International Leadership Journal

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International Leadership Journal

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Volume 15, Issue 1, Winter 2023

From the Editor

February 2023

Welcome to the 44th issue of the *International Leadership Journal,* an online, peer-reviewed journal. This issue contains four articles.

In the first article, McClellan offers an alternative model to the traditional caudillo style of leadership in Latin America. The caudillo style, which carries a negative perceptual bias, has prompted many practitioners and theorists to seek other models, however, they are generally limited in that they are based on externally imposed ideals that are often culture-specific, meaning a model developed on Latin American ideals and culture is needed. McClellan's model is based on a thematic analysis of speeches by Catholic Bishop Leonidas Proaño, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee from Ecuador.

Hankle argues in his article that it is exceptionally important to understand the meaning-making element of human psychology to lead well. Knowing that people are meaning-making creatures allows leaders to understand the need for inspirational aspects of the leadership process. He demonstrates that leaders are necessary agents for helping their constituents derive meaning and purpose that supports an organization's mission and finds that leaders who can embody that mission and create an environment in which this message is continually communicated are able to inspire and affect their teams.

After briefly reviewing some relevant literature and key considerations, Kerns presents a well-doing leader management cycle. This systematic and dynamic approach will help guide leaders in more fully understanding and managing well-doing at work. He notes that specific challenges associated with this process include developing additional tools for assessing leader well-doing as well as developing evidence-based leader well-doing effectiveness profiles.

Finally, Ghazzawi contributed to the limited research on ineffective or failed leadership. In his study, he used semi-structured interviews with 43 managers to assess their perceptions of failed leadership behaviors, the antecedents of the behaviors, and the consequences based on interactions with their leaders. His results help describe the common flows of failed leadership, identify the common antecedents of leadership failure, and suggest that failed leaders behave in ways reflective of their personalities or due to other situational factors that have consequences for followers and organizations.

Please spread the word about *ILJ* to interested academics and practitioners and remember to visit http://internationalleadershipjournal.com. Also, feel free to propose a topic and be a guest editor of a special issue by contacting me at jcsantora1@gmail.com.

Joseph C. Santora, EdD
Editor

ARTICLES

Modeling the Leadership of Leonidas Proaño:
An Alternative Model to the Traditional Caudillo Style of
Leadership in Latin America[*]

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Leadership in Latin America has typically been conceptualized in the leadership literature as following a caudillo style that carries a negative perceptual bias. Consequently, many leadership theorists and practitioners have sought alternative leadership models developed outside of the region. While many of these models have merit, they are limited in that they are based on externally imposed ideals that are often prescriptive, idealistic, and culture-specific. Instead, alternative models of leadership from within the Latin American cultural context are needed. This article offers a model for Latin American leadership based on the work of Catholic Bishop Leonidas Proaño, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee from Ecuador. Bishop Proaño's speeches are examined using thematic analysis, and a model of leadership that suggests alternative ways of being, thinking, and acting to those of the traditional caudillo style of leadership is offered.

Keywords: Latin American leadership, leadership in Ecuador, leadership theory, Leonidas Proano, Nobel Peace Prize

Leadership in Latin America has traditionally been conceptualized as an extension of the caudillo style typical of early political leaders within the region (Chevalier, 1992; Hamill, 1992). This approach to leadership is generally characterized by charisma, paternalism, machismo, populism, corruption, limited planning, an emphasis on positional authority, and autocratic decision-making (Behrens, 2010; Bown & McClellan, 2017; Castaño et al., 2015; Dorfman et al., 1997; Grant, 2021; Martz, 1983; McIntosh & Irving, 2010; Osland et al., 2007; Stephens & Greer, 1995). Given the modern emphasis within the arena of leadership studies on more participative, democratic, empowering, and person-centered approaches to leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; George, 2008; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011), Latin American leadership is often viewed as needing to change and become more reflective of these approaches (House et al., 2004;

Romero, 2004). There is evidence suggesting that this change is occurring (House et al., 2004; Romero, 2004), but with an emphasis on the use of models developed outside of the Latin American context (Holzinger et al., 2006; Kri et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, since most of the models, philosophies, and theories of leadership that drive change were developed largely within the U.S. cultural context, they suffer from the challenges that come with cultural imperialism (Blunt & Merrick, 1997). This is especially true given that many of them are culturally derived, idealistic, prescriptive, and even mythical (Bennis, 1999; McChrystal et al., 2018; McClellan, 2022a). While many of these models have been found to be valid outside of the Western cultural context, they nonetheless carry the weight of colonialism and do not represent authentic expressions of leadership from within the Latin American context (Cabezas Guerra et al., 2021; McClellan, 2022a). Consequently, Latin American leaders should exercise caution in their acceptance of external leadership models (Behrens, 2010). Fortunately, some scholars have explored alternative approaches to leadership from within the Latin American context (Bown & McClellan, 2017; Hidalgo, 2012; Jalalzai, 2016; McClellan, 2022b). Nonetheless, these do not represent the full breadth of possible styles and approaches within Latin America's diverse contexts. Consequently, there is a need for more research exploring alternative models of leadership within the Latin American cultural context. This article seeks to expand on this literature by examining the leadership philosophy and approach of Leonidas Proaño, the Ecuadorian Nobel Peace Prize nominee and Catholic bishop.

Leadership in Latin America

As mentioned previously, the literature on leadership in Latin America has generally suggested that it follows what is known as the caudillo style of leadership (Hamill, 1992). This style is rooted in the Spanish colonial leadership tradition, but also reflects some elements of traditional Indigenous leadership (McClellan, 2016, 2017). Hamill (1992) defined a *caudillo* as a Spanish dictator. Chevalier (1992) suggested that these powerful men, through strength and personality, dominated their societies using demonstrated characteristics of leadership rooted in their

history. These include "the prestige of physical force, of the proud horseman, of the best shot, the semipatriarchal authority of the landed proprietor," as well as "the prowess of the military man who encounters no obstacles," and "the ostentation of the new man, who is not quite sure of himself; and, finally, the power of the businessman who succeeds in controlling the principal means of production" (Chevalier, 1992, 41). Dealy (1992b) suggested that these men acted as a head or leader who directed and guided others based on a motive of public power. This culturally embedded approach to leadership gave rise to some dominant trends in leadership that still shape the cultural context today. These include an emphasis on charisma, positional authority, autocratic decision-making, paternalism, populism, machismo, corruption, and a limited emphasis on planning and efficiency orientation.

While charisma appears to be a universally valued element of leadership (House et al., 2004), it plays a unique role in a unique way within Latin America. Rooted in the Spanish conceptual frames of grandeur, generosity, and dignity (Dealy, 1992a), Latin American charisma is emotionally engaging and authority based. It strives to create a perception that one is friendly, flirtatious, visionary, and powerful. Consequently, charisma is a central element of relationship formation between leaders and followers (Martz, 1983) and is closely tied to the concepts of paternalism and machismo.

Caudillo-style leadership in Latin America tends to be characterized by personalism and paternalism (Behrens, 2010; Dorfman et al., 1997; Martz, 1983; McIntosh & Irving, 2010; Osland et al., 2007). *Personalism* is leadership that is grounded in an intense loyalty to the leader as a person as opposed to the leader's ideas or vision. This type of relationship tends to emphasize follower loyalty and often promotes dependency (Martz, 1983). Furthermore, personalism is closely associated with paternalism. *Paternalism* suggests a parent–child type of relationship in which the leader demonstrates an interest in caring for followers but is free to do so in whatever ways he or she sees fit. As Behrens (2010) described it,

[Latin American] paternalism is defined as a hierarchy within a group, by means of which advancement and protection of subordinates are expected in exchange for loyalty, usually to a father figure, or patriarch, who makes

decisions on behalf of others for their good even if this may be against their wishes. (21)

Research supporting the existence of this cultural script in Latin America suggests that it involves a combination of relational orientation or supportiveness combined with firmness and directiveness (Lankau & Chung, 2009; Wendt et al., 2009).

As a result of these two notions, Latin American leader–follower relations are characterized by *simpatía*. As Triandis et al. (1984) explained:

an individual who is *simpático* shows certain levels of conformity and an ability to share in other's feelings, . . . behaves with dignity and respect toward others, and seems to strive for harmony in interpersonal relations. This latter characteristic implies a general avoidance of interpersonal conflict and a tendency for positive behaviors to be emphasized in positive situations and negative behaviors to be deemphasized in negative situations. (1363)

Populism is a form of leadership that emerged within the Latin American context that is rooted in personalistic and charismatic traditions. A populist leader is one who can identify and express the needs of the poor and underprivileged in society and then convince them that he or she embodies their will (de la Torre, 2007). In so doing, the populist leader strives to convince the masses that he is the only means of achieving that will (Grant, 2021). Generally, the populist's rhetoric is characterized by strong criticism of elitist and privileged elements of society and emotional appeals to those who are less privileged or marginalized to participate more actively in supporting the leader's efforts (de la Torre, 2007). However, this appeal is not rooted in the actual participation of the people in the democratic process, as populist leaders tend to exhibit more authoritarian leadership. Instead, it is more about inviting them to actively oppose those threatening the leader's activities through strikes, uprisings, and other mass public activities.

Machismo is often seen as a reinforcer of the caudillo style of leadership, especially as it relates to relationships between men and women (Coleman, 2006). It purports an ideal of manhood rooted in women's subordination and domination, particularly through sexual conquest (Handelsman, 2000; McIntosh, 2011; Morrison & Conaway, 2015). Furthermore, it encourages "authoritative family relationships, fearlessness in society, and physical violence when dishonored"

(McClellan, 2016, 26). Machismo represents an ongoing, significant threat to inclusive leadership and egalitarian mixed-gender relationships in the workplace and beyond.

Dealy (1992a), in his discussion of the values that undergird Latin American culture, argues that deception represents an ideal of the Latin American "public man" (112). The ability to cunningly take advantage of others or make gains through dishonest means is celebrated as a form of prowess. When this is combined with the cultural tendency toward in-group collectivism that involves networks of mutual support and a history of poor oversight, heavy bureaucracy, and bribery, the result is high levels of corruption across the region (Transparency International, 2021).

Finally, leaders in Latin America tend to use processes that involve more autocratic decision-making and less planning and team-oriented approaches to leadership. Based on a review of Latin American leadership literature, Romero (2004) suggested that a caudillo-, or patrón-, style leader traditionally, is autocratic; rarely delegates or uses teams; uses a formal, hierarchical communication style; avoids conflict; and is relationship-oriented, assertive, and aggressive. Furthermore, researchers suggest that Latin American leaders tend to use less participative organizational processes for achieving success (Dorfman et al., 1997; Stephens & Greer, 1995). Planning processes also tend to be less elaborate, which likely dates to the leadership of the conquistadors and early colonizers whose "approach to leadership was characterized by limited planning, authoritative decision-making, limited concern for royal authority, and distribution of wealth and power among friends and family" (McClellan, 2018, 3). Nonetheless, it appears to continue to represent a modern aspect of Latin American leadership (McIntosh, 2011).

Alternative Models and Perspectives

The caudillo style appears to represent the dominant narrative on leadership within the region. It also carries a negative connotation, which tends to cause leadership in the region to be viewed negatively and contributes to the trend of leaders looking outside for more effective models of leadership. However, this dominant negative bias and narrative masks the positive aspects of Latin American leadership and

the existence of alternative models of leadership within the region. For example, one example of successful, alternative leadership in the region can be found in the story of Ricardo Semler in Brazil (Semler, 1993).

Semler (1993) inherited the family business, Semco, and initially ran it in a way that was consistent with his father's more traditional, caudillo approach. However, after experiencing some health problems, he determined to fundamentally alter the business. He reorganized it as a highly democratic workplace in which decisions were made collectively; hierarchical structures, privileges, and symbols were eliminated; self-organizing teams became the dominant structure; people established their own salaries; and eventually, the head of the organization (Semler) was removed completely. Semco became and remains a highly successful business and popular employer in Brazil. Semler later moved into a government position, where he implemented similar changes.

While Semler's unique approach to leadership has not been formally researched, some formal research has taken place that examines alternative approaches to leadership. Romero (2004) suggested that one factor that might contribute to a change in the dominant approach to leadership in Latin America was the emergence of women as leaders. Research seems to support this notion. In their review of the literature on female leaders in Latin America, Bown and McClellan (2017) suggested that the motives, goals, behaviors, and practices of female leaders demonstrated some differences and some similarities to the caudillo style. Whereas the motives of traditional leaders seemed to emphasize power and status, female leaders' motives seemed to revolve more around concern for the well-being of others. Their goals focused more on follower growth, relationship development, and organizational goal achievement than power acquisition and maintenance and paternalistic care for followers' interests and needs. Finally, their behaviors, while still demonstrating paternalistic tendencies, focused more on encouraging open communication, nonabrasive problem-solving, delegation and organization, use of teams and coaching, and application of consultative and persuasive styles.

Bown and McClellan (2017) further compared this female approach to leadership to that of Indigenous women in the Ecuadorian Andes. They suggested that these Indigenous women demonstrated a unique approach to leadership that was motivated by encouragement and support from their spouses and other community members, collective relationships and community, a sense of being called to make a difference, and a desire to achieve organizational objectives for the benefit of the community and honor and remember predecessors and past leaders. Their goals, consequently, focused more on group harmony; social improvement; helping people solve problems; and building egalitarian, empowering social relationships while demonstrating their ability as women to be leaders. In terms of behaviors, they tended to focus on inclusive trust building, motivation through conversation, the use of *truque* and *prestamanos* (exchange of goods and labor), leading by example, developing ownership, mentoring and coaching, celebrating cultural rituals, and collaboration with family and the community to address difficulties.

The GLOBE study (House et al., 2004) also revealed some alternative approaches to leadership, suggesting significant changes in implicit leadership ideas regarding what people want from leadership while also suggesting some differences already exist in business. For example, leadership values appear to be moving away from the caudillo-style emphasis on autocratic, face-saving, self-centered, bureaucratic leadership. Furthermore, the research suggested an increased preference for performance-oriented, self-sacrificing, collaborative, visionary, administratively competent, and participative leadership. As the GLOBE study enters its next iteration, it will be interesting to see how these trends have continued or changed since the original study.

While these studies suggest that alternative approaches to leadership exist within Latin America, Bordas (2007, 2013, 2016) took a different approach to her examination of leadership within Latino communities. While she found many similar elements of leadership to those exhibited by caudillo-style leaders, she suggested that these need not necessarily be expressed in negative ways. For example, she found in the personalism of Latino leadership an emphasis on "the belief that every single person has value regardless of status or material wealth

and should be treated in a personal and courteous manner" (Bordas, 2013, 54) Consequently, Bordas (2013) suggested that "relating to everyone in this way strengthens relationships" and recognized "that everyone has something to contribute"; the result is that "personalismo fosters an inclusive and shared leadership process" (54). As a result, she suggested that the characteristics of the caudillo-style leadership culture do not necessarily require that a leader engages in "negative" caudillo-style leadership. Instead, she argued, Latino culture supports a way of leading that is more inclusive, relational, resilient, and transformational. Thus, she implied that Latin American cultural values can shape leadership behavior in both negative and positive ways, based on how the leader applies these values to their efforts. Table 1 provides a summary of the cultural characteristics she articulated and their impact on leadership.

