

Post-Pandemic Leadership Approach: Entrepreneurial Leadership

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Abstract

The paper begins by discussing the effects of the pandemic on organizations in general and leadership in particular. Both entrepreneurship and leadership will be briefly discussed in turn. Changes due to crisis or new discovery of things, however small or large, including disruption, are not a new phenomenon in the entrepreneurial world; in fact, entrepreneurs love disruptive innovations; therefore, we will derive and explore entrepreneurial leadership characteristics to understand how they use pandemic disruption (changes) to their advantage and Post-pandemic leadership can emulate to effectively deal with the new , competing demands of their business stakeholders.

Key Words: Post-Pandemic, Leadership, Entrepreneurial, Entrepreneurship.

AMS Classification: 58B12

1 Introduction

The pandemic has brought to light the importance of time, social connection, communication, and emotional well-being (friendliness, joy, pride, and gratitude). The biggest crisis of the 21st century, COVID-19, which occurred at the end of the second decade, forever changed many things around the world, particularly the leadership approach to doing business and effectively leading the organization's members. Pandemics have historically forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew; post-pandemic leadership approaches in organizations are no exception. The way

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leadership operates (creative to unlearn), will have to change to reflect this very different world, the paradigmatic changes in politics, economics, and societies. This paper attempts to reveal why the key characteristics of entrepreneurs who operate in dynamic, changing environments are critical for post-pandemic leaders who need to cope (problem) with their need to excel and explore new horizons. In essence, it seeks to demonstrate a new style of evolving leadership, which offers a break from the past and movement into the future by drawing concepts and connections for analysis from a close business-associated domain 'entrepreneurship' to inspire a new post-pandemic leadership approach - entrepreneurial leadership.

The paper begins by discussing the effects of the pandemic on organizations in general and leadership in particular. Both entrepreneurship and leadership will be briefly discussed in turn. Changes due to crisis or new discovery of things, however small or large, including disruption, are not a new phenomenon in the entrepreneurial world; in fact, entrepreneurs love disruptive innovations; therefore, we will derive and explore entrepreneurial leadership characteristics to understand how they use pandemic disruption (changes) to their advantage and

Post-pandemic leadership can emulate to effectively deal with the new , competing demands of their business stakeholders.

2 Impact of Pandemic on Organizations

Organizations have endured at least a decade's worth of chaos, crisis, technological disruption, and change over the past two years (during and after the pandemic,) and now business stakeholders (shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and governments) demand more say in building a better, viable, sustainable, and just future. On the operational side of organizations, the pandemic disrupted supply chains, nearly halted air travel, eliminated group gathering, transferred workers from their offices to their homes, reorganized and all but eliminated in-person interaction for effective and efficient operations of many businesses, leading to many businesses consolidating, shutting down, or going out of business with the associated health, mental health, and social services crises. Generational change and polarization. Majority of the organization's business model was modified with no choice of its own, as a result of technological, social, and economic challenges, the need to fulfill calls for greater flexibility and equality while maintaining financial performance. All of this

explains why classical leadership is either being challenged or organizations failing to adapt to survive and thrive. The dynamic environment of today's organizations necessitates a type of leadership that is far more creative in nature and effective in dealing with the new, conflicting demands of weary business stakeholders.

2.1 Leadership Literature

Leadership is one of the most complex and multifaceted phenomena to which organizational and psychological research has been applied (King, 1990). While the term "leader" was noted as early as the 1300s and conceptualized even before biblical times, the term leadership has been in existence only since the late 1700s (Stogdill, 1974). Even then, scientific research on the topic did not begin until the twentieth century (Bass, 1981). However, there has been extensive research on the subject since that time.

Burns (1978) remarks that, "Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth." Stogdill (1974) claims that, "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as those who have attempted to define the concept." However, we persist in attempting to answer the fundamental question: What constitutes an effective leader? Is a manager a leader? Zaleznik (1977) has reported that managers and leaders are different. They differ in what they attend to and how they think, work, and interact.

