaction, and self-esteem, as a way of influencing people's performance. Thus, it is concern for people. With the introduction of this model, effective leadership behaviour was found to be associated with high performance whether a person exhibit task-oriented behaviour or people-oriented behaviour, leading to the contention that effective leaders are able to address both the task and human aspect of the organization. However, researchers could not isolate which behaviour pattern consistently resulted in effective leadership (Lavazzoli, 2001).

Further attempt to identify distinctive characteristics of the setting to which the leader's success could be attributed led to the situational model of leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). This model proposed that, at different levels of the organization, or in different kinds of organizational cultures, different types of leadership are required. It also proposed that leadership is determined not so much by the characters of the individuals, but by the requirements of social situation within which the leadership occurs. This implies that both traits and behaviour must fit the context or situation. This theory again could not identify what leadership abilities could be more effective in specific situations.

The inadequacies of the situational theory gave way to further research efforts focusing on the interactions of personality traits, behaviour, leaders' characteristics, leaders' behaviours, key situations, and group facilitations, that allowed people to lead organizations to excellence. From this research came Fielder's contingency leadership model. This model attempts to specify the conditions under which certain leadership traits and behaviours will lead to certain performances (Northouse, 2001). It also proposed that effectiveness depends on the leader's personality and the situation. Following the contingency theory is the Path-Goal theory, which focused on the interaction of leadership behaviours with situation and characteristics in determining the leaders' effectiveness rather than personality traits. The Path-Goal theory identifies four leadership behaviours and two situational variables. The four leadership behaviours were: directive, achievement-oriented, supportive, and participative; the two situational variables were: subordinates' personal characteristics and environmental demands such as the organization's rules and procedures. These, the theory proposed, most strongly contribute to leaders' effectiveness.

Despite the fact that there was no consensus on what traits, behaviour or situation effect success in a leader, there was agreement to the fact that leadership is critical to any organisation. This led to investigations on the personal characteristics and individual behaviours of effective leaders and how these contribute to their role in making organisations effective. This line of investigation differentiated between leaders and managers and introduced a new leadership characteristic- vision- and explored its importance. Research revealed that effective leaders must have a vision, facilitate the development of a shared vision, and value the human resources of their organizations. In addition to these insights on leadership, a new classification emerged, transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leaders were described as those who give something in exchange for what they want; they direct energy, tend to live within the organisational culture, and hold followers in a dependent position. On the other hand, transformational leaders synergies the energies of their followers, alter organisational culture, and put themselves and their followers in an independent relationship (Moss & Liang 1990). Over the years, the phenomenon of leadership has continued to attract interest of academics and practitioners in many fields, including school management. Transformational leadership has since been described as behaviour that transcends the need for rewards; but that which appeals to the followers' higher order needs, inspiring them to act in the best interest of the organisation rather than their own self-interest (Bass, 1997). It is seen as the key in the continued success of organisations because of its promotion of team cohesion, organisational commitment, and higher levels of job satisfaction (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999).

3. Transformational and Transactional Leadership Paradigm

Bass (1985) reported that Burns introduced the concept of transformational leadership in 1978. He described it as a process whereby leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. He stated that, transformational leaders are individuals who appeal to higher ideals and moral values, such as, justice and equality; and that transformational leadership can be found at various levels of an organization. He distinguished transformational leaders from transactional leaders, describing transactional leaders as those who motivated by appealing to followers' self-interest. Based on Burns' definition of transformational leadership, Bass asserted, transformational leaders motivate followers by appealing to strong emotions regardless of the ultimate effects on the followers; and they do not necessarily attend to positive moral values. Other researchers have described transformational leadership as going beyond individual needs, focusing on a common purpose, addressing intrinsic rewards and higher psychological needs, such as, self actualisation, and, developing commitment with and in the followers (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1990; Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992). With the introduction of transformational leadership theory into the literature, greater attention has now been given to understanding how certain leaders are better equipped to elevate

follower's motivation and performance to the higher levels of accomplishment (Bass, 1985).