Table 1: Bordas's (2013) Characteristics of Latino Leadership and Their Impact on Leadership Behavior

Characteristic	Impact on Behavior
Personalismo	Greater concern for authenticity and trust building, individual relationship development, and increased participative leadership
Consciencia	Increased self-awareness and sense of purpose related to serving others
Destino	Belief in the call of destiny to make a difference for others
La Cultura	Leadership guided by the values of family, an easy-going nature, generosity, honesty, hard work, and service
De Colores	A greater emphasis on inclusiveness and diversity
Juntos	Collective community-based action that does not privilege the leader
Adelante	An emphasis on global vision and the spirit of immigration and unity
Si Se Puede	An emphasis on social activism and change through resilient coalition-based leadership
Gozar la Vida	Leadership characterized by passion, caring concern, joy, and celebration
Fe y Esperanza	Leadership rooted in spirituality, hope, and character, which gives a leader courage, humility, and an ability to forgive and heal

While Bordas's (2013) model suggests a more positive view of Latino leadership, it is worth noting that it is largely based on an idealized view on the practices of

many Latino activist leaders within the United States. However, her positive take on these cultural characteristics does suggest the likelihood that traditional examinations of Latin American leadership have largely been examined through a U.S.-centric negative lens, with an emphasis on the flaws in political leadership within the region. Consequently, there is a need for more appreciative examinations of alternative approaches to leadership within the Latin American context. This is the emphasis of the current study: to examine the leadership philosophy and practice of a leader who inspired many other leaders within Ecuador, Nobel Peace Prize nominee Leonidas Proaño.

Leonidas Proaño

Leonidas Proaño (1910–1988) was born in San Antonio, near Ibarra, Ecuador. His parents were devoted Catholics but relatively poor financially. Thus, Proaño knew what it was like to suffer hunger and privation firsthand while growing up in a faith-based environment. At a young age, he recalled watching his parents interact respectfully with the Indigenous members of their community. This and his religious upbringing led him to study at a seminary near Ibarra. After completing his education, he made the decision to become a priest (Bellini, 2009; Bermeo, 1989).

His first assignment was as an elementary school chaplain and seminary educator (Bellini, 2009; Bermeo, 1989). While there, he was influenced by the work of Jose Cardijn (1882–1967), a Belgian priest—later a Cardinal—who established the Young Christian Workers movement. This movement was based on a social change philosophy rooted in Cardijn's see–judge–act model (JOC Internationale, 1965). This model advocated for young people to engage with reality and other people within that reality in a deeply empathic way that allows them to identify and understand issues that did not align with Christian social principles, examine what God's will would require in terms of changes, and act to bring about these changes (Sands, 2018). This model of social change would greatly influence Proaño's approach to leadership (Tobar, 1989), as did the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Friere (1921–1997) and his 1968 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Friere et al., 2018).

In 1954, Proaño was appointed the Bishop of Riobamba. As a result, he immediately put into practice the see–judge–act model to learn about the lives of the largely Indigenous population he served (the term *Indigenous* is the preferred term of the people whose ancestors preceded the Hispanic colonizers in Ecuador). His years in Riobamba were dedicated to working with the Indigenous people to expand education, develop leaders within their communities, organize for change, redistribute land, and organize communities based on Indigenous communitarian principles, as well as other social change efforts. This brought him into conflict with both the privileged elites, who tried to have him removed as bishop, and the government; he was often accused of being a communist and even jailed. His efforts also led to his leadership in the liberation theology movement, his papal appointment as president of the Department of Indigenous Ministry, and his nomination for the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize (Bellini, 2009; Bermeo, 1989).

Though he initially rejected the nomination as he did not desire the recognition, he ultimately accepted it at the insistence of a group of Indigenous leaders who insisted that the nomination was not for him personally, but rather for them and their movement for change. His life's efforts contributed in significant ways to the establishment of multiple Indigenous organizations that later became some of the strongest throughout Latin America. Throughout his life, Proaño advocated for and engaged in an approach to leadership that represented a syncretic blend of his experiences, educational background, and interaction with the Indigenous people (Bellini, 2009; Bermeo, 1989).

Research Method

To create a leadership model based on the philosophy and approach of Bishop Proaño, the author used thematic analysis of hundreds of speeches given by Proaño between 1985 and 1987 (Bellini, 2009) grounded in qualitative examination. *Thematic analysis* is an approach that begins with familiarizing oneself with the data, proceeds through the development and review of codes and themes, and summarizes these in a written format (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This coding and theme development process was based on McClellan's (McClellan,

2021a, 2021b, 2022a) conceptualization of leadership as a momentary phenomenon in which leaders participate in a process of social influence and to which they bring their way of being, thinking, and acting. Consequently, Proaño's speeches were examined based on what he had to say about how individuals who influence others and lead change should embody their way of being, his philosophy regarding leadership (way of thinking), and his actual actions or recommended actions for leading (way of acting). Thus, each speech was read and examined for content that related to these three areas. Relevant content was then coded and thematically organized using the thematic analysis process.

Results

Way of Being

McClellan (2021b) explained that "a leader's way of being is made up of the underlying elements of the individual's identity that are critical in relation to leadership because they ground and direct the leader's thoughts and actions" (74). A person's way of being is rooted in his or her identity, worldview, personality, and characteristics. However, it is more malleable and situational. Thus, while rooted in these deeper elements of who the leader is, it is momentarily reflected in the individual's shifting "mindset, motives, mood, attitude, and values (McClellan, 2021b, 74). Proaño's speeches provide a very clear conceptualization of his thinking regarding the way of being of those who would be influential and lead change. Perhaps the most dominant theme is that of being a loving individual who strives to serve others and make a difference in society. Consistent with this theme, he declared that one should "love others sincerely in such a way that it leads to service, that it causes one to think about others and dedicate one's whole self and all one has to serving others" (Bellini, 2009, 46). In doing so, one should not seek one's "own satisfaction but rather the satisfaction and joy of others" (Bellini, 2009, 50). Developing a loving and service-oriented heart was important and could only be achieved through empathy derived from "contact with the community, with the people" (Bellini, 2009, 253). Thus, he firmly stated, "we must convert ourselves into servants, as Christ said, I did not come to be served, but to

serve others, we must make ourselves servants of others in capacity and acts of service" (Bellini, 2009, 177).

A second dominant theme was that of being a faithful follower of Christ and the gospel. Thus, he asserted, that for individuals to "gain the confidence of their neighbors and fellowmen," they would need to "live a life that bears witness that they keep the commandments in all circumstances" (Bellini, 2009, 38). For him, faith meant accepting "Jesus Christ and his saving mission" (Bellini, 2009, 206). Acceptance, was not enough, however, as individuals needed to be "true Christians" (Bellini, 2009, 380). As he stated, "the true Christian is the one who loves God and his fellow being as himself" (Bellini, 2009, 410). For Proaño, this meant carrying "Christ with us in our own lives" and striving to be like him (Bellini, 2009, 380). He wrote:

> We need to be kind, meek, as Christ was; we need to be valiant as Christ was in the face of evil, to eradicate it from among men, we need to be, with him, workers of our Father in Heaven's will. (Bellini, 2009, 380)

While his Catholic background represents an element of colonialism, its influence on Latin American culture is a reality of the syncretic Latin American cultural experience.

Proaño was a founding father and staunch advocate of liberation theology, which flowed through his speeches and writings (Bellini, 2009). Consequently, he believed that sin was not just an individual act, but rather that it represented anything that ran counter to God's will. He believed that society institutionalized sin through injustice and systems that perpetuated injustice, tyranny, and poverty. Therefore, part of the role of Christians in eradicating evil was to transform society. As Proaño explained, individuals of faith needed to "have a heart dedicated to great causes like the gospel, love for others, and the transformation of society in such a way that there is less misery, hunger, poverty, and more justice and unity" (Bellini, 2009, 41).

As a Catholic bishop, it should not be surprising that Proaño saw a need for leaders to demonstrate religious faith. However, he was not blind to the flaws of religious devotion or the fact that the Catholic Church in Ecuador contributed to

repression. While he advocated for conversion of the Indigenous peoples of Ecuador and actively and proudly contributed to it, he also encouraged respect for their beliefs and a syncretic blending of traditions that honored those beliefs.

Rooted in love and faith, Proaño advocated for leaders who were visionary and courageous change agents. He believed that leaders needed to be "valiant fighters" (Bellini, 2009, 139) who "live with audacity, with daring, with a spirit of adventure" (Bellini, 2009, 119) and focused on bringing about change. He wrote that "Christ came to earth with a rebel spirit to bring about change to return human beings to the right channel, the river of life, of truth, justice, and fraternity, of peace and true liberty" (Bellini, 2009, 165). He further argued that, like Christ, we need to "bring about change" in a way that results in greater well-being, justice, and community (Bellini, 2009, 138).

Proaño believed that individuals of influence should be positive and joyful. He advocated for leaders who exhibited "joy, optimism, and hope" and spoke frequently to young people about the importance of enthusiasm (Bellini, 2009, 89). He believed that these emotions were rooted in one's loving and serving attitude. As he declared, "joy comes from learning to love others in truth and to not think so much in oneself as in others" (Bellini, 2009, 74). Indeed, it comes from living with faith and love within the context of community. Consider his statement regarding the source of happiness within the Ecuadorian community:

> Where do we, as an Ecuadorian community, get this capacity for happiness, mobility, enthusiasm, to give refuge to whoever comes to us, this capacity for solidarity? We have to discover this, value it, and bring it to light and cultivate it until we identify as Ecuadorians. This is where the mutual help that is so valuable across diverse popular sectors of this Ecuadorian community comes from. This community so full of qualities, with hope amid suffering, optimism amid misery, the crushing, and the poverty. It is a community that has faith, that believes in the future, that can build a new world. (Bellini, 2009, 187)

Also important for individuals who desire to make a difference is their purposeful, proactive, committed, and hopeful way of being that makes them both highly engaged and resilient. Proaño (Bellini, 2009) suggested that one should

> acquire a will that is energetic, warm, and able to fight in life for what matters and develop oneself in such a way that they can fulfill their duty, the little things

in life, and the principles that one needs to abide in one's practice, this is what it means to firmly establish ones feet on the ground. (Bellini, 2009, 68–69)

This will to act comes from asking the questions

Why did God put me here? . . . what will I do with the rest of my life? By asking these questions, you can clarify and discover what it is that you will do and, if you make the right choice, you can give yourself to this commitment with enthusiasm. (Bellini, 2009, 119)

As one commits to one's sense of purpose, according to Proaño, we need to

give the best of who we are and what we have, our intelligence, the knowledge God has given us, the capacity of our hearts to love and serve others to bring the true light of truth[,] the light that is in Christ. (Bellini, 2009, 83)

Finally, Proaño argued that leaders should be people of integrity with a commitment to the values of justice, truth, community, fraternity, and peace. He asserted that we need to be "truthful in every sense of the word" and to "learn to be just" (Bellini, 2009, 282). In doing so, the values and principles "to guide us [are] love for our fellow beings, respect for life, respect for liberty, the justice that we practice and defend, all of the compilation that represents the values of a Christian" (Bellini, 2009, 306). Proaño frequently spoke of the need for people to value fraternity and community. He told people to "aspire to be part of a community that loves the values of love, fraternity, and mutual service" (Bellini, 2009, 82). He especially valued the sense of community he found among the Indigenous peoples of Ecuador, noting that

the feeling of community of the indigenous causes them to not overlook anyone or to marginalize them, this includes the old, widows, children, invalids, they are concerned with everyone and everyone receives what is needed for life, for their needs, it is with this characteristic that they strive to create a truly communitarian organization. (Bellini, 2009, 313)

This was the source of power that was needed to bring about change. He stated:

We need to begin within small circles of influence, with what we call "*communidades eclesiales* de base," Christian communities, to live in fraternity, to multiply the Christian homes in which there is a true community of love as an ideal, as an aspiration. (Bellini, 2009, 282)

Thus, in Proaño's estimation, those who wish to make a difference should value community and its relational compadre fraternity.

Finally, would-be influencers should value peace. After he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, peace became a major theme in Proaño's speeches (Bellini, 2009). He saw it as the fruit of liberation. Thus, he advocated for people to become "authentic workers for peace," builders of authentic peace, youth who construct peace, and people with peace in their hearts (Bellini, 2009, 261). Such peace was dependent "on maintaining our relationship with God, our brothers and sisters, and with nature" (Bellini, 2009, 387). Indeed, he stated that peace

> is the result of a Christian life lived subject to the truth, respect for the life created by God, the practice of justice in all its forms, with respect for human liberty without any domination or trampling upon the dignity and liberty of each person; subjected to love, the living of love, brotherly love, a love that reflects a permanent state of heart and a commitment of the person to serve others, only as a fruit of this is peace born and from this peace comes happiness, true happiness. (Bellini, 2009, 336)

Thus, Proaño's recipe for a strong leadership way of being was rooted in loving kindness that causes one to courageously serve others with a strong sense of purpose, commitment, and engagement that is rooted in values associated with truth, justice, liberty, community, fraternity, and peace. From this comes a positive joyful attitude that motivates and inspires others.

Way of Thinking

Proaño's way of thinking about leadership was rooted in his worldview regarding society and God's will. He believed that Christ came to redeem the world from sin. However, sin was not just an individual act that violated God's will. Proaño was more concerned with the structure of society and how it created systems of injustice and oppression that benefitted the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor, especially the Indigenous poor. He viewed these systems as the embodiment of sin at a societal level because their results were counter to God's will for his children. Consequently, he believed that it was the responsibility of everyone to overcome sin, not only in their own lives, but through focused efforts to change these systems.

According to Proaño, Christians and leaders "should be committed to defending basic human rights, food for the hungry, clothes for the needy, consciousness

raising, education by identifying the root causes of these social ills and addressing them (Bellini, 2009, 40). They "should be leaven for the transformation of society and the world" (Bellini, 2009, 96) with the end goal being that of creating "a world in which values such as life, truth, justice, love, liberty, peace, and consequently, joy, reign" (Bellini, 2009, 411). Thus, he summarized his cause by stating that he desired "a just, humane, fraternal world wherein all can live happily practicing justice, love and liberty" (Bellini, 2009, 193). In practice, this would involve people living "the practice of truth, fighting for justice and for fraternity, living as brothers and sisters, members of the same family, seeking and constructing peace in the social environment" (Bellini, 2009, 89).

As to how leaders should achieve this, Proaño believed that it required the creation of a *pueblo* or community of people dedicated to bringing about change. His primary focus was on advocating for and educating the Indigenous people. He wanted for

> all of the indigenous peoples in Ecuador to grow to become a *pueblo* with their own organization, their organizations. With their own leaders, . . . their own indigenous education, . . . with respect to their own culture. This would include a commitment to their own values including a love of the land and of their community. It would have a communitarian practice, not focused on serving self or egotistical interests, but rather one that connects them to God, the land, their work, and the community. Economic liberation. (Bellini, 2009, 31–32)

His philosophy of how leaders could bring this about was most clearly articulated in relation to how this was to be achieved. To this end, he spoke frequently to the youth and religious leaders regarding how they could make a difference. He believed the process began with awareness. As he stated, a "calling to the youth is to understand all of this, be aware of the situation, explore deeply the causes and commitments that they believe are just" (Bellini, 2009, 156). Speaking to priests, he declared:

> For a seminarian, a priest, a bishop, for a religious person, for a Christian that wants to be faithful to the people there is an obligation to know this reality, but not just from books, magazines, articles from specialists, but fundamentally from within. Knowing it in Christian terms means incarnating oneself in reality. (Bellini, 2009, 239)

Such awareness was to be achieved by putting oneself inside the experience of others experientially and empathically and represented the beginning of the process of education, which Proaño saw as "two-way learning" in which "we have to come down from our sense of superiority and situate ourselves at the level of those we suppose to educate so as to become their disciples, their students (Bellini, 2009, 96). In this way, we should "seek to help them develop their own voice" (Bellini, 2009, 103). Then, through "authentic liberation education," those we serve "can develop their own vision and knowledge" and take "charge of their own transformation" (Bellini, 2009, 103). Once a vision was developed, the goal was to organize groups of people under their own leadership to develop plans based in their own experience and enact those plans within the context of collaborative communities that practiced nonviolent social change. These groups should then unite with other groups to form larger groups. Proaño summarized this leadership philosophy in a speech regarding youth organizations:

> The youth are called to get close to the community they belong in, to dialogue with groups of poor people, not contenting themselves with arming their own little group of youth, meeting every week, and accomplishing their program. They need to multiply their groups and work with groups of poor people. They should not have groups strewn here and there, striking like snipers. They have to have an organization that directs the action of all, as part of a plan, with objectives, as part of a very large organization. (Bellini, 2009, 302)

He believed that if this process was followed, the impact could radiate throughout Latin America. He declared:

> My dream is that we will create awareness in the towns and across all social levels, awareness of these fundamental human rights, this sense of solidarity; we are going to develop cords that extend into the interior of every country first, then from town to town, from nation to nation all across Latin America; the day will come when Latin America will throw off the yoke under which we are submitted (Bellini, 2009, 145).

