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Leadership, Decision Making and Teams

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Abstract

The following document represents a comparative examination of research publications from three sets of scholars in the areas of leadership, decision making and team dynamics. While each article examines its own set of problems, within the scope of its specified purpose and makes recommendations commensurate with its unique findings, the writer has chosen to examine the content of each research project not only in terms of its individual attributes but as a part of a larger algorithm that explores possible connections, relationships and interdependences between the research topics.

In terms of individual value, each publication was examined for purpose and structure of the research design, to the body of knowledge on the topic, credibility of the researchers, location of the housed publication, and relevance to the writer's primary research interest in complex, large-scale change within an organization.

Three articles are included in this literature review. Each of the articles adhered to the following pre-requisites: relevance to leadership, decision making and team dynamics; and conformity to standards for foundational or primary research and scholarly/peer reviewed articles.

Leadership, Decision Making and Team Dynamics

(A Comparative Examination of Research by Charles H. Schwepker, Marcus Selart,

F.K. Marsh and Their Respective Research Teams)

Introduction

There is an old adage that is frequently quoted as "If you're leading and no one is following, you're just taking a walk." (author unknown). The writer would add to that thought, if there is no purpose to the journey, you walk in vain. Three concepts serve as the focus of this literature review: leadership, decision making and team dynamics. These three concepts seem logically intertwined and the dynamics between the three are the focus of this synthesized literature review. This approach takes nothing away from the purpose, content and learning within each publication, but seeks to explore a broadened perspective from the examination of the relationships between leaders, followers and the dynamics around decision making, particularly in the context of environmental or cultural change.

Each of the topics has a significant place in the list of challenges faced by most organizations and is at the forefront of most business initiatives. Whether it is the designation of relevant leadership competencies and the delicate selection of leaders who possess those competencies, the challenge is present. Whether it is the understanding of the complex nature of teams and the intricate interactions that support or hinder their success, the challenge is evident. Whether it is the examination of the process of decision making, the characteristics of leaders who comfortably make decisions or the pressures and environmental factors that guide the quality and integrity of those decisions, the challenge is significant. Together, these three factors reflect some of the most difficult problems faced by organizations and because none of these problems ever occurs in a vacuum, understanding the dynamics that exist between the issues is critically important.

It is the writer’s hope that the examination of these three research topics and the interrelationships between them will illuminate a pathway for the further exploration of leadership, and the influence of large-scale, complex change within an organization. The three articles included in this literature view examine leadership, decision making and team dynamics.

Article One	Article Two	Article Three
“Transformational Leadership and Its Impact on Sales Force Moral Judgment” by Charles H. Schwepker Jr. and David J. Good. (2010)	“Ethical Decision Making in Organizations: The Role of Leadership Stress” by Marcus Selart and Svein Tvedt Johansen. (2011)	“High Performance Team: Building a Business Program with Part- and Full-time Faculty” by F.K. March.(2010).

All three of the publications meet the requirements for scholarly, peer-reviewed work, by credible authors and are published in a recognized scholarly journal. The researchers carefully documented the pre-research literature review that supported or challenged their research suppositions. Each included significant listings of references and resource documents to support their research pursuit. Each of the documents included in this review focuses on one or more of the prescribed topics: leadership, decision making and team dynamics. Additionally, the writer looked to each article for relevance toward her ultimate research interest in predictive strategies for implementing complex, large-scale change within an organization.

Purpose

Each of the researchers carefully and clearly articulated the intent of their respective research project(s). Each built their research on the reputable grounded theory of leadership models, organizational strategies and decision methodologies. In article one, Schwepker (2010) and team set about to explore the relationship between leaders who exhibited transformational leadership styles and the resulting moral judgment of their followers. (Schwepker& Good, 2010). They followed a line of reasoning that supported the findings of other researchers that transformational leaders were more apt to promote environments that encouraged moral decisions and integrity within the ranks of their teams. This article is particularly valuable to sales organizations (the

primary focus of this article), because so little has been explored in the area of moral judgment and sales professionals. In fact, sales professionals have enjoyed a prominent perception of *creative morality*, particularly in the face of sales opportunity. So, the opportunity to affirm or refute that perception with scholarly evidence and suggest leadership styles that encourage moral judgment in their sales behaviors is worthy of pursuit.

Article two, by Marcus Selart (2011) and team looked at the inclination of leaders toward ethical decision making and the threat to that inclination posed by pressure and job stress. (Selart & Johansen, 2011). There are many things that affect the way a leader looks at a situation and makes a decision to act. Current research indicates that pressure to meet deadlines or to respond to difficult challenges may affect the way managers view and respond to a given situation. In fact, the researchers surmised that increased levels of stress may threaten a leader's inclination toward integrity and ethical decision making. These researchers set about to explore the dimensions of job stress and pressure and their impact on the way leaders approach their decisions and subsequent actions in the context of ethics and integrity. (Selart & Johansen, 2011).

In article three, Marsh (2010) explores followership from the opposite end of the spectrum. This researcher set about to examine team dynamics in the face of organizational change and a mission to simultaneously create and implement a complex change within the organization. (Marsh, 2010). The dimensions introduced in this article provided rich opportunity for exploring interrelationships between leadership, team dynamics in an environment of significant change. It is a rare instance when an organization experiences a single antonymous dynamic. It is more likely that multiple dynamics are occurring concurrently. This article provides a realistic view of the interaction within the team, between the team and the leadership and their response to a dynamically changing environment.

Again, the connecting link to be explored is the influence of leadership, specifically transformational leadership, in that setting. The pictorial reflection of the interrelationships between the topics could be represented as follows:

Figure 1. Interrelationship between leadership, decision making and team dynamics in the face of organizational change.

It is plain to see that any change to one of the elements affects each of the remaining two elements. So it is with organizations. (For example: Changes in team dynamics are likely to affect the leadership and their ability to make decisions.)

References

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