Prior to the introduction of transformational leadership theory into the literature, transactional leadership had been described as an exchange, based on power relations; which requires bargaining, trading, and, compromising, among leaders and followers; and, as the core component of effective leadership behaviour in organizations (Northouse, 2001). Exhibiting transactional leadership meant that followers agreed, accepted, or, complied, with the leader in exchange for praise, rewards, and, resources; or, for the avoidance of disciplinary action. Rewards and recognition were provided contingent on followers successfully carrying out their roles and assignments (Podsakoff, Todor, & Skov, 1982). Transactional contingent reward leadership usually clarifies expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved. The clarification of goals and objectives, and the provision of recognition once goals are achieved, should result in individuals and groups achieving expected levels of performance (Bass, 1985). In its more corrective form, labelled active management by exception, the leader specifies the standards for compliance, as well as what constitutes ineffective performance; and may punish followers for not complying with those standards. This style of leadership implies that, followers are closely monitored for errors, mistakes, deviances, and then corrective action taken as quickly as possible when these occur. On the contrary, in the passive form, the leader either waits for problems to arise before taking action; or, takes no action at all. In the case of the latter, the leader would be labelled passive avoidant, or laissez-faire. Such passive leaders avoid specifying agreements, clarifying expectations, and providing goals and standards to be achieved by followers.

Some researchers such as Bycio, Hackett, and Allen (1995) have argued that transactional contingent reward style leadership is positively related to followers' commitment, satisfaction, and performance. Goodwin, Wofford, and Whittington (1998) reported a positive relationship between transactional contingent reward leadership and organizational behaviour; distinguishing transactional leadership that was more recognition- based from that based on setting basic expectations and goals. Goodwin et al showed that the recognition-based transactional leadership, which they labelled implicit contracting, was more positively related to Transactional leadership therefore seeks to motivate followers by appealing to their own self-interest. Its principles are to motivate by the exchange process. In the political environment, politicians may exchange favours or government jobs for votes while in business, business owners may exchange wages for the labour of their employees. Transactional behaviour focuses on the accomplishment of tasks and good worker relationships in exchange for desirable rewards. Transactional leadership may encourage leaders to adapt their styles and behaviours to meet the perceived expectations of the followers

3.1 Components of Transformational and Transactional Leadership

The components of transformational and transactional leadership have been identified in various ways. Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X), Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999); Antonakis (2001); and Avolio and Bass, (2002) identified four distinct components of transformational leadership. The four components, also called the pillars of transformational leadership is what Avolio et al. referred to as a higher order construct of transformational leadership. They include:

1. Idealized influence. Leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. Their followers identify with their aspirations, and want to emulate them. Among the things the leader does to earn credit with followers is to consider followers' needs over the leaders own needs. The leader shares risks with followers and is consistent in conduct with underlying ethics, principles, and values.
2. Inspirational motivation. Leaders behave in ways that motivate those around them by providing meaning and challenges for engaging in shared goals and undertakings to their followers. Individual and team spirit is aroused. Enthusiasm and optimism are displayed. The leader encourages followers to envision attractive future states, which they can ultimately envision for themselves.
3. Intellectual stimulation. Leaders stimulate their followers' effort to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. There is no ridicule or public criticism of individual members' mistakes. New ideas and creative solutions to problems are solicited from followers, who are always included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions to them.
4. Individualized consideration. Leaders pay attention to each individual's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor. Followers are developed to successively higher levels of potential. New learning opportunities are created along with a supportive climate in which to grow. Individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognised.

Shamir, House and Arthur (1993) conceived these same components but included charisma. They called it charismatic-transformational leadership. Shamir, House, and Arthur suggested that charismatic-transformational leaders

transform the self- concepts of their followers. They build personal and social identification among followers with the mission and goals of the leader and the organization. The followers' feelings of involvement, cohesiveness, commitment, potency, and performance are enhanced. Other authors have suggested that transformational leadership is an important antecedent to building the collective confidence or potency required of groups to be successful when dealing with difficult challenges. Guzzo, Yost, Campbell, and Shea (1993) stated that group potency is a function of group design (e.g., task interdependence), process (e.g., leadership), and context (e.g., operating conditions). When a group's task is designed to facilitate highly interdependent work among group members, and the leadership of the group provide encouragement for members to work together, group members' collective confidence is expected to be higher, they argued. Zaccaro, Blair, Peterson, and Zazanis (1995) have also suggested that, leadership actions that persuade and develop subordinate competency beliefs might be as critical a determinant of collective efficacy as the group's prior performance experiences. Transformational leadership, as defined above, develops followers to believe in themselves and their mission.