Way of Acting

Proaño's philosophy of leadership was not one that he espoused but did not enact. Instead, his philosophy was developed through study, action, and reflection. As mentioned previously, there is evidence that his philosophy was heavily influenced by liberation theology, Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, Cardijn's see–judge–

act model, and his understanding and belief in the importance of community and collaboration to bring about change. Consequently, his way of acting as a leader, based on his own descriptions and those of others, began with awareness and followed a frequently articulated process.

Six days after his appointment as Bishop of the Diocese of Riobamba, he journeyed throughout the region and came to realize the reality, or at least his first perception of the reality of the situation in which the Indigenous people lived (Bellini, 2009, 84). Finding that the people were "passive, initiativeless, and hopeless," he began to put structures in place to liberate and educate, consistent with the Freirean tradition (Bellini, 2009, 85). The first thing he did was get to know the Diocese of Riobamba in the Chimborazo Province. He made a quick visit to all the parishes and came to know many of the Indigenous communities. He discovered, based on his perception, that they lacked leaders and followed as sheep, largely focused on drunken fiestas. In response, he gave the land to the peasants; established radio schools for literacy; established an institute for the formation of peasant leaders, both men and women; and brought in missionaries of the Laurites order (Bellini, 2009, 91–94). It is worth noting that there was a high level of paternalism implied in his early perceptions, which he acknowledged later in life. This approach became one that he outlined later for other leaders to follow. He explained that a person must first

> enter the reality of the other, get close to the people and their reality. Study the reality of the various aspects of their lives. This must be done through the eyes of the other . . . with empathy and from their perspective. (Bellini, 2009, 98)

Then, one must "suffer what they suffer" (Bellini, 2009, 99). Through this process of connecting and trust building, one establishes "friendship and trust" (Bellini, 2009,101). Having done so, "one dialogues with the other to identify their priorities from the perspective of their reality" (Bellini, 2009,100). From this, the leader establishes a shared vision and then "provides support and works with them as equals," not paternalistically (Bellini, 2009,101). Finally, as followers establish their own voice, the leader steps back and "lets them identify the causes they wish to pursue" and remains silent or asks questions (Bellini, 2009, 101). This process

was reiterated and exemplified throughout his life and teachings (Bellini, 2009; Bermeo, 1989; Tobar, 1989).

To engage in this process effectively, leaders needed to develop and practice a set of core competencies and behaviors. These included grounding oneself; relationship building; participating in and facilitating dialogue; reflecting; establishing a vision; speaking effectively; committing to action; organizing on active, peaceful, communitarian principles; and making space for others as leaders.

Grounding Oneself

According to Proaño, young people who wish to have an impact in their society, need to "dream big" and "keep their eyes on the sky and their feet firmly on the ground" (Bellini, 2009, 68). To do this, they first need to "acquire a will that is energetic, warm, and able to fight in life for what matters" (Bellini, 2009, 68). Part of this meant establishing a personal sense of purpose through discernment. As Proaño explained:

> From discernment one can identify what will fill one and what will not. From this one discovers one's vocation, every human being comes to this world to occupy a role, fulfill a mission, and it is necessary that one discover what this is. What is the mission that God has assigned to each one? From this comes self-actualization. (Bellini, 2009, 118)

Having this vocational sense was an important part of dreaming big and keeping one's eyes on the sky. It was achieved as one

> uses one's head by asking what is my life for? Why did God put me here? . . . what will I do with the rest of my life? By asking these questions, you can clarify and discover what it is that you will do and, if you make the right choice, you can give yourself to this commitment with enthusiasm. (Bellini, 2009, 119)

However, this requires really knowing oneself and resisting the imposition of values that would distract one from making changes. He stated:

> We have to begin by seeking to understand our own identity, our cultural values, and discover the devalues and countervalues that have come from strangers to shake ourselves free of them, to liberate ourselves from all of these values that make us more individualistic, isolated, social climbing in the exercise of our work, and return to communitarianism. (Bellini, 2009, 186)

Only after developing such a clear sense of purpose and values was one able to

develop oneself in such a way that they can fulfill their duty, the little things in life, and the principles that one needs to abide in one's practice, this is what it means to firmly establish one's feet on the ground. (Bellini, 2009, 69)

Grounding oneself was not a onetime thing. It required ongoing effort and assessment. Proaño spoke of a group of colleagues that met regularly to assess progress, noting that "we got together one day per month, first, to reflect and revise our activities as priests, to help one another with constructive criticism and to take a few hours to rest in some *prado* in Quito" (Bellini, 2009, 165).

Relationship Building

Proaño argued that to influence others to bring about change, one had to connect with and build relationships with them by getting close to them. He said that "you must get close to them with your eyes, reasoning and intelligence, and your heart" (Bellini, 2009, 69). To do this, one had to enmesh oneself

in the life of the indigenous, know how his family is structured, the relations that exist between husbands and wives, between parents and children, what kind of communication, how men treat indigenous women, how parents treat their children. We need to know from within how they work, what work they do, agriculture and herding. Will they seek work in the cities? What cities? What is work like for migrants? (Bellini, 2009, 240)

This was achieved through dialogue, observation, and deep shared personal experience that built relationships of trust. He believed they needed to get close to, converse with, discover, make friends, and journey together in search of joint solutions. This needed to come from within, with the support, help, and companionship undoubtedly of people who were willing to do this, but not from the outside.

Participating in and Facilitating Dialogue

For Proaño, dialogue was a tool of awareness and relationship building and the essential tool for catalyzing a vision and a strategy for change. Indeed, for him, it was probably a leader's most essential tool. As he explained:

Study reality, dive into reality, analyze this reality with the people, find out the causes that create this reality. Dialogue and conversation will help you discover what you need to do, the concrete objectives for which you fight and work, for which you live. (Bellini, 2009, 376)

He believed that dialogue was the first commitment that people who wanted to bring about change should make and the key to developing a strategy for that change. This came about through the mutual "consciousness raising" that occurred in dialogue (Bellini, 2009, 356). Through it, the leader and the led "become aware of the situation in which they live and that it is not the will of God," they "become aware of their strengths, of the gifts God has given them," and they "awaken in them the aspiration of every child of God" (Bellini, 2009, 356). In addition, dialogue leads to "another kind of consciousness raising with the social classes who, perhaps without realizing it, produce the situation" (Bellini, 2009, 356).

Reflecting

A critically important skill for processing the awareness that comes from dialogue is what Proaño referred to as reflecting. From his perspective, this critical skill involved "comparing reality with the way things ought to be to really become clear about the differences and investigate these by asking why this reality exists until we can discover the root of the problem" (Bellini, 2009, 117). This process involved examining the situational reality and asking

> if the way things are is the way God wills them to be. Then we should ask what do we need to do to change this sad reality? How can we do it? Many answers come from reflecting. One should cultivate this capacity. (Bellini, 2009, 117)

This process, like many of Proaño's processes, is not really an individual process, but more a part of the process of dialogue. Nonetheless, it involves a specific approach to examining the situation in terms of its reality, how it should be, and what can be done to improve it.

Establishing a Vision

As one dialogues and reflects on the outcomes of that dialogue, it is natural for a vision of possibilities to emerge. Proano believed that "in order to make progress and move things forward," people needed "a clear vision of the situation in which one is acting and the means of acting that one will use to bring about change in society" Bellini, 2009, 148). Leaders need to establish a clear vision and plan. He spoke of needing to have objectives and a plan to provide clarity and coordinate action (Bellini, 2009,).

However, these were not to be developed by a leader and imposed on the collective. Instead, they were to emerge from the dialogical and reflective processes as manifestations of the collective will. Through dialogue and "work with the people," leaders gain "more experience and knowledge" of others, themselves, "and of the society they want to create [and] the peace they want to achieve" (Bellini, 2009, 387). Then they can strive to give voice to this collective vision and plan.

Speaking Effectively

Consistent with many models of leadership, Proaño referenced the importance of communication skills for leaders. He believed that the Indigenous people needed to develop both the confidence and the capacity to express their thoughts and will. Consequently, while discussing the progress of the Indigenous movement, he shared an example of an Indigenous man who developed the ability to speak with skill with the president of Ecuador in his own language. Apparently, such demonstrations of leadership influence were fulfilling for Proaño, as he later stated:

> One should be able to stand up before any authority figure and speak his voice, to claim his rights, be able to stand behind a microphone in front of the masses and give a speech with ease. He should be able to declare the steps he is taking and the thoughts that he is thinking with his own mind. This fills me with satisfaction. (Bellini, 2009, 122)

Committing to Action

Those who wish to bring about change or lead others must demonstrate a high sense of self-discipline; they "must build on reflection to seek a commitment to act" (Bellini, 2009, 177). For Proaño, this meant making and keeping commitments. He believed that people needed to "make commitments, commitments to transformational action" because they "cannot change a situation without acting, the commitment to act is indispensable" (Bellini, 2009, 148). He further argued:

> Beautiful words are not enough. . . . Words, by themselves, can change our attitude, our mindset—that is the purpose of a message—but if they just change our attitude and do not go beyond attitude to action, words are useless, empty, and lost. (Bellini, 2009, 177)

In his estimation, an individual who could say "I want to do this and commit his will and character to it will come to do many things" because he has learned to

"manage his will and character" (Bellini, 2009, 113). Such commitments do not need to be huge and drastic; indeed

> these commitments may be gradual, but they must be fulfilled, in order to make progress and move things forward. . . . [This requires] a clear vision of the situation in which one is acting and the means of acting that one will use to bring about change in society. (Bellini, 2009, 148)

Organizing on Active, Peaceful, Communitarian Principles

Proaño believed that once people have dialogued together and developed a commitment to act, they needed to organize themselves to act in a unified way to bring about change. Because of his emphasis on human rights and serving the poor, he generally encouraged organizing to promote justice, human rights, social change, and peace. He declared:

> One of the things that must be done in Ecuador to bring about peace is organizing. The people need to organize themselves, all of the Ecuadorian community should organize itself to stand against any tyranny that wishes to oppress them, to raise their voice and make heard the call for their rights. (Bellini, 2009, 374)

The key to organizing was to establish a clear sense of purpose through the dialogical process. Out of this dialogue would emerge a sense of direction or purpose. As he stated, "to organize, it is important to know for what we are organizing. What are we going to do?" (Bellini, 2009, 375). Once the purpose is clear, the key is to

> begin small, for example, university students organize, form groups, groups that get close to the most poor, that do a work among them, appropriate to their own studies, contributing where they can, contributing and learning to live with justice, because there is no peace without justice. . . . The more these youth work with the people, the more experience and knowledge they will have of them and of themselves and of the society they want to create, the peace they want to achieve. (Bellini, 2009, 387)

These small groups can then collaborate with other groups to bring about change at increasingly larger levels of society. In this way, they can "multiply their groups and work with groups of poor people" (Bellini, 2009, 302). But these groups should not be disjointed and "strewn here and there, striking like snipers. They have to have an organization that directs the action of all, as part of a plan, with objectives, as part of a very large organization" (Bellini, 2009, 302).

These groups, whether large or small, were to be based on the communal philosophy of the indigenous people of Ecuador, that of *minga*. According to Proaño, *minga* "is a work that is performed in community to contribute to the wellbeing of all" (Bellini, 2009, 128), based on the concept of Indigenous organizing or "comunas" (Bellini, 2009, 197). In the post-hacienda era, *comunas* took the place of the hacienda leaders for communally addressing people's needs (Lyons, 2006). They were created for, among other things, "living, savings, and credit" (Bellini, 2009, 197). Through this kind of organizing, Proaño believed that change could occur. He declared:

> How can we change this situation? With organizing and action: we must act, little by little, but untiringly; we are not going to change the whole world, nor is it in our hands to do so, but we can begin here, each one in our own house, with our family, in our neighborhood, our province, our country. (Bellini, 2009, 287)

It is worth noting that the kind of action that Proaño envisioned for bringing about change was nonviolent but not passive. He stated:

> When we speak of nonviolent liberating action we are not speaking of passivism, just crossing our arms, or doing nothing. In this moment one uses arms, but not the kind that kill, but rather the kind that transform, arms of the social kind like the boycott, the strike, the fast . . . means that use the practice of discipline, with the value and practices that exist, they are capable for changing the government, for changing structures. (Bellini, 2009, 251)

This is the kind of organized action Proaño encouraged and that has ultimately been practiced in many of the change movements of the Indigenous people he sought to influence and develop as leaders (Becker, 2008; Paige, 2020).

Making Space for Others as Leaders

All this organizing and effort to bring about change was not just practical. For Proaño, the work of bringing about change was as valuable for what it did for the people who were engaged in the effort as it was for society at large. On organizing for action, he declared:

> Take for example a group of [university] students . . . they meet to reflect, to go towards a common project and in doing so they realize the need to go to the neighborhood, to the people, to investigate their reality[;] there they will find material to inform them, to critique and self-critique, to advance a true

process[.] I consider this not only a valuable duty of students, but also a useful means of development. (Bellini, 2009, 253).

Thus, the growth and development of those involved in the process was essential. Throughout Proaño's speeches, there is an emphasis on the role of those who were striving to bring about change to get out of the way and let people take over the leadership for themselves. Consider the following quotes:

I have spoken of opening doors, but we must do more than that. We must do a work that is profound and long, we must leave in the hands of those [the poor and indigenous] the responsibility and withdraw ourselves imperceptibly. (Bellini, 2009, 356).

Our work, in this moment, is to help them to know, each moment more profoundly, what their cultural identity means in practice, and then to slowly remove ourselves so that they can become leaders of their own church, with their own priests, bishops, believers, seminaries, liturgy, and teleology. (Bellini, 2009, 357)

Yes, in my early efforts, I tried to act as the voice of the poor. Now I can say that they do not need my voice nor that of anyone else, they have developed their own voice, they can speak their own words and their own thoughts. (Bellini, 2009, 382)

We should get close to the indigenous and the indigenous youth with love and respect to understand them better, to love them more, to lend them, if necessary, support in the rescue of their culture and in the economic liberation through their own means, which means for them to fight to realize a model of society that is different from ours, but which may also come to be ours. (Bellini, 2009, 153)

These quotes make it clear that Proaño was not trying to make himself into a leader of others. Rather, he was trying to develop others as leaders to bring about their own change. Proaño believed that his initial actions simply created a foundation for the Indigenous people to first articulate their own priorities and then to plan and organize to achieve their own goals without the need for others to lead them, first locally, and ultimately nationally. This is eventually what they did as the Ecuadorian Indigenous populations ultimately developed some of the strongest Indigenous political groups in Latin America (Paige, 2020).

Consequently, based on his own actions and his teachings, we can summarize the Proaño model of leadership as a process model rooted first in strengthening the leader's way of being and commitment. Second is the pursuit of awareness

through study, engagement, and dialogue. Third is the facilitation and support of the development of priorities and objectives that are important to the followers. Fourth is the organization of followers into groups and communities that support one another in their individual growth efforts and the pursuit of their shared goals. Finally, the model involved the integration of these groups to form larger and more influential organizations.