Further, managers perceive life as a steady progression of positive events, resulting in home security and work security. Finally, managers appear to be narrowly engaged in maintaining their identities and self-esteem through others. Leaders have self-confidence growing out of the awareness of who they are and the visions that drive them to achieve (Zaleznik, 1990). With these obvious distinctions between managers and leaders out of the way, what is leadership? Leadership is a process; it comprises more than the leader and the situation. Leadership as a process that includes leaders, followers, environment, context, and culture that achieves a specific goal. Perhaps, in this post-pandemic era of rapid change and environmental complexity, leadership has taken on greater importance than ever before.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Literature

The term "entrepreneurship" was coined in 1902, amidst the English language word "entrepreneur" was borrowed from French in 1762. Entrepreneurship is the process by which an individual or occasionally a group of people creatively identifies a

business opportunity and acquires and deploys the necessary resources required to capitalize on it. Entrepreneurship is an act of being an entrepreneur who by risk and initiative, attempts to make profits. Entrepreneurs take advantage of opportunities to acquire added value. This definition sees entrepreneurship as a behavioral characteristic of an individual in a firm, not as a characteristic of the firm itself. Stevenson, Roberts, and Grousbeck (1989) argued that entrepreneurship is an approach to management. They distinguished between “promoters,” individuals whose strategic direction is driven by the perception of opportunity, and “trustees,” who are driven by the resources they currently control. One could argue that “promoters” are leaders while “trustees” are managers. Over the years, several schools of thought on entrepreneurship have been generated that combine psychological traits with leadership skills. McClelland (1961) believed that entrepreneurial behavior was embedded in an individual’s personality, the result of one’s upbringing, in parallel to the notion of leaders being born vs made. Stewart (1989) documented the “fire in the belly” of an individual who is always “running hot” within the organization. Thus, entrepreneurial behavior appears to be internal, similar to what is often described as characteristic of leaders.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurship and leadership are two areas of research which can be applied to organizational settings. They are well established in themselves but not often studied together; though some studies used the term “entrepreneurial leadership” few truly define the concept (Roomi and Harrison, 2011). Thus, entrepreneurial leadership is the fusion of entrepreneurship and leadership which if applied will enable organizations to take advantage of opportunity in order to gain competitive advantage (Roomi and Harrison, 2011). Cohen (2004) defines entrepreneurial leadership as any leadership that creates climates for entrepreneurial behaviors that organizations need to succeed today. It is the process of creating an entrepreneurial vision and inspiring a team to enact the vision in high velocity and uncertain environments (Bagheri and Pihie, 2009). Frederick, et al. (2007) stated that entrepreneurial leadership is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. Now before delving further into what entrepreneurial leadership is, consider why we need it and how current established classical leadership theories and models are failing to meet the demands of the post-pandemic leadership challenge. The major leadership eras and periods are presented in Table 1 along with examples of particular theories (King, 1990).

Table 1: Evolutionary Stages of Leadership Theory

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| <p>Personality Era <i>Great Man Period</i> (Focus on natural born leaders) Great Man Theory (Bowden, 1927; Carlyle, 1841; Gallon, 1869)</p> <p><i>Trait Period</i> (Focus on identifying traits and characteristics of leaders) Trait Theory (Bingham, 1927)</p> <p>Influence Era <i>Palace Relations Period</i> Five Bases of Power Approach (French, 1956; French and Raven, 1959)</p> <p><i>Persuasion Period</i> Leader Dominance Approach (Schenk, 1928)</p> <p>Behaviour Era (Focus on the actions and skills of leaders) <i>Early Behaviour Period</i> Reinforced Change Theory (Bass, 1960)</p> <p>Ohio State Studies (Fleishman, Harris, and Burt, 1955) Michigan State Studies (Likert, 1961)</p> <p><i>Late Behaviour Period</i> Managerial Grid Model (Blake and Mouton, 1964) Four-Factor Theory (Bowers and Seashore, 1966) Action Theory of Leadership (Argyris, 1976) Theory X and Y (McGregor, 1960, 1966)</p> <p><i>Operant Period</i> (Sims, 1977; Ashour and Johns, 1983)</p> | <p>Transactional Era (Focus on leadership as a cost-benefit exchange) <i>Exchange Period</i> Vertical Dyad Linkage/Leader Member Exchange Theory (Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975) Reciprocal Influence Approach (Greene, 1975) Emergent Leadership (Hollander, 1958)</p> <p><i>Role Development Period</i> Social Exchange Theory (Hollander, 1979; Jacobs, 1970) Role Making Model (Grean and Cashman, 1973)</p> <p>Anti-Leadership Era <i>Ambiguity Period</i> Attribution Approach (Pfeffer, 1977)</p> <p><i>Substitute Period</i> Leadership Substitute Theory (Kerr and Jermier, 1978)</p> <p>Culture Era McKinsey 7-S Framework (Pascale and Athos 1981) Theory Z (Ouch and Jaeger 1978) In Search of Excellence Approach (Peters and Watermain, 1982) Schein (1985) Self-Leadership (Manz and Sims, 1987)</p> |
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| <p>Situation Era (Focus on leaders adapting their style taking into account the environment) Environment Period Environment Approach (Hook, 1943) Open-Systems Model (Katz and Kahn, 1978) Social Status Period Role Attainment Theory (Stogdill, 1959) Leader Role Theory (Homans, 1959) Sociotechnical Period Sociotechnical Systems (Trist and Bamforth, 1951)</p> <p>Contingency Era Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1964) Path-Goal Theory (Evans, 1970; House, 1971) Situational Theory (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969; 1977) Multiple Linkage Model (Yukl, 1971; 1919) Normative Theory (Vroom and Yetton, 1973; Vroom and Jago, 1988)</p> | <p>Transformational Era (Focus on an inspirational style pushing followers to higher and higher levels of achievement) Charisma Period Charismatic Theory (House, 1977) Transforming Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978) Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Period SFP Leader Theory (Field, 1989; Eden, 1984) Performance Beyond Expectations Approach (Bass, 1985)</p> <p>Shared Leadership (Focus on distribution of leadership) Stages and life cycles in shared leadership settings (Carson et al., 2007; Pearce and Conger, 2002). Value-Based Leadership (House and Aditya, 1997)</p> <p>Collaborative Leadership (Focus on leadership skills across functional and organizational boundaries) Collaborative Leadership (Hank, 2009)</p> <p>Servant Leadership (Focus on the leadership serving its members) The Servant as Leader (Greenleaf, 2007)</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Leadership (Era) ? (Focus on the creative and paradigm pioneering skills of leaders)</p> |
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The vast literature on leadership literature, at its most general level, focuses on the ability of leaders to influence a group of followers and emphasizes the relationships between three key factors: the leader, the followers, and the landscape. While leadership theories abound, we will focus on three cross-cultural, universal perspectives of leadership that have emerged in recent years and are relevant to the post-pandemic timeline - leadership capable