Some researchers have added to Burns' original theory of transactional leadership. Today, transactional leadership is thought of by many to encompass four types of behavioural components. These components are identified as:

1. Contingent Reward – The leader who wants to influence the behaviour of followers clarifies the work that needs to be accomplished by the followers. The leader then uses rewards or incentives to achieve results when expectations are met.
2. Passive Management by Exception - To influence behaviour, the leader uses correction or punishment as a response to unacceptable performance or deviation from the accepted standards. The leader gets involved only when there is a problem
3. Active Management by Exception - To influence behaviour, the leader actively monitors the work performed and uses corrective methods to ensure the work is completed to meet accepted standards.
4. Laissez-Faire Leadership–The leader is indifferent to whatever happens in the organization. He normally adopts "hands-off" approach toward the workers and their performance. These leaders ignore the needs of others, do not respond to problems or do not monitor performance. They avoid accepting their responsibilities, are absent when needed, fail to follow up requests for assistance, and resist expressing their views on important issues. They are ineffective because they do not offer any leadership at all.

It has also been found that most leaders have a profile of the full range of leadership characteristics that include both transformational and transactional factors (Bass & Sleidlmeier, 1998). However, those who are called transformational do more of the transformational than transactional. In their defining moments, they are transforming. Those labelled as transactional leaders display much more transactional leadership behaviour. They are more likely to have attitudes, beliefs, and, values more consistent with transactional leadership but they still may be likely to be transformational at some times, Bass and Sleidlmeier suggested. Some researchers, such as, Waldman, Bass, and Yammarino, (1990) have also argued that both transformational and transactional leadership behaviour are needed to accomplish the broad task of leadership. These researchers believe that transformational leadership augment the effectiveness of transactional leadership, it does not replaces it. Leaders who exhibited greater amount of transformational behaviour therefore have a more positive impact on such criteria as team performance, followers' perception of leader effectiveness and satisfaction with leaders performance (Bass, 1990; Waldman, Bass & Yammarino, 1990).

4. Features of Transformational Leadership

Research has shown that transformational leadership impact positively on organizational effectiveness. Sashkin and Rosenbach (1998) stated that transformational leaders provide the basis for creating organizations that are extremely effective in terms of any criterion of performance or profit. Peters and Waterman (1982) reported that effective transformational leadership was considered the single most important factor separating the top 100 mid-size American companies from their contemporaries. Northouse (2001) also stated that effective transformational leadership results in performances that exceed organizational expectations because managers pull together the components of transformational leadership to achieve what they termed additive effect of transformational leadership.

Another feature of transformational leadership is that, it revolves around people. Yukl (1994) defines transformational leadership as a process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organisational members and building commitment for the organization's mission, objectives, and strategies. This definition of transformational leadership focuses on the leader's effect on followers, thus, suggesting that it revolves around people. For a positive effect on followers, (Bass & Avolio, 1992) suggested that transformational leaders must pay attention to and be sensitive to the needs of their subordinates as well as their own needs. Transformational leaders cultivate the acceptance of the group's mission by their followers through intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. They seek to unite

subordinates as they work toward a common purpose by fostering collaboration and strengthening the team members. They make followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and, respect toward the leader; and, do more than they originally expected to do. The transformational leader motivates subordinates by making them more aware of the importance or values of task outcomes; and by helping subordinates think beyond their own self-interest, but about the work, the team, and, the organisation. The leader also activates higher order needs such as creative expression and self-actualisation in their subordinates. Transformational leaders envision the future and then rally others to buy and support this vision as if it belongs to each of the members of the organisation personally. Transformational leaders also share values, mutual trust, respect, and unity in diversity (Fairholm, 1991). Transformational leaders also inspire others to excel and give everybody in the organisation individual consideration. They stimulate people to think in new ways.

In transformational leadership, leaders employ the style that best suits the situation they face. Lewis (1996) suggested that for transformational leaders, style is not as important as results. Therefore, they do not necessarily apply the effective method that worked in solving a problem in one situation or one time frame to another situation or time frame. They do not approach every situation in the same way. When something does not work for the first time they re-assess the situation and look for a better approach. Above all, transformational leaders encourage subordinate by recognising contributions and celebrating accomplishments (Kousze & Posner, 1990). In doing all these, transformational leaders are able to transform the people they work with, by empowering them and enabling them to transform their intentions into reality for the effectiveness of the organizations (Lewis, 1996). Transformational leadership therefore cannot exist unless there is another person (follower) that has been influenced to act by the leader. The perception and imagination of the followers on a leader's actions impact on their performance is therefore very important.