Conclusion

While leadership in Latin America has traditionally been cast in a negative authoritarian light in the shadow of the region's caudillos, there is evidence that alternative models of leadership exist within the region that represent positive and powerful culturally situated approaches to leadership. If these models can be mined and mapped, they could come to represent more effective, culturally appropriate alternatives to the externally derived models often depended upon that are less well suited to the Latin American cultural context. One such model is that of Bishop Leonidas Proaño. This article has outlined his philosophy and approach to leadership based on a thematic analysis of his speeches.

By examining his ideas regarding a leader's ideal way of being, thinking, and acting, a model of leadership was illuminated that advocates for leaders motivated by loving kindness, which causes them to courageously serve others with a strong sense of purpose, commitment, and engagement. This is based on a foundation of values associated with truth, justice, liberty, community, fraternity, and peace and expressed through a positive joyful attitude that motivates and inspires others.

Regarding a leader's way of thinking and acting, Proaño's model is based on the belief that leadership's purpose is to bring about social change and justice to transform society from systemic misalignment with God's will to Christian peace through a process of influence rooted in his version of Cardijn's see–judge–act model (JOC Internationale, 1965) and Friere et al.'s (2018) pedagogy of the oppressed. His process began with seeking awareness through connecting with and entering the reality of the other, dialoguing to achieve understanding and strategize action, and organizing to bring about change. Doing so required

competencies in grounding oneself; relationship building; participating in and facilitating dialogue; reflecting; establishing a vision; speaking effectively; committing to action; organizing on active, peaceful, communitarian principles; and making space for others as leaders.

This model provides a model of leadership that is significantly different from the traditional caudillo style. It is also more aligned with many "modern" notions of leadership that are suggested in the literature for Latin America. However, it represents an approach to and model of leadership that is derived from the Latin American context and practiced by a widely respected leader, and his followers, whose thinking and practice—though influenced by some thinkers from outside the region—nonetheless demonstrate no evidence of dependence on external leadership theorizing. These are the kinds of models that this author believes are important to identify, understand, and develop for greater dissemination and practice within the Latin American context. Hopefully, this article contributes to that end and encourages more inward-looking research and development of positive leadership models for Latin America.

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Meaning-Making as a Function of Leading[*]

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In this article, the argument is made that it is exceptionally important to understand the meaning-making element of human psychology to lead well. Knowing that people are meaning-making creatures allows leaders to understand the need for inspirational aspects of the leadership process. Knowing that people are more than animals who function based on instinct and conditioning allows leaders to appreciate a leadership approach that draws on the psychology of meaning-making. Since meaning-making is discrepancy-based, leaders who guide their constituents through the meaning-making process, driven by organizational values and statements, can inspire their teams toward a common shared goal. This also keeps the team from experiencing organizational angst.

Keywords: anthropology, existentialism, leadership, meaning, psychology, visioning

Philosophical anthropology is an essential part of our worldview that forms the foundation for justifying how people are treated, what natural rights they may or may not have, how they relate to the world they inhabit, what is wrong with the world, and how it can be corrected. Who we are and our place in the world, as well as other ontological questions, are important facets undergirding everything from religious studies to scientific inquiry (Matthews, 2009; Walsh & Middleton, 1984; Wolters, 1985). This is also true of leadership theory. Each theory must identify the core characteristics of human nature to provide a framework for determining how leaders motivate people, connect them to the organizational vision, and influence them to accomplish necessary goals. Attempts to find common ground in leadership theory are still new, but some research has found that the process of leadership has common themes that imply certain ontological assumptions about the people they lead (Mollazadeh et al., 2018). For example, servant leadership defines *people* as dignified creatures with transcendent values motivated by the belief that their leader cares and supports their well-being. According to this theory, a core characteristic of human nature is the idea that people follow a leader when they feel valued. The servant leader proposes that a core aspect of human nature is the desire to feel

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valued and have their highest needs met. When this occurs, people commit to doing what is necessary to reach organizational goals. When people feel supported and valued, a leader can inspire change (Greenleaf, 1970/2003).

Psychology recognizes that a key facet of being human is to search for and create meaning, particularly when needed to overcome challenging situations (Frankl, 1959/2006; Wexler et al., 2009; Schok et al., 2010; van der Spek et al., 2013). If one understands this is a key characteristic of being human, leaders can tap into this to lead well. Knowing that people are meaning-making creatures and that meaning-making is a shared effort among people is a powerful anthropological characteristic upon which leaders can build. When shared meaning is facilitated by leaders, organizations flourish, and the vision and mission of an organization are actualized (Türkel et al., 2021). This article explores how understanding people as meaning-makers affects leadership efforts.

Philosophical Anthropology and Leadership—What Is a Person?

Philosophical anthropology is the academic term used to describe what it means to be human from a philosophical perspective. Some might argue it is one of the most important and distinct questions that philosophers can ask. Benjamin and Malpas (2017) argued:

> Although philosophical anthropology is constituted around the question of the human, which also means the being of the human, it is not the question alone that makes for the distinctiveness of philosophical anthropology, but rather the primacy that is given to that question. In this respect, philosophical anthropology appears, not just as one branch of philosophy among others, but as actually bringing with it a distinctive conception of philosophy as fundamentally concerned with the human in a way that comes before anything else. Moreover, precisely because philosophical anthropology insists on the primacy of the question of the human, so it also resists the tendency to treat the human in any reductive or eliminative fashion. The question of the human thus remains a distinct question, and the manner in which it is answered remains equally distinct. (317)

This desire to keep from reducing the human being down to some atomistic level is important and affects numerous theories and ideas in different disciplines. Classically, human beings have always been understood as distinctly different from other creatures in the natural world. One can find in the works of Plato, Aristotle, and

Locke, among others, the continued insistence that human beings are unique and different in kind from the rest of the animal world. There are some exceptions (e.g., one can find in Machiavelli [1513/1952] the sense that human beings are animals and Montaigne [1588/1952] seems to elevate animals to the level of humans in some of his writings); however, there is an overwhelming amount of writing from the classical thinkers to the those of the 19th century who found human beings to be a different type of creature. American philosopher and educator Mortimer Adler (2000) emphasized this philosophical idea:

> The traditional view of man which begins with the Greeks and runs right down to the middle of the nineteenth century is the view that man is a rational animal, the only rational animal on earth, and so, essentially distinct in kind from all other animals. This view, by the way, was held in antiquity by thinkers who disagree about many other things. Plato and Aristotle disagree about much, but they agree on this, the Roman Stoics and the Roman Epicureans disagree about many things, but they agree on this. They agree upon man's special character. And the ancients looked upon man as the only thing on earth which was descended from the gods. (53)

This high view of the nature of human beings was important for classical thinkers and shaped how they viewed people in numerous other spheres of living. As previously noted, Machiavelli (1513/1952) believed man to be a sort of beast. Machiavelli seemed to believe men and "brutes" are alike, not because they have reason, but because they lack it. He believed passion primarily controlled behavior as the motivating force behind what people do. Reason and intellect are tools used simply to gain what the passions want. Machiavelli would say that the prince "being compelled knowing to adopt the beast, ought to choose the lion and the fox, because the lion cannot defend himself against snares and the fox cannot defend himself against wolves" (25). For Machiavelli, to lead is to do so in such a way as to gain what the passions want by being both strong and cunning—in short, to draw on the innate animal instincts we share with other animals.

Machiavelli's understanding of people proposed that leaders can do whatever is necessary to protect their organizations, even at the cost of virtue and human rights. Pantelimon and Manu (2010) captured Machiavelli's thoughts when they wrote that "any action, however cruel or unjust, is legitimate if it helps to preserve the safety

and independence of the country. Government depends on force and guile rather than universal standards of truth or goodness" (173) These points demonstrate that a reduced view of human beings causes leaders to lead people like animals.

Contrast Machiavelli's ideas with those of the founders of the United States. The guiding philosophical anthropology of the latter was informed by enlightenment principles that proposed people to have inherent rights because of their inherent dignity. The Declaration of Independence proposed that people, by nature, have certain inalienable rights. These rights are unique to the human person, who is unique among other living creatures. Because of that, no external authority can impose upon these rights. This document was written while people of color were enslaved. These words tugged at the minds of national leaders from the time they were written until the 1860 election of President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's whole leadership focus concerning the Civil War changed after pondering the words of the Declaration of Independence in such a way that new meaning emerged. This caused him to frame the meaning of the American Civil War from one to preserve the Union into a war to abolish slavery (Hatzenbuehler, 2020). People are more than beasts; they are meaning-making creatures, and leaders must lead them through the meaning-making process to be effective.

People as Meaning-Makers

Watch the reaction of someone when a tragedy strikes. Their immediate cognitive mechanisms go into meaning-making mode. A hopeful young college student is killed in a car accident; a person who survives conflict in Iraq returns to the United States and is killed in a bar fight; or the smartest student in the class ends up being turned down for a spot at a prestigious college. These events immediately cause people to attempt to answer the question "why?" Why did that individual who survived the dangers of battle get killed in the safety of his or her own town? Likewise, when two people are put in extreme conditions of abuse, struggle, and torture, one may survive while another succumbs to the horrific treatment of their situation and dies. Research seems to imply that those who can make meaning of the situation fare better than those who cannot (Clark-Taylor, 2022; Yang, 2020).

While it would be impossible to perform experiments to prove the efficacy of meaning and purpose during abuse and torture, Jewish psychiatrist Victor Frankl (1905–1997) was made an unwilling participant in this very type of experience. Frankl was put in Nazi prison camps during World War II, and while there, observed that those who found meaning and purpose during suffering survived and that those who didn't died. In his 1959 book *Man's Search for Meaning,* he stated that the power of finding meaning in life was to find specific meaning, purpose, goals, and a future orientation; this allowed people to endure and survive the horrors they underwent in the Nazi camps. Frankl (1959/2006) wrote:

> What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. Our answer must consist not in talk and meditation, but in the right action and in the right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual. (98)

Frankl's work is seminal for understanding people as meaning-making creatures. One might be able to argue from the research that has emerged from Frankl forward that people are, by nature, meaning-making creatures.

Research today continues to affirm what Frankl experienced in those concentration camps. Work itself becomes a powerful source for meaning-making and deriving purpose (Salamone & Lordan, 2022). Researchers find that when individuals have a sense of meaning in their work and feel that it is purposeful, they thrive. Prilleltensky (2014) noted that it is not just the work that gives meaning to what people do, but the fact that the work is meaningful to a community that recognizes individuals for doing it. When people believe their work positively affects their communities, they have a sense of direction and future focus, and they understand what they do is important for others. The struggle to matter to others gives life meaning and purpose.

Meaning-making is a cognitive process that can be studied from a psychological perspective. Seminal studies in meaning-making have been done by Park (2013),

who proposed a multidimensional model for how meaning is made. Park (2017) proposed that people are motivated to make meaning because of the human need for significance, comprehension, and transcendence. Meaning-making fulfills one's need for agency, control, certainty, identity, social validation, values, and it is frequently deployed as a defense against the anxiety brought about by feelings of mortality. The meaning-making system described above is considered an essential way for people to frame their experiences. Meaning-making seems to occur most frequently when people experience some form of distress that creates a discrepancy between what they believe and what they experience in the world. According to Park (2013):

> The Meaning Making Model is discrepancy based, that is, it proposes that people's perception of discrepancies between their appraised meaning of a particular situation and their global meaning (i.e., what they believe and desire) creates distress, which in turn gives rise to efforts to reduce the discrepancy and resultant distress (40).

This demonstrates that meaning-making typically occurs when people's sense of how the world should work is challenged. This is often the case when tragedy strikes or, minimally, when someone is faced with a problem they did not expect. It may be the loss of a job, the death of a spouse, or some other factor that challenges one's worldview. It is inherent in human nature to make sense of the world and find meaning in it. This alleviates the cognitive dissonance one feels when what someone believes or expects does not happen. This powerful source of motivation is something leadership needs to harness to lead well. If people are meaning-making creatures, how can leaders lead with this in mind?

Leadership and Meaning-Making

While defining leadership is not simple, a satisfactory understanding might be that *leaders* are those who use influence to motivate a group of people to achieve a final goal (Northouse, 2010). This is a good general definition, but it does not provide a broader understanding of important leadership factors. Any tyrant who frightens people into giving them whatever he or she wants might be said to be

leading. According to this definition, tyranny is leading, though one would like to believe leadership has a more inspirational and virtue-laden element to it.

If leadership is about motivating people—who are meaning-making creatures—leaders take on the responsibility to motivate people by providing them with a sense of meaning and purpose. By participating in the life of an organization, its members can derive a greater sense of meaning and purpose (Katsaros, 2022). This meaning and purpose must also be driven by organizational values and virtues, connecting the person's individual values to those of the greater organization. When organizational values and individual values align, a more cohesive sense of belonging and identity emerges.

Organizations should derive their meaning and purpose from two important statements: their vision and mission statements. A *vision statement* is meant to convey a future aspiration and what the organization hopes to become. A *mission statement* focuses on the present and describes how an organization lives out its vision. The first is the ethos of the organization; it answers the question of why the organization exists. The second tells people how the organization plans to actualize that vision in the day-to-day work of its members. Vision statements are a key part of several leadership theories; in particular, transformational and charismatic leadership theories propose that vision statements are essential for creating organizational change (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; House, 1977). Studies have demonstrated that a solid vision statement positively affects organizations across diverse and different industries, fields, and subjects (Gulati et al., 2016; Kirkpatrick, 2009). It is important that leaders constantly communicate the vision of the organization because it is the guiding principle for giving meaning to the work an organization does. There are numerous researchers in leadership studies who have identified the ability to communicate an organizational vision as a core competency for leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2016) identified inspiring a shared vision as one of the five key practices of successful leaders. This involves envisioning a future of exceptional possibilities as well as influencing others to embrace that shared vision. Leaders communicate an organizational vision through words but also through actions. The very tasks leaders perform and the

symbolic acts they institute, such as organizational rituals, all communicate the organizational vision (McAllister-Wilson, 2004). This holistic expression of the organizational vision is exceptionally important and keeps the mission from becoming just another corporate statement. This ability to make the organizational vision a core part of everything the leader communicates becomes the energy that carries an organization through positive and difficult periods. This continued communication and connection of it to everything those in the organization do is how a leader continues to facilitate meaning-making.

It is important to also note that leaders must be aware of their industry context to facilitate meaning-making. Lim et al. (2021) argued for an interpretive set of leadership skills that allows leaders to develop meaning for their own organizations and to keep the purposes of the organizations before their constituents. Those leading nonprofits need to continue to facilitate an organizational reality that is derived from an organizational meaning originating in the mission and values of the organization. Along with industry-specific approaches, leadership style and theory inform how leaders make meaning in their organizations. Winton et al. (2022) found that while meaning-making is not necessarily a key factor for maintaining and developing employee engagement when employing authentic leadership skills, there is evidence that the impact of authentic leadership is mediated by aspects of the meaning-making process. The implication is that leaders must be aware of how meaning-making is facilitated through the style and theory of leadership they choose.

A leader who understand meaning and purpose to be essential for building organizations knows that communicating an organization's vision to his or her team can inspire them to continue to work, particularly when organizational change is being implemented or there is a crisis. The implication is that if people are meaning-making creatures who search for meaning during periods of crisis, it is best they can derive that meaning from those who are most intimately connected to the vision and mission of an organization. Otherwise, they may draw that information from sources counterproductive to organizational thriving. Leaders lead by drawing on the psychological mechanisms of meaning-making to inspire

others to act and help avoid a collective existential angst that can destroy an organization. While the manner in which they do it may differ based on the type of organization they lead and the leadership style they employ, the need to be mindful of the meaning-making process of their constituents is essential.