of sustaining innovation and adaptation in high-velocity and uncertain environments.

Entrepreneurial Leadership consists of characteristics that are related to entrepreneurship and leadership, such as vision innovation, teamwork, planning, risk-taking, effective management of resources and proactiveness. Timmons and Spinelli (1994). Stuart and Abetti (1987) stated that, Entrepreneurial Leadership refers to the ability for an entrepreneur to have high tolerance for ambiguity, persistence, perseverance, and demonstrating high degree of creativity and builds entrepreneurial culture and organization.

2.4 Entrepreneurial Leadership and Leadership Theories.

The transformational leadership perspective evolved in response to limitations found in traditional transactional leadership theories, such as the path–goal theory (House, 1971) and operant conditioning (Luthans and Kreitner, 1975; Podsakoff et al., 1982). In these traditional theories, the leader’s role is instrumental rather than inspirational, is based on the principle of exchange, and functions to provide the necessary incentives or disincentives to obtain desired task outcomes. In contrast, the transformational leadership perspective focuses on how leaders evoke superordinate performance from followers through a transcendence of self-interested behavior by appealing to higher needs for self-actualization, deeply held personal values, and implicit motivations of followers (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). As Burns (1978, p. 20) observes, the act of leadership “binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose.”

Entrepreneurial leadership has much in common with transformational leadership in that the leader evokes superordinate performance by appeals to the higher needs of followers. However, the entrepreneurial leader’s ability to evoke such performance is founded in the context of the firm’s need to adapt to emerging environmental contingencies. Thus, the basic challenge is to create a willingness in followers to abandon current conventional but career secure activities for creative, entrepreneurial action. Therefore conventional approaches and strategies used by traditional leadership are simply not equipped for continuous fine tuning of strategies, careful but rapid creative experimentation, and capturing creative opportunities that emerge from experiments, as the pandemic and post-pandemic created an unpredictable environment for organizations around the world, not to mention supply chain challenges and technological complexities. Recent studies also recognize that entrepreneurship is beneficial for managing established businesses, not just for radical breakthroughs or the early stages of an organization like a startup.

2.5 Post-Pandemic Leadership Approach

Drawing on these ideas of being entrepreneurially flexible for maximum results during this challenging time, following suggestions entrepreneurial leaders work through; creativity, curiosity, paradigm pioneering, and unlearning. We agree the entrepreneurial approach won't get it right every time, but still they must act, the formula is this - act, seek, and accept feedback, and self-correct. It is far preferable to wait and see. The ingredients that composed entrepreneurial leadership include; the willingness to take calculated risks, formulation of an effective venture team and the creative skill to marshal the needed resources; the fundamental skill of building a strong business plan and the vision to recognize opportunities where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion and to acquire and practice the key characteristics - creativity, curiosity, paradigm pioneering and unlearning, the entrepreneurial leader must perform two basic functions: First is "understanding phenomenon of perception," or observational enactment to practice paradigm pioneering, and learning to unlearn. The second is "questioning the status quo," to practice curiosity and creativity.