Some researchers, Epitropaki (1999) and Barling, Weber and Kelloway (1996) related that transformational leadership is not a quality that only a few privileged individuals possess. Anyone can learn to become more transformational. This is another feature of transformational leadership. Training in transformational leadership behaviour has been shown to increase leaders' success and effectiveness. Barling, Weber and Kelloway conducted a field experiment with 20 managers trained in transformational leadership and compared them to a control group. They found that managers who underwent the training performed better when it came to motivating and empowering followers to participate in finding solutions to problems or new ways of doing things positive (intellectual stimulation) as compared to the control group. This they attributed to the training. They also found that, followers' commitments and financial performance also increased as a result of their managers' training to be more transformational in their leadership style.

5. Transformational Leadership and School Management

The idea of transformational leadership as developed by Burns in 1978 and later extended by Bass in 1985 and others did not focus on schools. Rather, many of the studies were based on political leaders, army officers, or business executives. Over the years, the uncertainty of change, combined with the challenges and conflicts it brings to the school, has called for the need to restructure the school to create an environment with the essential purpose of teaching and learning; and, empowering the entire school community to become energised, focused, and, successful in the society (Sagor, 1992).

Views on school leadership are therefore changing to reflect the situation where school leadership concentrates on growth of both students and teachers, as well as function as the servants of collective vision, problem solvers, resource finders, mediators and cheerleaders (Poplin, 1992). Although there have been few studies on leadership in schools, and the definition of transformational leadership is still vague, evidence show there are similarities in transformational leadership whether it is in a school setting or a business environment (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Leithwood (1992) found in his studies that transformational leaders in school pursue three fundamental goals:

Helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, and a professional school culture. This means staff members often talk, observe, critique, and plan together. Norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement encourage them to teach each other how to teach better. Transformational leaders involve staff in collaborative goal setting, reduce teacher isolation, use bureaucratic mechanisms to support cultural changes, share leadership with others by delegating power, and actively communicate the school's norms and beliefs.

Fostering teacher development. That teachers' motivation for development is enhanced when they internalise goals for professional growth. This process is facilitated when they are strongly committed to a school mission. When leaders give staff a role in solving non-routine school improvement problems, they should make sure goals are explicit and ambitious but not unrealistic.

3. Helping teachers solve problems more effectively. Transformational leadership is valued because it stimulates teachers to engage in new activities and put forth that "extra effort." Transformational leaders use practices primarily to

help staff members work smarter, not harder. These leaders shared a genuine belief that their staff members as a group could develop better solutions than the principal could alone.

As the context in which education is practised change, educators and policymakers continue to assert the need for strong principal leadership in school. The effects of such leadership are uniformly positive. They influence teacher collaboration and change in attitudes toward school improvement and success (Leithwood, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1990).

6. Distinguishing between General Education and Vocational Technical Education

Vocational technical education is used to describe the educational processes that are mainly designed to lead participants to acquire practical skills and knowledge necessary for employment in a particular trade, group of occupations or trades. Generally, vocational technical education can be distinguished from general education in terms of purpose, curriculum, pedagogy, and delivery system. Finch and Crunkilton (1993) stated that, the purpose of general education could be viewed from two broad philosophical perspectives: (a) Preparation of individuals for life, and (b) preparation of the individual for earning a living. The two purposes are not mutually exclusive; rather, they intersect. Education for preparing the individual for life lays the foundation for life-long learning, while education for earning a living is specialised; and enables the individual to acquire specific skills and competencies that will enable him or her gain employment and earn income. Vocational technical education, which lead participants to acquire practical skills and knowledge necessary for employment in a particular trade, group of occupations, or trades therefore, satisfy the second purpose of general education.

The constant transformation of occupations and the rapid technological advances challenge vocational technical subjects and curricula to prepare the individual for continuing changes in the world of work. Vocational technical education curricula therefore, go beyond teaching knowledge as general education curricula do. In addition to teaching knowledge and skills in the special areas, they offer knowledge in career development, leadership and organizational skills, and modify individuals' attitude as well; in other to make the individuals who participate sustainable, in the rapidly changing environment of the world of work. Vocational technical curricula are design to reflect effective learning. They normally specify objectives to be achieved, content to be taught, sequencing of topic, and how often and in what manner learners are to be assessed.