Conclusion

This article's purpose was to demonstrate that leaders are necessary agents for helping their constituents derive meaning and purpose that supports an organization's mission. Leaders who can embody the mission of an organization and create an environment in which this message is continually communicated are able to inspire and affect their teams. While there is no formula for how to facilitate meaning in every leadership situation, being mindful that people are constantly doing it means that leaders must be responsible for the meaning their constituents form. People will search for meaning; it is a core characteristic of being human, particularly when there is a crisis. The question is whether they will find meaning in what leadership is communicating by words and actions or from sources counterproductive to an organization's life. Leaders who influence and motivate their teams through meaning-making will be serving their organizations and the people they lead well.

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Well-Doing: A Managerial Leadership Practice-Oriented Approach[*]

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Well-doing is an important process and outcome for leaders to influence proactively and intentionally. Organizational performance and well-being are likely advanced when leaders effectively execute well-doing behaviors for the benefit of others. After briefly reviewing some relevant literature and key considerations, a well-doing leader management cycle is presented. This systematic and dynamic approach helps guide leaders in more fully understanding and managing well-doing at work. The four factors contained in the well-doing leader management cycle are briefly reviewed. Some specific challenges associated with this process include developing additional tools for assessing leader well-doing as well as developing evidence-based leader well-doing effectiveness profiles.

Keywords: impact, outcomes, practice-oriented approach, well-doing, well-doing leader management cycle

Well-doing can be facilitated and led by managerial leaders as well as others who may not hold a formal leadership title in an organization or even be working in a workplace setting (Kouzes & Posner, 2021; Liu et al., 2021).[1][2] When leaders act as effective well-doers, they positively impact organizations by enhancing prosocial behaviors, well-being, and performance (Cameron, 2022). Further, well-doing practices help steer organizational behavior toward doing the right thing and producing good or virtuously derived dividends (Kempster, 2022; Pless et al., 2022). The emerging study of virtue as a science, including how it is conceptualized and measured, provides some resources for practitioner-oriented scholars to draw upon to help practitioners better understand and apply well-doing at work (Fowers et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2021).

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[1] A debate comparing management, leadership, leader, and manager has taken place over the past several decades. In this article, the terms *managerial leadership, management leadership, leading,* and *managing* as well as *manage* and *lead* are used synonymously.

[2] My observations, and those of others, indicate that leaders with formal titles can and do serve as positive role models for others to act as influencers of behaviors such as well-doing (see Kouzes & Posner, 2021; Liu et al., 2022, for more on "everyday people" and "everyday leadership").

There is a paucity of available practitioner-friendly resources to advance the practice of well-doing in organizational settings. In fact, leader well-doing as a process and outcome is seldom covered in the extant literature. Cameron (2022) noted that leaders and organizations are rarely addressed in relationship to virtuousness and/or other related constructs such as well-doing. In contrast, this article provides a practice-oriented approach to understanding and operationalizing the process of managing well-doing. It is intended to offer leaders and those supporting their development a practice-oriented approach from which to view well-doing as a process and outcome to be managed. This approach and perspective extend the concept of well-doing beyond philosophical discourse and conceptualizing by offering an opportunity for leaders to systematically look at well-doing as a value-added resource with the potential—if executed effectively—to positively impact all organizational levels. It is in keeping with recent work that provided measurable conceptions of constructs such as virtue and well-doing (Fowers et al., 2020; Lieder et al., 2022; Wright et al., 2021).

Within the context of this article, *leader-driven well-doing* is operationally defined as proactively behaving and intentionally responding to situations in virtuous ways which make value-added contributions that benefit others. Ultimately, the effective facilitation and management of well-doing can help create an organizational culture in which selfishness is put aside and altruistic behavior ascends above self-serving driven leadership actions daily. Leader-driven well-doing can then become a vehicle for doing what is right while enhancing well-being and performance. This work also aligns with recent studies of responsible leadership (Kempster, 2022) and virtuous leadership (Cameron, 2022).

Some Key Considerations

The approach offered here integrates several key dimensions associated with leadership and how they relate to leading well-doing. This approach recognizes the importance of individual differences, especially relating to values management, personality, and leader motivations as key influences on effective, authentic well-doing. For example, as an individual difference-making factor, the nature and

management of a leader's core values are consequential to the practice of well-doing (Kerns, 2017; Rokeach, 1973). When considering a leader's core values, it is important to distinguish between different subsets of values that may be at play across diverse circumstances. Some values may align with well-doing behaviors, while others may compete with executing these types of behaviors. For example, the virtuous value of fairness may conflict with a value like competitiveness, causing dissonance and dynamic tension for leaders. Some leaders, in this situation, may experience internal conflict between wanting to "win at all costs" and "being fair-handed" in their dealings with others. Further, leaders' motivations for leading connect with their intentions when executing well-doing-oriented behaviors (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kerns, 2015). For leaders to be perceived as authentic, they need to align their well-doing actions with their intentions. It turns out that stakeholders are discerning in perceiving whether leaders are displaying authentic well-doing behaviors, meaning that their observable actions are aligned with their internally held intentions to support or otherwise benefit stakeholders. Interestingly, the emerging work from the field of neuroscience has provided evidence that in social exchanges, individuals can recognize at a psychobiological-mirror neuron level whether a person is trustworthy (Baek & Parkinson, 2022; Gordon & Platek, 2009; Zak, 2018).

Situational context is another important consideration when practicing well-doing behavior. Leaders bring their unique profile of relevant resources to their daily work, including their capacity to discern what is going on in specific situations (Kerns, 2020a). Self-awareness and situational awareness, along with managing personalized wisdom, are important in helping leaders discern which actions to take in specific situational circumstances (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2018; Kerns, 2020b). In the context of virtue and character types, the ideal character type has been described as the virtuous individual who consistently acts in ways that are appropriate to specific situations (Fowers, 2014). In practice, well-doing leaders can be characterized as knowing who they are; what is going on around them; and how they can best proactively and intentionally respond to situations to make virtuous, value-added contributions (Kerns, 2022).

Further, leaders need to possess the capacity to act competently once they decide what the right thing to do is. Well-doing leaders bring who they are, which includes the behavioral expressions of their core values, beliefs, and transcended motivation(s) to situations as antecedents to competently doing the right thing. In practice, there are relevant and important behavioral areas of competence that contribute to helping leaders effectively execute well-doing behaviors. These areas include such things as intentional identity-based habit management (Clear, 2018), practicing strategic proactivity (De Meuse, 2022; Parker & Liao, 2016; Parker et al., 2010), and managing the bright and dark sides of personality and associated behavioral tendencies (Harms, 2022; Nübold et al., 2017).

Another key consideration in the study and practice of managing well-doing is the dynamic relationship between selfishness/self-serving behavior and intentionality. In practice, I have observed that self-serving leader behavior can be intentional or unintentional. Likewise, acts of leader well-doing as defined in this article can also be intentional or unintentional. The dynamic relationship between a leader's well-doing behavior and intentionality needs to be considered when reflecting on authentic acts of well-doing. Authentic acts of leader well-doing would most likely be recognized by stakeholders when they see the leaders' actions aligning with their intention(s) to act to benefit the stakeholders.

Carlson et al. (2022) reminded us that selfishness is a pivotal concept in the study and conceptualization of human morality; however, its psychological nature has been sparsely considered. This recent shift in looking at the psychological nature and related dynamics surrounding selfishness needs to be more fully considered in the study and practice of leader well-doing behavior. Specifically, I have found that having executives and executive education students consider their levels of selfishness compared to their propensity to be altruistic to be useful and informative when reflecting on themselves as well-doers (Kerns, in press).

Finally, looking at the impact that effective well-doers have on desired outcomes is an important consideration. Over the last several decades, as part of practicing, studying, and teaching leadership, I have focused on three core results for leaders to strive to achieve: performance, well-being, and well-doing. As part of the results-

management dimension, these three outcomes interact with the four other dimensions (individual differences, motivations to lead, situational context, and competencies). Measuring, evaluating, and optimizing a leader's well-doing behaviors and optimizing the impacts of these behaviors and the achievement of desired outcomes are integrated into the proffered well-doing leader management cycle.

All five core dimensions benefit from having practice-oriented frameworks and tools to help leaders effectively execute their leadership. To this end, the next section offers a well-doing leader management cycle relating to enhancing leader well-doing. This practice-oriented approach offers a way to help leaders proactively and intentionally enhance their efforts at effectively managing well-doing.

Practice-Oriented Approach

Well-doing is a dynamic and multifaceted construct that has relevance, application value, and positive impact when effectively executed by leaders. Practice-oriented approaches that address leader well-doing can help support leaders and organizations who recognize the importance of well-doing as a value-added process and outcome.

The well-doing leader management cycle helps orient leaders to four factors that are involved in influencing and managing well-doing. I have drawn upon the cycle when helping both emerging and seasoned leaders better understand and recognize key factors that are involved in managing well-doing. The cycle is part of an integrated managerial leadership system that considers well-doing, along with performance and well-being, as key outcomes that need to be managed to optimize desired results.[3] The well-doing leader management cycle helps leaders gain a better understanding of well-doing as a multifaceted construct and how it can be operationalized. I have used this approach in numerous settings, including

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[3] My system of managerial leadership strives to provide practitioners, applied researchers, and teachers with an integrated approach to viewing and understanding leadership. The system brings together several streams of leadership study and research that have been offered over the past 100 years. Concurrently, the development and implementation of frameworks and tools for enhancing a leader's well-doing effectiveness, which is the focus of the current article, can help advance the practice, study, and teaching of leadership. It is, however, beyond the scope of the current article to review and discuss the other dimensions and related practices of the system.

work organizations, executive education, and applied research venues. The four key factors found in the cycle are (I) values and beliefs, (II) identity, (III) action plans and execution, and (IV) outcomes (see Figure 1).
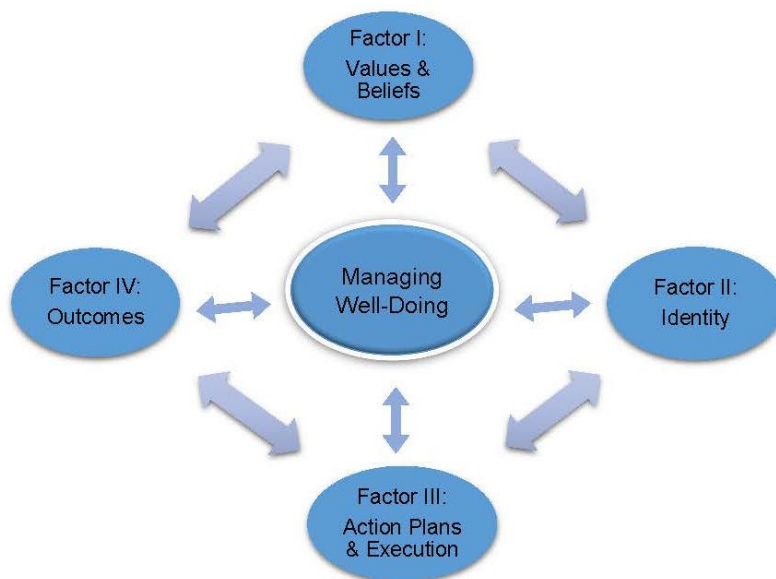

Figure 1: Well-doing leader management cycle©
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The cycle reflects the dynamic and fluid interaction among the factors. Values align with a set of personalized beliefs and guiding principles that are espoused by leaders. Their values and aligned beliefs help them develop their well-doing leader identities. In turn, specific identity-based behaviors become part of action plans, which help guide the execution of well-doing behavioral practices. These behavioral practices help form, shape, and sustain behaviors and habits that strengthen leaders' well-doing identities. Leaders who effectively execute actions help achieve outcomes that enhance their effectiveness as well-doers.

   This approach to managing well-doing builds upon observations and experiences I have gathered from working with a broad range of leaders across many different settings. Drawing upon fieldwork, applied research, teaching–

consulting, and relevant literature reviews over the past four decades, I offer the following observations about well-doing in the context of managerial leadership:

- Core values and related beliefs are important factors in influencing behaviors (Kerns, 2017).

- Selfishness and altruism are important areas to consider when assessing a leader's propensity for displaying well-doing behaviors (Carlson et al., 2022; Li et al., 2014).

- Managing wisdom and practical personalized knowledge is integral to effective leader well-doing (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2018; Kerns, 2020b).

- Expertise, deliberate practice, and habit management strategies can be applied to developing and managing well-doing-related behaviors (Carden & Wood, 2018; Harvey et al., 2021).

- Self-view systems are integral to understanding and managing a leader's identity as a well-doer (Hannah et al., 2009; Kerns, 2022).

- Leader-identity formation and learning across one's lifespan can contribute to developing a well-doing identity (Kerns, 2018, in press; Liu et al., 2022; Wang & Hackett, 2020).

- Developing leader-identity-based habits related to well-doing helps promote and sustain well-doing behavior (Clear, 2018; Sheldon, 2018).

- The emerging scientific study of virtues and brain science hold promise for enhancing the practice of well-doing as it relates to leadership (Fowers et al., 2020; O'Mara. 2018; Zak, 2018).

- Optimizing virtuousness and well-doing-related behaviors can impact desired organizational outcomes (Cameron, 2022).

- Virtuousness can be operationalized by effectively managing core values, beliefs, and behavior (Kerns, 2003).

- Psychological selfishness has relevance and application value to the study and practice of leader well-doing (Carlson et al., 2022).

- The Dark Triad and other leader behaviors connected to bad leadership impinge upon well-doing, well-being, and performance in organizations (Harms & Spain, 2015; O'Boyle et al., 2012; Örtenblad, 2021; Rauthmann, 2012).

- Action planning, learning agility, and feedback systems that connect execution efforts to outcomes are important processes in developing and managing well-doing (Gregory & Levy, 2015; Harvey & Valerio, 2022; Mueller-Hanson & Pulakos, 2018).

Well-Doing Leader Management Cycle

The well-doing leader management cycle contains four factors that help support leaders in managing well-doing, each of which is reviewed below. The key processes and behavioral objectives associated with each factor are briefly discussed. The implementation of the cycle can be self-managed by leaders or facilitated by an executive coach or trusted advisor who helps a leader engage in implementing the cycle. It is important that leaders recognize the dynamic and fluid interaction among the four factors when implementing the well-doing leader management cycle.

Factor I: Values and Beliefs

As part of operationalizing the values and beliefs factor, leaders are oriented to the notion that values influence our beliefs and how we act. This is introduced to them as a values–beliefs–behavior chain (Kerns, 2003). Within this context, discussions typically emerge regarding how some of their values may conflict with others. Leaders are encouraged, for example, to reflect on how their more virtue-oriented values may compete with or otherwise cause dynamic tension between some of their other core values.

Managing leader well-doing is anchored by the assessment, review, and documentation of leaders' core values. I have developed a Values in Action Profiling and Prioritizing Checklist, which helps leaders identify their core values. (Kerns, 2016). This checklist is typically used along with the Values in Action (VIA) Questionnaire (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) in helping leaders identify their top five core values, which are then developed into a values statement. For example, a recent executive coaching client's five core values were competition, fairness, honesty, gratitude, and achievement.

Once the five core factors are identified, leaders develop personalized definitions for each of these five core values. After each value has been defined, they then link each of their core values to a personalized belief relating to that value. In the case of the previously mentioned client's five core values, the following personalized values and beliefs statement was produced: "I value appreciating people for what they do (gratitude), telling it like it is (honesty), and being fair (fairness). I also value accomplishing important things (achievement) and winning (competition)." The behavioral objectives associated with managing well-doing with Factor I are:

- identifying five core values,
- defining each core value in a personalized way, and
- documenting a personalized core values and beliefs statement.