2.5.1 Phenomenon of Perception

As nature records various stages of reality that's happened (past) or happening (present) or about to happen (future), humans add their beliefs to those natural phenomena and what history tells us is someone's perception. Perception does not occur when reality begins, it emerges only when people engage with reality - past, present and future. In the Preface to Phenomenology of Perception Merleau-Ponty asserts that 'phenomenology is accessible only through a phenomenological method' (Merleau-Ponty 2002). Here to understand the phenomenon of perception, breaking the phenomenon into easy three steps. The first step will be referred to as Recording, followed by Observation and Perception.

1. Recording. In the recording step of reality happening, no human interaction happens. Reality needs to be recorded as it is. Metaphorically speaking - record like a video camera does. This step also can be referred to as "see it with camera eye and record" as it is for yourself.

2. Observation. In the observation step - you tend to observe what you want to observe. With so much reality happening (as recorded in the previous step), you only observe what is interesting to you or something associated with you or something beneficial to you.

3. Perception. In the final step - along with your observation you add your beliefs and that's your perspective, right or wrong on reality. With so much reality happening (as recorded in the first step), you select the observation, you interpret things to your liking to achieve one's goal. This process of the above three steps moving sequentially helps in understanding Phenomenon of perception. Will use an example to explain the preceding process. Recording is like a dash camera in a car - it records as it is that's happening in front of the car's camera. Observation is an insurance company observing the recording of what they wanted to observe or looking for to file the insurance case assuming there is an accident car met with. Now third layer perception is added to the car dash camera recording by the attorney of the client and sure attorneys will use their perception of evidence to win their client's case. No one is wrong here in step 2 or step 3 but each adding their observation and perception to their will – but to keep one's apart from the herd perception, one should be able to distinguish those three steps - recording, observation and perception that is understand the phenomenon of perception with clarity and apply the right filter to the right layer this helps one to understand how paradigms (set of beliefs) are constructed upon. Delayering the paradigm helps to deconstruct (unlearn) and find opportunities (paradigm pioneering) to improve, enhance, and add value to the existing substances - product, and services to the business.

2.6 Questioning the Status Quo.

The status quo is defined as preserving the existing state of affairs. It is about doing what is comfortable and thinking inside the existing box. Often we hear that “we have always done it this way.” Other times we are waiting for a better way to come along. To question the status quo, using creativity and curiosity ask “what if” and “why not” to explore various unexplored opportunities. The first step in dismantling the current paradigm is to challenge the status quo, and using the “phenomenon of perception” process will help identify any gaps and provide an opportunity for intervention.

2.7 Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed Teachings.

Those poor, suffering, loyal inhabitants of the Sierra cannot even imagine what a great contribution they made to the forging of our revolutionary ideology (Freire, 2012, p. 170). Freire's work deals with a very obvious truth: just as the oppressor, in order to oppress, needs a theory of oppressive action, so the oppressed, in order to become free, also need a theory of action (Freire, 2012). The word "action" in this context is the most compelling one because it highlights how people act and think creatively to survive. When circumstances are not in our favor, humans are compelled to use their creativity to find short- or long-term

solutions with the resources they have or lack. With post-pandemic conditions making things unpredictable and raising concerns about the company's very existence and survival, now is a great time for creativity and to reflect deeply on processes, tools, values and methods in order to come up with innovative short- or long-term approaches to organizational success.

3 Conclusion

The political, social, and economic unrest following the pandemic, the business environment is still not stable. On a regular basis, if not daily, leaders in an organization encounter new, significant challenges related to technology, supply chain, remote workers, and productivity. Today's businesses need a culture and environment where employees are continuously pursuing opportunities to learn, innovate and thrive, and the first step in fostering these conditions is entrepreneurial leadership. Small, medium, and big, and mature conservative businesses too in the post-pandemic era require entrepreneurial leadership in order to perform the continuous renewal that has become essential to survival. Businesses that act entrepreneurially will be able to offer a more rewarding work environment to their employees, allowing them to recruit, train, and keep a talented and motivated human resource pool, gain the first-mover advantage in new products or services, adapt capabilities to meet the emerging competition, and successfully translate future options into a platform for ongoing value creation and the company's transformation. Thus, in our post-pandemic leadership approach, entrepreneurial leadership is recommended as vaccination for organizations to become immune to these post- pandemic effects and emerge as successful organizations.

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