The nature of vocational technical curriculum requires pedagogy that is different from what is used in general education. Vocational technical education teaches participants to develop expertise in their area of specialisation. And as stated by Stevenson (1994), as learners in a specialist area learn the appropriate skills and knowledge for that area, they progress through different stages of novice, advance beginners, competent, proficient, and experts. In a typical vocational technical instructional environment, it is possible for one to encounter learners who are at different levels of skill development.

Vocational technical educators therefore, employ the use of pedagogical strategies that modifies curriculum objectives to the realities as dictated by the participants learning needs and time limitations. Therefore, while general education requires the teacher to have strong knowledge on the subject, vocational technical teachers require more than that. They need subject matter knowledge in addition to specialist knowledge and skills on working the teaching learning materials (tools), equipment, and materials- and pedagogical knowledge, which refer to the teaching learning knowledge that teachers develop while teaching. It is these three types of knowledge together that makes the vocational technical educator proficient in ensuring that effective learning actually takes place in participants.

Vocational technical education can also be differentiated from general education in terms of how they are delivered. General education is generally delivered through classroom instruction. On the other hand, vocational technical education requires both classroom instruction and practical work. In other to be effective, classroom activities are supplemented by structured learning experiences in the workplace. Vocational technical education planners therefore use a variety of systems to achieve this: classroom instruction with substantial hands on activities in the institution, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, internship, and work-study programme. Clearly, vocational technical educational leaders need unique leadership skills to succeed in providing practical and relevant work-based skills to students.

7. Transformation Leadership and Vocational Technical Education

As leadership and leadership development became an important and long-standing concern in many disciplines and fields of practice, vocational and technical education was not an exception (Wonacott, 1998). The concern about leadership and leadership development in vocational technical education arise from the fact that there are series of changes that are rapidly and significantly altering the educational and economic environment in which vocational technical education exists. The nature of work is changing; technology keeps changing rapidly; there is increased public demand on vocational technical education system to produce individuals with more opportunities for present and future prospects in multiple industries, and offer the individuals with enough skills for personal development and success in the

changing society (Moss & Liang, 1990). Based on findings of studies done in other fields that leadership is critical to organizations in unsuitable situations where changes in the environment makes the usual ways of conducting the affairs of the organization unsuitable and irrelevant, Moss and Jensrud (1994) suggested that vocational technical education must begin its own transformation if it is to remain a viable form of education in the new environment. They argued that, as the context in which it is practised changes, vocational technical education needs leaders who can chart new directions and influence others to believe and follow--Thus, the need for the transformational leadership.

The National Centre for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) in America thought of leadership in vocational technical education as both a process and as a property. Leadership as a process was defined as perceiving when change is needed and influencing a group by non-coercive means such as persuasion and example, in efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement. As a property, members of a group ascribe leadership to an individual when they perceive the individual to possess certain qualities or characteristics. Normally members of a group will allow an individual to lead and influence them when the individual's behaviour matches the groups' ideas about what good leaders should do in that context. Since leadership as a property lies in the eyes of the beholder, only those who are perceived that way are leaders and the specific properties of leadership depend upon the quality of the nature of the behaviour accepted by a particular group as evidence of leadership. Given this conceptual background, the perception of potential followers, subordinates or peers is to be considered as of primary importance when assessing the effectiveness of leadership in vocational technical education (Moses, Finch, Lambrecht, & Jensrud, 1994).

The NCRVE conceptualisation also took a perspective on the role of leadership. Based on NCRVE's philosophical view of leadership and a review of literature, a system of classifying leadership effectiveness was designed. Three major classifications were designed based on three types of outcomes or consequences proposed by Yukl in 1989. The major divisions were: the extent to which the leader's behaviour is perceived to improve the quality of the group process, the extent to which the leader's behaviour is perceived to have had a personal impact on followers (teacher), and the extent to which the leader's behaviour is perceived to have helped the group or institution perform its tasks successfully and attain its goals. Each of the three divisions was further divided into categories of criteria, and then samples of specific criteria were created to illustrate each category.