Factor II: Identity

Building upon the work completed with Factor I, leaders are introduced to the process of managing leader identity and connecting elements of this approach to managing their well-doing identities (Kerns, 2022a, 2022b). Like managing leader identity, managing leader well-doing is a multifaceted process that covers a broad range of topics and related subject areas, many of which enhance the study and application of this practice in workplace settings. It is valuable for leaders to have a clear, credible, and motivating view of who they are and who they want to become as a well-doing leader.

I have found that helping leaders draw from their personalized core values and belief statements (Factor I) is useful in facilitating them to concisely document and articulate their leader well-doing identity statement. The leader's well-doing identity statement typically consists of five bullet points. I often ask leaders to think of their well-doing identity statement as their "sweatshirt message" that they have the opportunity to project/behaviorally demonstrate to others on a daily basis.

A structured interviewing process using a leader lifespan experience impact-mapping matrix has also proven to be a useful tool for helping leaders draft and finalize their leader well-doing identity statements (Kerns, 2018). Given that

leaders' relevant experiences accumulate over a lifetime and help form and shape leaders' well-doing identities, this process helps leaders identify specific people, events, and situations that have contributed to their self-views relating to well-doing. These developmental experiences often include leaders sharing stories that have both positively and negatively affected their perspectives on leader well-doing. The structured interviewing process connects with the work relating to leader self-view systems and leader development across the lifespan and is especially relevant in helping leaders manage their well-doing leader identities (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Hannah et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2020).

The following five-point leader well-doing identity statement was developed with the same client:

- I am grateful and like to show it.
- I am honest but recognize timing is important when expressing what's on my mind.
- I am fair-minded and strive to treat others fairly.
- I like to win and don't care who gets credit.
- I am a doer and get satisfaction from seeing things get done.

The above well-doing identity statement or "sweatshirt message" is further operationalized as part of the work that is completed in relation to Factor III. During this process, behavioral indicators relating to each of the above bullet points are identified and addressed, as needed and appropriate, as part of the action planning and execution work. The behavioral objectives associated with managing well-doing with Factor II are:

- Integrate core values and beliefs into a leader's well-doing identity statement.
- Identify relevant key people, events, and situations across one's lifespan that have contributed to forming and shaping the leader's well-doing identity.
- Produce a five-point well-doing leader identity statement or "sweatshirt message."

Factor III: Actions Plans and Execution

Working this factor involves an interactive process that draws upon the information gleaned from the work completed as part of addressing Factors I and II. As part of Factor III, action plans are developed and linked to specific behavioral practices to be executed. These specific behavior-oriented action plans are formulated and subsequently executed by leaders. As part of this process, leaders are expected to follow up with their coaches or other individuals in their organizations as part of holding themselves accountable for completing the agreed-upon actions.

This part of the well-doing leader management cycle focuses on specifying well-doing-oriented behaviors and holding leaders accountable for the execution of these behavioral practices. Typically, "performance huddles" are held quarterly to review leaders' progress in executing their action plans.

Action plans focus on leaders doing the following four things:

1. Do more of something.
2. Do less of something.
3. Start doing something.
4. Stop doing something.

In practice, leaders' action plans seem to focus on doing more or less of something. For example, the previously mentioned client proactively and intentionally worked to reduce his behavioral tendency to push others to complete strategic projects before sufficiently engaging with project members around key topics. This leader also became more proactive and intentional regarding expressing gratitude toward others, both inside and outside of the organization. The behavioral objectives associated with managing well-doing with Factor III are:

- Specify clear behavior-specific action plans.
- Target behavior-specific action plans to increase, decrease, start, and/or stop well-doing-related behavioral practices.
- Hold regularly scheduled accountability meetings/performance huddles to track execution efforts and make behavioral adjustments as needed and appropriate.

Factor IV: Outcomes

The work done in operationalizing this factor underscores the dynamic and fluid interaction among the four factors. This is especially true regarding the linkages between Factors III and IV. In practice, action plans and execution efforts (Factor III) and assessing the outcomes of these efforts (Factor IV) is an ongoing continuous program of feedback exchange and making behavioral adjustments with the intent of optimizing desired outcomes related to enhancing well-doing. This work calls for leaders to display learning agility when setting action plans, executing them, and adjusting based on outcomes (Harvey & Valerio, 2022; Hoff & Burke, 2017).

The outcomes realized from effectively executing specific behavior-oriented actions that are connected to leaders' core values, beliefs, and identities remain important to index and manage. The assessment of the impacts and outcomes of well-doing leader-enhancing actions on well-being and other key performance metrics also seems important. My colleagues and I continue to study the relationship between leader well-doing, well-being, and performance in workplace settings. Going forward, it seems especially important to better understand how leader well-doing-enhancing actions spill over to impact other outcomes, such as leader well-being and performance across organizational levels and among diverse stakeholder groups.

The previously mentioned client realized positive outcomes from implementing a positive energizing program built around identifying and executing well-doing-oriented behaviors among executive members. Informal reporting indicated that this group experienced an increase in positive energy levels as measured on a seven-point scale suggested by Cameron (2021) as part of his work on positively energizing leadership. The behavioral objectives connected to managing well-doing with Factor IV are:

- Regularly assess the impacts of well-doing leader actions on specified outcomes.
- Assess and manage leader agility.
- Be aware of and consider the impacts of leader well-doing actions on well-being and other targeted performance metrics.

Some Challenges

Evidence gleaned from practice, applied research, and review of relevant literature highlights several challenges facing organizations and their leaders when addressing the topic of leader well-doing. A brief review of some of these challenges follow.

Definitional Clarity and Measurement

Well-doing as a construct can benefit from additional definitional clarity. As with the study and measurement of virtue, there are many ways that well-doing can be conceptualized and considered. These perspectives range from the philosophical formulations of Aristotle to the emerging empirical study of well-doing as a multifaceted construct (Hackett & Wang, 2012; Lieder et al., 2022; Wang & Hackett, 2016; Wright et al., 2021). The definitional clarity challenge also connects to the challenge to develop additional practitioner-friendly measurement tools for assessing leader well-doing.

The definitional clarity and measurement challenge is further fueled by the diverse and largely unintegrated multidisciplinary perspectives relating to well-doing, as recently reviewed by Lieder et al. (2022). Interestingly, the emerging efforts to pull together perspectives relating to the psychological processes surrounding well-doing offer hope to practitioner-oriented scholars who want to bridge the gap between theory and practice when addressing leader well-doing (Lieder et al., 2022). The well-doing leader management cycle offered in this article is intended to help span this divide between theoretical conceptualizing and practice.

Developing Practitioner-Friendly Frameworks

The development of practice-oriented, leader-driven well-doing frameworks is in its infancy. Practitioner-minded scholars and practitioners are challenged to individually or collectively develop evidence-based models that have practical utility for leaders striving to positively impact well-doing as a value-added process and outcome. It would be valuable for these frameworks to consider integrating well-doing, well-being, and performance in a way that indicates how these areas interact to optimize outcomes.

Further, these potential frameworks should consider the notion of everyday leadership as espoused by Liu et al, (2022) and Kouzes and Posner (2021). Developers of practitioner-friendly frameworks who intend to help leaders become more effective well-doers should consider extending their definition of a leader to include individuals who may not have a formal leadership title in an organization. This perspective may create an opportunity for organizations to consider well-doing as an organizational resource that can be embraced and managed by everyone. Further, organizations could introduce the notion of everyday leadership as a potential organizational-culture building block to be managed and fostered across all organizational levels, making well-doing a practice for everyone to help create a strong and effective culture that includes leader well-doing as a key process and value-added outcome (Kerns, 2020c).

Developing Leader Well-Doing Profiles

Given the many behavioral and psychologically oriented topics that are used in association with well-doing, it seems important and appropriate to develop evidence-based profiles that reflect factors that likely enhance the effective practice of well-doing. The current approach, for example, explicitly integrates core values, beliefs, and identities along with action planning, execution, and outcomes into the well-doing leader management cycle. Further, proactivity and intentionality are also indicated as important influences. In addition, learning agility, altruism, and selfishness are key considerations for understanding and managing leader well-doing.

Going forward, practitioners, applied researchers, and practice-oriented scholars are challenged to come together to develop leader well-doing profiles. These profiles need to be evidence-based in practice and/or research, have face validity for practitioners, and be coachable/teachable. When professionally developed, these profiles could be useful resources for leaders to turn to when addressing challenges relating to areas such as training/development and assessment. These efforts at profiling factors and behavioral facets of leader well-doing parallel the work being done in defining and measuring virtue constellations (Wright et al., 2021).

Addressing Bad Leadership

The emerging work relating to leader well-doing holds promise in helping to turn the tide on the alarming incidence of managerial leadership incompetence, ineffectiveness, and/or abuse. When considering this unsettlingly circumstance, it seems that organizations that embrace, for example, the notion of everyday leadership, and apply it as an organizational-culture building block may be able to positively affect the incidence of bad leadership around the world (Kerns, 2021; Örtenblad, 2021). Given this epidemic of bad leadership, leaders and their organizations are challenged to find ways to apply what we know about well-doing to help address the unsettling issue of bad leadership. These efforts seem like the right thing to do. The current work, which includes addressing well-doing across a leader's lifespan, seems relevant to addressing the topic of ill-doing among leaders. It has been my experience in conducting many leader-lifespan interviews that negative leader role models are influential in shaping leader self-views regarding leadership acts of well-doing and ill-doing.

Balancing Self-Care and Well-Doing

While the definition of well-doing in this article includes the notion of acting virtuously for the benefit of others, there is a need for leaders to strike a balance between serving others and taking care of themselves. One end of this continuum finds leaders spending too much time attending to the needs of others, causing them to sometimes become ego-depleted and exhausted. In contrast, the opposite end of this continuum sees leaders exerting too little effort for the benefit of others and running the risk of being seen as self-serving. This dynamic relationship between give-and-take or altruism and selfishness challenges leaders to be both self- and situationally aware of where they are on this continuum. This dynamic also connects with some useful frameworks relating to the give and take and perceptions of equity/fairness in social exchanges (Grant, 2013).

While there are likely noticeable individual differences in how much leaders are prone to act altruistically versus selfishly, it is important for leaders to be aware of where they are regarding acting in service to others versus being self-serving. In the context of the well-doing leader management cycle, leaders seem to be

challenged in striking a balance between administering self-care versus executing acts of well-doing as part of their proactively and intentionally self-prescribed action plans. In practice, leaders are challenged to find the "just right amount" of virtuous behavior to offer for the benefit of others (Kerns, 2013).

Conclusion

Organizational leaders and those interested in helping leaders can benefit by having practical approaches that help them better understand and manage well-doing as a process and outcome. Effectively managing well-doing contributes to enhancing leaders' positive impact. Drawing upon relevant literature, applied research, and practice, the well-doing leader management cycle operationalizes an approach for leaders to develop and manage well-doing. Leaders proactively and intentionally manage their core values and beliefs in alignment with their well-doing identity along with a set of behavioral action plans that guide the execution of well-doing-enhancing practices to achieve desired outcomes. As this work moves forward, there will be a need for definitional clarity and the development of additional assessment tools as well as practitioner-friendly frameworks. Practitioners and practice-oriented scholars are challenged to develop well-doing leader profiles and well-doing strategies to help positively impact the bad leadership problem. They are also challenged to help leaders find the "just right" balance between self-care and executing well-doing actions for the benefit of others. Taken together, these efforts will likely advance the effectiveness of leaders as well-doers.

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Leadership Failure in the Eyes of Subordinates: Perception, Antecedents, and Consequences[*]

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Effective leaders and leadership behaviors and practices are well-researched areas in the domain of leadership and management. However, ineffective or failed leadership, while often lamented in the literature, has been subject to limited scholarly inquiry. Using semi-structured interviews, 43 managers were interviewed to assess their perceptions of failed leadership behaviors, the antecedents of the behaviors, and the consequences based on interactions with their leaders. This study is another plea to describe the common flows of failed leadership, identify the common antecedents of leadership failure, and suggest that failed leaders behave in ways reflective of their personalities or due to other situational factors that have consequences for followers and organizations. The research contributes to the leadership literature by providing empirical findings on the subject and its implications for leaders, practitioners, organizations, and those in charge of leadership development. Limitations of the present approach, practical implications, and directions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: dark side of leadership, destructive leadership, dysfunctional leadership, ineffective leadership, leadership, leadership failure

Leadership and leaders' behavior hold a prominent place in the management and leadership literature. As numerous studies have suggested that people's performance and commitment are positively influenced by an organization's leadership (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019; Gill et al., 2006; Kim & Brymer, 2011), in addition to influence, *leadership* involves mutual trust and interaction between a leader and a follower. When an organization recruits, hires, trains, develops, and retains a valuable manager or employee, it is no surprise that the stability of the organization is maintained, both in terms of productivity and financial viability (Faloye, 2014).

The vast majority of the published research on leadership has been guided by a focus on the attributes of effective leaders and the impact they have on an organization's performance and employees' dedication and organizational identification (e.g., Avey et al., 2011; Frisch & Huppenbauer, 2014). When defining

an effective leader, Mayer and Caruso (2002) asserted that emotional intelligence plays an important role in the ability to lead. This reasoning is because a leader–subordinate relationship is governed by rules of behavior, cooperation, and dominance, among other variables that are emotionally influenced. Accordingly, a leader's ability to understand this and its effects on people and an organization is what makes an effective leader. The reality is that an organization is only as good as its leaders.

In an interview with Brady (2021), McKinsey & Company's director of research and economics, Tera Allas, professed that

> there are a lot of very good bosses, and then there are a lot of very bad bosses. And even the very good bosses don't necessarily realize that their impact on the people who work with them goes well beyond the business. The impact [bosses have] inside the workplace bleeds into a person's overall life satisfaction. And there are organizations in which you tend to see some concentrations of good and bad bosses. (para. 10)

Individuals in leadership positions who display bad behaviors have often been labeled by their employees and managers with descriptors that are not connected to leadership, including abusive, destructive, negative, or uncivil. Good leadership is a recipe for organizational and people success, while its absence is a path to dysfunction.

The focus of this article is why some leaders are not successful or less effective in leading others and what the consequences of their leadership patterns are. This article provides context for understanding the failure, or dark side, of leadership and adds to the literature on failed leadership through the examination of failed/ineffective leadership and its impact on people's performance and organizations. While some studies have investigated the dark side of leadership (Jacobs, 2019; Pyc et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2019) and concluded that this leadership induces frustration and occupational stress among other negative impacts on organizations and their members, the literature on this relationship is relatively sparse.

Literature Review

Researchers and practitioners often disagree on which personal characteristics best describe leadership. Coffin (1944) claimed that a job analysis of good

leadership indicated that leaders must have three components: planning, organizing, and persuading. The aforementioned traits fall into clusters relevant to which kind of leadership is involved. The leadership clusters also seem to be related to a leader's personality. However, Capowski (1994) asserted that

> leadership skills can be taught to some degree, most experts agree, but they are learned over a long period—and there's no single recipe for success. You can't really be an effective leader unless you 'do it,' and even then, you have to keep practicing. (15)

Over the years, researchers have agreed—to a certain extent—that some relationship exists between traits and leadership effectiveness or ineffectiveness (Gehring, 2007; Kornør & Nordvik, 2004). While some scholars argued that a relationship exists between behavior and leadership (Yukl, 1989), others suggested that situations affect leadership (Bass, 1990; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). These agreements or disagreements led the researcher to investigate the traits, the behavioral, and the contingency situational approaches as a framework to possibly explain their relationship to leadership effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

The Traits Approach to Leadership

Leadership traits are considered to be enduring characteristics that people are born with and remain relatively stable over time. Early leadership studies sought to identify personal attributes (or traits) that distinguish leaders from followers and effective from ineffective leaders. The traits approach views leadership from the perspective of the individual leader and assumes that a leader's traits produce patterns of behavior that are consistent across situations (Fleenor, 2017). Accordingly, researchers studying traits and their relevance to leadership have posited that traits such as intelligence, task-relevant knowledge, dominance, self-confidence, energy/activity levels, tolerance for stress, integrity, honesty, and emotional maturity have the strongest connection to effective leadership (Bass, 1990; Stogdill, 1974).

Stogdill (1974, as cited in Hogan et al., 1994) argued that personality characteristics such as (a) surgency—a trait aspect of emotional reactivity in which the leader tends to have high levels of positive affect, dominance, assertiveness,

energy, communication skills, and sociability; (b) emotional stability—adjustment, emotional balance, independence, and self-confidence; (c) conscientiousness—responsibility, achievement, initiative, personal integrity, and ethical conduct; and (d) agreeableness—friendliness, social nearness, and support—were positively related to leadership effectiveness. Stogdill (1948) suggested that while there is some consistent relationship between personality and leadership, leadership is not about a passive possession of some traits—rather, it is more situation-specific and interactive. Others have also concluded that whatever effect a personality trait has on leadership behavior, it still all depends on the situation (Fiedler, 1981; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992).

From Traits to a Behavioral Understanding of Leadership

Gyensare et al. (2019) argued that employees perceived the behavior of their superiors to be congruent with what they considered their prototype of effective leadership. Based on such perceptions, they tend to develop trust in their leaders. Similarly, Kwon et al. (2016) asserted that a good leader–follower relationship exists when it is perceived by the followers or in the "followers' eyes" to be fostering a climate in which they can speak up as opposed to holding back on issues they feel crucial to them and the organization.

From the mid-1940s to the early 1970s, the studies of leadership shifted from traits to the study of behaviors (Kolp & Rea, 2006), since behaviors are more accurate, objective, and observable than traits. Additionally, human behavior can be developed and taught, as opposed to traits, which are innate or developed early in human life (Kolp & Rea, 2006). The Ohio State University series of studies on leadership has focused on identifying observable behaviors of leaders instead of focusing on their traits since 1945 (Hogan et al., 1994). Some of these behaviors include a *consideration structure,* a leadership behavior that projects trust, respect, and values a good relationship with followers, and an *initiating structure*, a leadership behavior intended to make sure that followers are performing their tasks according to the provided instructions; a task-oriented behavior (George & Jones, 2012).

The Contingency Theory of Leadership and Situational Factors

The premise of the trait approach to leadership is that effective leaders possess innate traits that help others achieve their goals. However, not all effective leaders possess these traits, and some who have them are not effective. The behavioral approach ignores the situation in which leadership takes place (George & Jones, 2012). However, according to Fiedler's (1981) contingency theory, leadership effectiveness is a product of both individual-specific characteristics and the particular situation the leader is in. Whether a person is successful in a leadership role or not depends on the situation as well as on the personality or skills that the leader brings to the job. In other words, it is an interaction between leadership styles and the degree to which specific situations enable leaders to exert their influence. In a nutshell, while contingency theory suggests that both personal characteristics and situations influence leadership effectiveness, its premise was to specifically address two questions:(a) Why could a leader could be more effective than another in a certain situation even though they share the same personal credentials and experiences? (b) Why is a specific leader effective in one situation and not in another? (George & Jones, 2012).

The situational contingency approach to leadership proposed that leaders should adjust their behavior according to contextual factors or situations. The situation determines who the leader is. Accordingly, leadership is a situational product, as it focuses on the best leadership style for a given situation (Bass, 1990; Greenberg, 2011; Komives et al., 2013; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). Hersey and Blanchard (1982) argued that effective leaders are those who select the right leadership style when leading based on the situation as opposed to using the same style across all situations. To complement the theory, Fiedler (1978) proposed that a leader's effectiveness depends on three situational factors that determine whether a given situation is suitable for a leader's success: (a) a leader–member relationship in which subordinates like, accept, respect, and have confidence in the leader; (b) the structure of the task, or the extent to which the task to be performed by subordinates is clearly defined; and (c) position power, or the amount of formal authority/position power a leader has (see also Henkel & Bourdeau, 2018).

Method

The research method for this study was based on semi-structured interviews from a sample of 43 managers who work in various industries, including technology, manufacturing, education, health, hospitality, service, and financial. Semi-structured interviews were used because they may provide an influential form of formative assessment and discover how a respondent feels about the lack of leadership in a superior. In reality, "life is subjective—in the sense that human beings are ever engaged in the interpretation of life and that multiple subjectivities operate within any given experience and context—and therefore interviews are subjective as well" (Ravitch & Carl, 2021, 129). In these interviews, the interview instrument included the following questions:

- What is your conception of a failed leader—that is, someone you felt was ineffective or bad at leading? What was the behavior like?
- What were the circumstances/reasons that affected the occurrence of this leader's negative/ inappropriate or ineffective "perceived" behavior?
- What were the consequences or results of the leader's behavior on you, your team (if relevant), and your organization (if relevant)?

Operational Definition of Failed Leadership

Failed leadership is defined in this study as subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which a supervisor's behavior negatively affects their psychological, physiological, or behavioral being and how that behavior could lead to impediment in their own and/or their organizations' performance. Said hindrances may be relevant to the leader's traits, situational factors, or as a result of the negative leader's behaviors that include lacking vision, losing sight of what is important, being a micromanager, not being able to provide directions, engaging in the sustained display of verbal and nonverbal hostile behaviors, communicating poorly, not providing value to followers and the organization, lapsing ethics/integrity, and/or being self-centered.

Potential Perceptual Bias through Subordinates

According to Miner (2002), while the Ohio State research studies focusing on measuring leadership behaviors primarily used subordinates' descriptions of their leaders' behaviors, either individually or as a group, doing so might create bias. The accuracy of the subordinates' statements is based on what they remember and what they have perceived. As in any behavioral study, the sample of interviewed participants is seldom systematic. For that reason, the validity of respondents' descriptions of what they perceive, think, or believe at the time of the interview might be reduced by respondents' biases and attributions. Accordingly, both perceptions of behavior and respondents' memories can be faulty, and thus, a possible source of bias exists (Miner, 2002). However, the researcher tried to minimize the possibility of perceptual bias by providing enough time for the study sample members to reflect on the behavior, explain it, and recognize the consistency of the leader's displayed behavior over time.

It is important to note that the researcher did not provide any implicit leadership theories or suggest a pattern of good or bad leadership character or behavioral categories, as prior assumptions may present bias. Additionally, when categorizing terms, the researcher only merged terms that use different words or terms but mean the same, for example, the phrases "not cooperative" and "not collaborative" were merged into one, that is "not cooperative/not collaborative). Other examples include "not civil/rude," "lacks ability/knowledge," and "turnover intention/turnover," "not caring/don't care," "closed-minded/opinionated," and "not sincere/not trusting."

Participants and Setting

Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were guaranteed complete confidentiality. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with 43 managers, all of whom reside in the United States. While the vast majority of the managers resided in Southern California, three resided on the East Coast, and two resided in the Southwest. Interviews were conducted between April and August 2021 in person, online using Zoom videoconferencing software, or by telephone. The majority of the participants were working professionals who had enrolled in an executive MBA program at a university in Southern California. Of the 50 managers

solicited to participate, 43 managers volunteered to participate in the current study and completed the interview. Based on that, the response rate was 86%. The sample consisted of 26 men and 17 women. Their ages varied from 25 to 60 years old (mean = 48). Concerning participants' managerial levels, 6 were upper managers, 26 were middle managers, and 11 were first-line managers/supervisors. The managers had about 5 to 20 years of experience (mean = 16). The majority of the participants (51%) worked for organizations with 100 to less than 500 employees, with the others working for companies of various sizes.

Findings and Discussion

Figures 1, 2, and 3 display data summaries reflecting the guiding research questions: (a) the conception of a failed leader, (b) the antecedents of the leader's behavior, and (c) the consequences of the behavior. The researcher developed inductive/iterative codes to code the interview data, then sorted and grouped the coded data, refined and regrouped the codes, recorded the raw data with the refined codes, and developed preliminary findings using JMP statistical software data analysis to summarize it.

The Conceptualizations of a Failed/Ineffective Leader

Ferris et al. (2003) suggested that *leader perception and reputation* is a key construct in organizational science and referred to it as "a perceptual identity reflective of the complex combination of salient personal characteristics and accomplishments, demonstrated behavior, and intended images presented over some time as observed directly and/or as reported from secondary sources" (215). Through its sample, the current study identified more than 60 displayed behaviors that a failed leader exhibits, including not caring, being a bad communicator, being negative, not projecting positive energy, micromanaging, not adding value, being self-centered, being selfish, and being egocentric. As some of the provided characteristics or adjectives are synonymous with each other, they were grouped together to provide a more meaningful analysis and avoid redundant terms. Accordingly, the top adjectives shared by the managers were: negative, judicious, critical, or does not project positive energy (44%); not sincere, not trusting, or

vague (40%); micromanager (40%); self-centered, selfish, egocentric, or know-it-all (28%); not civil, hostile, not pleasant, or insulting (28%); lacks people skills (21%); closed-minded or opinionated (21%); despotic, autocratic, or authoritarian (16%); and takes credit for others' work (16%). Note that the percentage of the total responses does not total to 100%, as participating managers were not limited to only one perception.

In this article, the discussions focus on the most common behaviors suggested by at least 20% of the study sample. However, other behaviors of the suggested failed leader are also important to understand (see Figure 1 for a complete illustrative list of displayed behaviors and their frequencies).
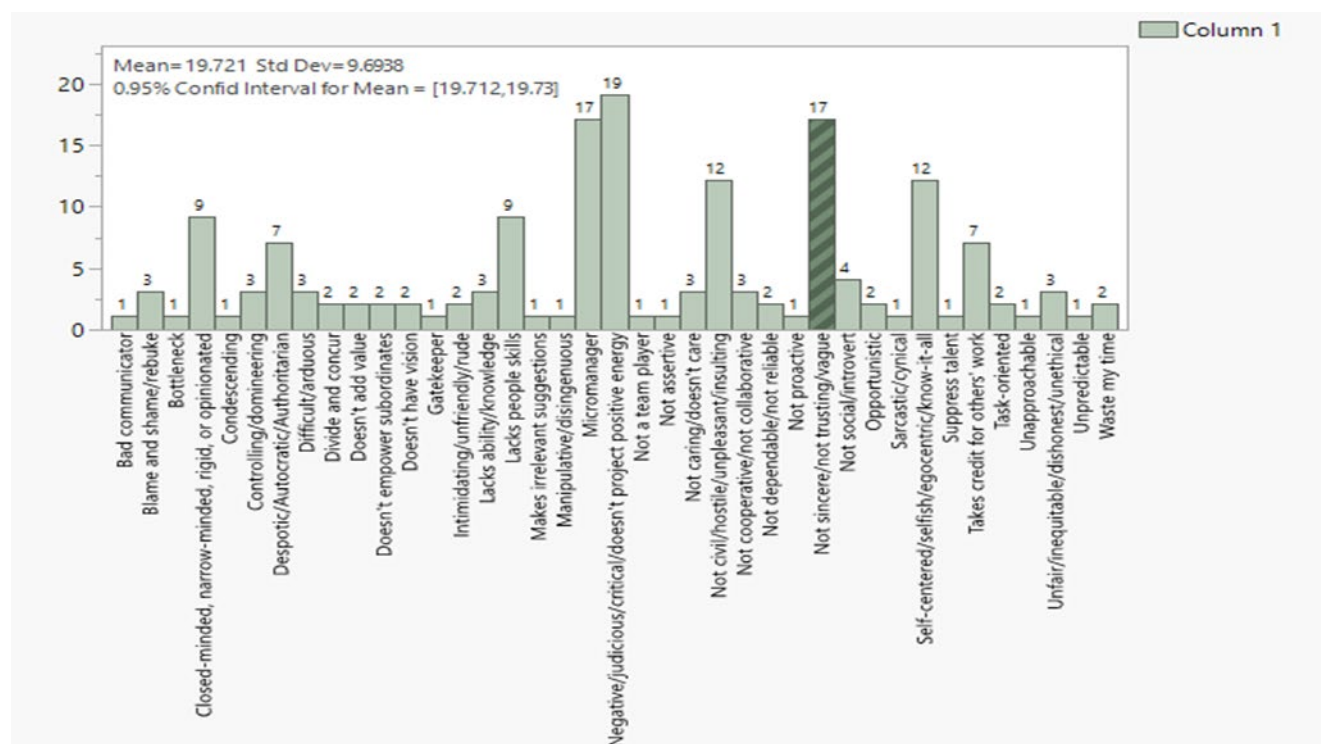

Figure 1. Conceptualization of a failed/ineffective leader

Negative, Judicious, Critical, or Does Not Project Positive Energy. Nineteen managers (44%) viewed a failed leader as someone negative, judicious, critical, or who does not project positive energy. Barron (2016) described *negativity* as "a tendency to be downbeat, disagreeable, and skeptical. It's a pessimistic attitude that always expects the worst. Negative outcomes are bad outcomes like losing a

game, getting a disease, suffering an injury, or getting something stolen" (para. 3). One of the study participants noted that

> my boss is always critical of my work. He only sees the faults in people. . . . He sees it in various aspects and contexts, including how I respond to him, how I address the situation, . . . or how I talked to a client. . . . My boss is always picking and trying to find the things that, according to him, are wrong.

In the same manner, Hurd (2020) suggested that the trait of being overly critical can be deep and that those who are labeled critical people are, indeed, negative. This trait is similar to saying that a person is negative all the time. Accordingly, a critical or a negative person is someone who tends to make judgments and find, or try to find, fault with others.

Gordon (2017) asserted that leaders should be positive as life can be hard. Positive leadership is the reason behind creating united connected teams and building great relationships with others. According to Komives et al. (2013), positive "energizers" bring the physiognomy of principle-centered people to the group—they move up the group to a different level by inspiring purpose and meaning as they lift each other. The mistake that some leaders make is to please and appease the negative energizers at whatever level they are in the organization. By doing so, they are demotivating "meaningfully engaged" people. Similarly, Covey (1992) advocated that happiness, cheerfulness, and being pleasant are the physiognomy of principle-centered people and leaders. These leaders share an optimistic, positive, and upbeat attitude. Their spirit is full of hope, enthusiasm, and belief in what they say and dream. He noted that "this positive energy is like an energy field or an aura that surrounds them and that similar charges or changes weaker, negative energy fields around them. They also attract and magnify smaller positive energy fields" (34–35).

In contrast, a leader who projects negative energies brings down the group, reduces people's morale level, and brings about unneeded distractions and drama (Komives et al., 2013). One study participant reaffirmed this by saying:

> A failed leader is someone who you can't easily feel connected with. You feel that she/he does not care about you. This person is negative, critical of your work, and a micromanager who you will need to go to her/him always for an opinion. However, you feel she/he is only wasting your time as you do not see

a positive impact or value added after you sit down with her/him. I consider her/him to be only a bottleneck and someone who does not appreciate me.

To project workplace positivity and positive energy, a leader should create a positive climate, build and maintain positive relationships, facilitate positive communications and words that convey hope and curiosity, and infuse a sense of purpose and meaning in the tasks of the members (Cameron, 2008; Komives et al., 2013). Radiating positive energy not only makes the leader likable but helps boost followers' morale. The tipping point in leadership and teams can bring about powerful results, including above-level performance, increased job satisfaction, happiness, and, equally important, enduring and meaningful relationships (Komives et al., 2013). One of the study participants added that "my leader is not approachable and not relational. . . . You don't feel close to her—she doesn't radiate positive energy."