Using these criteria, Moss, Finch and Johansen (1990) conducted a study to determine the kind of criteria vocational technical instructors actually use in judging the leadership effectiveness on their administrators. The result indicated that out of one hundred and fifty-four behavioural events, the most frequently used criteria by instructors to measure leadership effectiveness are those that satisfy the instructors' job-related needs. Four other criteria mostly used were all group process outcomes. Therefore, the investigators concluded that, leadership by consultation, persuasion, and inspiration are what is needed to achieve maximum group productivity. A leader's role therefore, must be to bring into focus the organization's vision, mission, and values to help adapt the organization to the environment; and to secure the commitment of individuals in the organization and foster their growth by tapping their intrinsic motivation. This perspective was further translated into specific criteria that could be used to evaluate a leader's performance. The NCRVE came out with six leadership tasks that describe the envisioned role of leaders in vocational technical education. The six tasks were:

1. Inspiring a vision and establish standards that help the organization achieve its next stage of development.
2. Fostering unity, collaboration, and ownership, and recognising individual and team contributions
3. Exercising power effectively and empowering others to act
4. Exerting influence outside of the organization in order to set the right context for the organization.
5. Establishing an environment conducive to learning.
6. Satisfying the job-related needs of members of the organization as individuals

Based on these six tasks, Leadership Effectiveness Index (LEI) has been developed to measure the extent to which leaders in vocational technical education achieve their goals. The perspective of the NCRVE conceptualisation on leadership behaviour was that, as vocational technical education leaders attempt to achieve the six tasks of leadership, their specific behaviours within the organization are determined by their own attributes, interacting with their perception of the group members attributes, the groups culture, the particular task at hand, and the general context in which the organization is operating. It states that within the constraint of a given situation, attributes, acting as predispositions, dis-inhibitors, and abilities, predispose individuals to behave in consistent ways. These attributes will remain constant across situations to influence behaviour in a wide range of tasks, groups, and contexts. This is consistent with assertions by Kuhert and Lewis (1997) that attributes determine the tendency of an individual to use transformational or transactional leadership behaviours.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Although there is no agreement of what leadership really is among researchers, leadership theorists have identified a number of different traits, styles, behaviours, characteristics, and ingredients associated with leadership. Leadership has also been identified as a critical solution for most of the problems in organizations including the school. This is because, it is leaders in organizations who are able to formulate goals and communicate them to others in the organizations. They are able to influence others to believe in the goals and commit to achieving these goals for the betterment of all. The school as an organization needs leaders who will constantly explore ways of improving outcomes by implementing quality teaching and learning programs in a conducive environment to move the school and its community towards continual renewal.

Vocational technical education as a field of study is currently faced with the challenge of training young people for present and future prospects in multiple industries in the face of all the changes that are rapidly and significantly altering the environment in which it exists. Vocational technical education must respond appropriately to these challenges in order to prepare individuals to be able to take advantage of the opportunities for the kind of workforce needed in today's world of work. In this regard, leadership therefore, becomes an extremely important variable that must be considered in the new vocational education environment. This is because the ability of vocational technical education to adapt constructively to its changing context resides to a large extent on the quality of leadership that is found in the field (Daughtry & Finch, 1997). The vast changes in human expectations and needs, as well as the rapidly changing technology requires efficient and effective leaders. Astute and creative leaders are required at all levels in order to understand the broad scope and magnitude of challenges facing the system. The leaders must be able to inspire a shared vision and establish standards that will help the vocational technical institutions achieve this vision in the face of the realities they face. They must be skilled communicators, they must move easily among people from government, other educational institutions, industry and the community. They must be shareholders in a unifying vision and above all they must be able to facilitate their followers by empowering them.

But as leaders attempt to achieve the task of leadership, their behaviour within the organization is determined by qualities, characteristics, values, and skills called attributes which interact with followers attributes, the particular task at hand, and the general context. Therefore, the need to have leadership development programs that can help create new leaders as well as modify present leaders who will ensure effective delivery of viable vocational and technical education. Leadership training for vocational technical educational leaders must, therefore, attempt to cultivate in individuals some key attributes and ensure that these attributes are accounted for in leadership preparation experience. These are qualities which when present enhance the probability of successful performance of a leader in a wide variety of situations. The possibility of being able to acquire and use these characteristics holds great promise for those participating in and leading vocational educational programs, reform efforts, and the change process.

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