Not Sincere, Not Trusting, or Vague. Seventeen of the managers (40%) cited "not sincere, not trusting, or vague" as a characterization when describing a failed leader. Projecting trust/sincerity, or at least not projecting negative vibes, is how a true leader interacts with subordinates. The absence of trust, regardless of its reason—whether economical or ethical, has major consequences for organizations. It could lead to competitiveness in the workplace and perhaps to an adversarial relationship detrimental to the organization (Hattori & Lapidus, 2004).

Clawson (2009) asserted that the quality of a leader–follower relationship determines whether followers will view the tasks in a similar way the leader sees them. If followers do not trust or respect their leader, their understanding of the task and development of the commitment will be difficult. As there's no substitute for trust and respect in a leader–follower relationship, its presence contributes to an effective work relationship and perceived learning by subordinates. Its absence makes perceived learning questionable while weakening relationships.

According to Komives et al. (2013), "trustworthiness is far more than telling the truth. Being worthy of trust means being honest, demonstrating integrity, keeping promises, and being loyal. It means being known for standing up for your convictions" (181). One study participant stated:

I had never sensed my boss's sincerity when guiding me. I think that I know what I am doing, as I have been [in] the same job for many years before she was hired. She is an egocentric and vague person who only cares about herself. Additionally, she wastes my time in nonproductive meetings. It makes it hard for me to accomplish my work and keep motivated. I don't feel she is a genuine person.

Micromanager. Seventeen managers (40%) cited "micromanager" as a characterization when describing a failed leader. A *micromanager* is someone who gives excessive instruction to subordinates and closely supervises their work, as opposed to a manager who only provides guidelines regarding what and when projects/work needed to be accomplished. While this style may produce some immediate results, it tends to demotivate subordinates and lower their morale as they are made to feel uncomfortable and as if the manager does not trust their ability to be empowered and perform freely. Raveendhran and Wakslak (2014) suggested that when leaders display behavioral characteristics that are reflective of micromanagement, they send signals that contradict them being in a secure, powerful, or high level of leadership. A good leader focuses on the most difficult task and delegates the rest to others while trusting followers' ability to do the job. Collins and Collins (2002) asserted that while micromanagement can be advantageous in situations such as training new employees, increasing the productivity of underperforming employees, and/or when there is a need to control high-risk issues, the organizational costs associated with long-term micromanagement can be exorbitant as employees might experience low morale, lower productivity, job dissatisfaction, and possible voluntary turnover.

The opposite of micromanagement is empowerment. *Empowerment* allows people use their minds, acquired knowledge, experience, and motivation to create a healthy organizational environment characterized by being socially, environmentally, and financially successful (Randolph & Blanchard, 2010). Successful organizational leaders believe that good expected outcomes are only possible by empowering people. One participant shared her experience with this style of leadership, stating:

My boss doesn't believe, nor understand, the meaning of empowerment. I feel he doesn't trust my decisions, which makes me feel worthless. . . . He always

calls for a meeting on Friday afternoon to show the bosses that he is a hard-working person; it is so demoralizing to us as we are trying to wrap up our week . . . he is a micromanager.

Another participant said:

I don't feel good about myself. I am always unhappy at work and have low job satisfaction. I always try telling my vice president, "my superior," that I can manage my team, but to a deaf ear. . . . He likes to keep a tight rope on all of us "managers" and team leaders.

The aforementioned description of leadership behavior is similar to that which Greene (2000) described: "Make other people come to you—use bait if necessary" (62). Greene's judgment mirrored one of the Machiavellian principles:

When you force the other person to act, you are the one in control. It is always better to make your opponent come to you, abandoning his plans in the process. Lure him with fabulous gain—then attack. You hold the cards. (as cited in Greene, 2000, 62)

Randolph and Blanchard (2010) labeled empowerment as a key to achieving organizational goals. In fact, in a culture of empowerment, people in organizational settings respond differently. They usually take risks with challenging tasks and organizational procedures. It is the sense of pride in their jobs and the feeling of ownership of what they do that fuels their drive to achieve. They usually think and act in a fashion that makes sense in whatever situation they are encountering. They act in ways that serve both the organization and its stakeholders.

Self-Centered, Selfish, Egocentric, or Know-It-All. Twelve managers (about 28%) viewed self-centeredness, selfishness, or egocentric behaviors as some of the failed leadership characteristics. Self-centered behavior can lead to an excessive focus on self-gratification at work, which could lead to abuses of control, exploitation, employee bullying, lack of compassion, and violation of employees' rights tenets (Koehn, 2007). Opposite to these practices is an integrated self that is reflected in a cohesive entity that Gilbert et al. (2012) defined as "a place where one is (a) surrounded by mutually supportive persons, (b) in an environment comprised of policies that are egalitarian and fair, and (c) supported by colleagues who are engaged in the process of self-development" (31).

One participant reflected on his experience and stated:

> My CEO is a negative person. . . . If anything goes wrong, it is never his fault. However, if things go right, it is always because of his vision or his ideas. . . . When I present a good idea, he likes to criticize it and add meaningless things or flavor to it to appear as if it is his idea. To me, he is more of a self-centered person!

Another participant stated that "my boss is selfish! Every good thing is because of her vision, her instructions, or her ideas when it isn't. She puts herself first and takes credit for everything." Avolio and Locke (2002) argued that "leaders of higher moral character who espouse and live towards universal end values will see that satisfying their selfish interests neither benefits the groups they lead in the short term nor even themselves over longer periods" (176).

Not Civil, Hostile, Not Pleasant, or Insulting. Twelve managers (28%) viewed a failed leader as someone who is not civil, hostile, not pleasant, or insulting. The relational leadership model encourages ways and processes that promote the creation of an inclusive environment in which conflicts and disagreements can be handled in a civil way that is guided by openness and honesty as ground rules (i.e., group norms) as opposed to an environment in which people are afraid to talk or their opinions are not counted (Komives et al., 2013). Not being civil, not being pleasant, or being insulting is a clear indication of immoral leadership behavior and an immoral organization. As one of the study participants stated, "we lack psychological safety! I can't speak freely, others are too afraid to speak freely. . . . I do not feel that I am a valued member, nor do I feel that I belong there." Similarly, Ennals-Fenner (2017) argued that hostile leadership may hinder followers' ability to perform and cause them to stop focusing on positive outcomes. Such toxic leadership behavior causes a toxic environment. According to Koehn (2007),

> moral evil is a violation of behavioral norms enforced through a community's system of praise and blame and reinforced by traditional values . . . moral systems focus on the harm to another when an agent acts in a way that violates some social communal norm. (38)

To this end, being civil, unthreatening, or a well-disposed person are some aspects of our social communal norms and characteristics of good leadership.

Lacks people skills. Nine managers (21%) viewed a failed leader as someone who lacks people skills. Having people skills enables a leader to understand, lead,

work with, and control the behaviors of followers. Having versus not having people skills is what differentiates an effective leader from an ineffective leader (George & Jones, 2012). If leaders lack people skills, they negatively affect followers' commitment to an organization, as commitment requires identification with organizational goals as well as the internalization of its policy and culture (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019; Beck & Wilson, 2000; Singh & Gupta, 2015). By the same token, a leader's absence of people skills makes interaction at work challenging and affects followers' acceptance and commitment to this leader. In turn, the lack of acceptance and commitment may translate into a lack of acceptance and/or identification with the organization and its culture as the culture will be the center of blame by the follower. This notion was validated by one of the study sample participants, who stated:

> My boss does not add much value. He questions everything and puts his name on the product/final project . . . likes to take credit away from everyone. He is smart, [and] knows what he is doing but does not know how to handle people— he lacks people skills period. . . . You need to always stand up to him. You will need to become confident.

The lack of people skills was summed up by another manager, who noted:

> My interaction with my senior manager is very limited. Our senior manager does not know how to energize us. He is stiff and not social. I have no idea of how or what he thinks. I feel I am only a number. . . . The culture is not fun at all!"

Closed-Minded or Opinionated. Nine managers (about 21%) viewed a failed leader as someone who is closed-minded or "opinionated." A closed-minded leader makes it difficult for followers to discuss new ideas. This type of leader, also described as narrow-minded or rigid, is usually not open to suggestions or willing to consider alternatives or different perspectives. Being approachable is key— leaders must always reach out to others for feedback or suggestions. Equally important, leaders must make subordinates feel comfortable and do what they expect of others. Great leaders set examples.

Leaders who have been characterized as being closed-minded or opinionated usually fail to establish rapport with others. They lack the group's social norms and understanding of people's emotional cues as they violate these norms. They

usually don't back off; they lack social intelligence; and at the end of the day, they will not have the desired impact on followers (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). When a narrow-minded or opinionated leader forces an idea or decision during a meeting or in a situation, the energy does not evaporate as people leave the meeting or execute the leader's decision or guideline; it spills into every aspect of organizational life (Carew et al., 2010). If people leave a meeting feeling unheard, or disagree with the decision, they will be angry, frustrated, and demotivated. In reality, a situation like this affects the next event. Similarly, one participant said:

> I am demotivated as I feel that my boss is always the cause of my dissatisfaction. My boss is a closed-minded person, does not allow us to disagree or argue a decision, it is the boss's way or the highway.

On the contrary, when meetings or decisions are productive and/or empowering, positive energy spreads (Carew et al., 2010).

Antecedents of Failed Leadership Behavior

Figure 2 summarizes the study participants' attribution of causes of their leaders' displayed behaviors. Note that other causes for failed leaders are also important to understand.
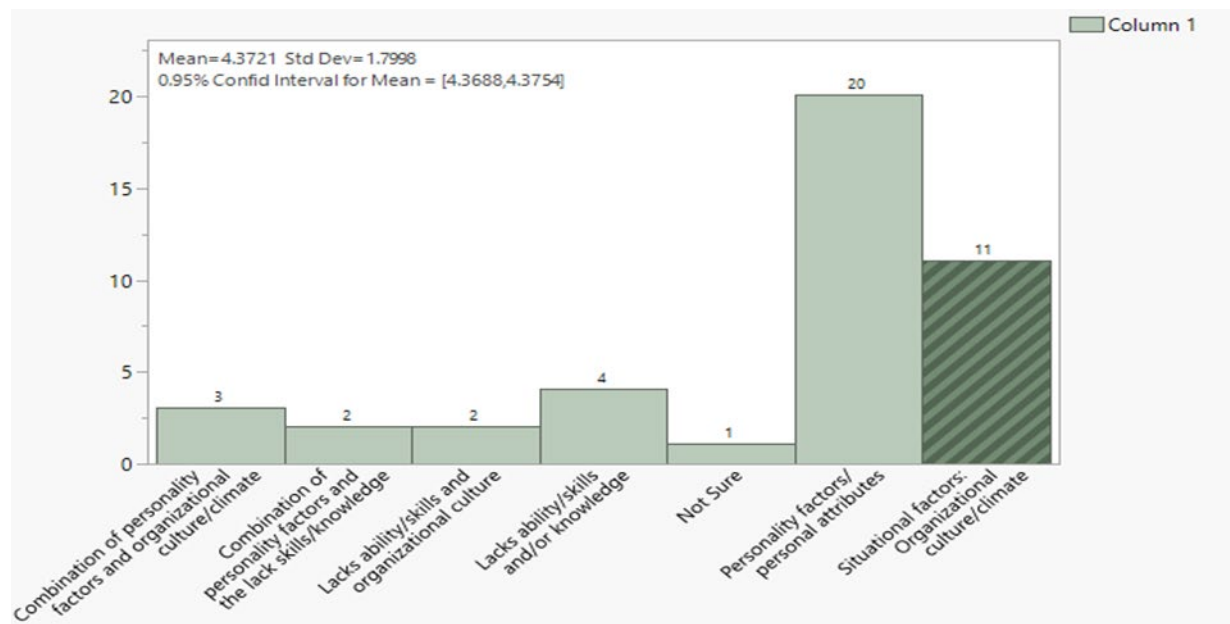

Figure 2. Antecedents of failed leadership behavior

Personality Factors/Personal Attributes. As previously stated, 20 study participants (47%) believed that individual personality factors or attributes are responsible for leaders' displayed behavior. Additionally, while other participating managers did not dismiss the personality role in their leaders' displayed behaviors, two managers (5%) attributed it to a combination of personality and lack of knowledge and three others (7%) to a combination of personality and organizational culture/climate. Accordingly, 25 managers (59%) recognized personality factors as a major attributor to their leaders' displayed behavior.

Trait research was a fundamental part of 20th-century leadership studies and continues today (Karimova, 2018; Stogdill, 1948; Yukl, 1989). Daft (2015) asserted that *traits* are the most distinguishing personal characteristics of a person or a leader. Such personal characteristics include intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, and appearance, among others. Karimova (2021) asserted that personality and character are both used to describe someone's behavior. However, the two examine different aspects of that individual's displayed behavior. While personality is more visible, an individual's character is revealed over time through varying situations. Accordingly, a character combines the mental and moral characteristics of the person. While personality is easier to figure out since it is relatively stable,

> character, on the other hand, takes longer to discern but is easier to change. That's because a character is shaped by beliefs, and with enough effort and motivation, changing one's perspective and view of the world can lead to a shift in one's character. (Karimova, 2021, para. 8)

Similarly, Lickerman (2011) suggested that character takes far longer to understand since it includes traits—positive or negative—such as honesty, virtue, or dishonesty that only reveal themselves in specific, and more often, uncommon circumstances. Kolp and Rea (2006) characterized *bad character* as "literally a character who has been deformed. . . . It is quite possible to be competent in business but deformed in character. In fact, the competent leader who lacks character is capable of causing great harm" (24). One study participant said that he believed that "the major cause of my current superior's behavior is his personality; he is so negative and rude. . . . I think his displayed behavior is caused

by his nature . . . [and] his personality." Another study participant stated that "my boss is insecure . . . it is a reflection of his personality."

The above notion was echoed by another study participant, who stated that "I firmly believe he just wants to always remind me that he is my boss. It is coupled with innate character/personality. He is what he is. I deeply believe that he does not understand the consequences of his behavior."

Situational Factors: Organizational Culture and Climate. Organizational environment and culture are other key contributors to failure in leadership. Eleven managers (26%) cited situational factors, including organizational cultures, as the causes of their leaders' displayed behavior. Three managers (7%) suggested it was caused by a combination of personality factors and organizational culture and/or climate, and two managers (5%) believed that the leaders' intertwined lack of ability and organizational culture were the reasons for the behavior. Altogether, organizational culture and climate contributed to about 37% of the leader's displayed behavior according to 16 managers. *Organizational culture* is defined as "a cognitive framework consisting of attitudes, values, behavioral norms, and expectations shared by organization members" (Greenberg, 2011, 481). It is also referred to as the shared perceptions of prevailing organizational norms for conducting workplace activities. It includes the members' behaviors, attitudes, and feelings, and it influences a great deal of employee performance and job satisfaction (Mathew & Selvi, 2007). Organizational climate is the mood of the organization, or in other words, it is how employees experience that culture.

According to Hofstede et al. (2010), culture plays a major role in organizational life, as leaders and subordinates in organizational settings are inseparable. This inseparable "vertical relationship" in organizations is based on the common values of superiors and subordinates. The belief about the qualities of a leader, regardless of organizational level, is a reflection of an organization's dominant culture. Asking individuals within an organization to describe leadership qualities is another way of asking them to describe their organization's culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). According to Demarest et al. (2010),

most members of an organization typically find it difficult to describe their company's culture, often because they are so immersed in it. They have not thought about the unique elements, symbols, rituals, stories, events, and demonstrated behaviors that make their organization's culture what it is. (241)

Researchers have advocated the view that "the people make the place" (Wanous et al., 1992). Others maintained that a healthy organization can achieve alignment with its people (Lencioni, 2012). *Alignment* is based on achieving the employees' psychological contract as a result of their organizational experience. A good organizational experience results in higher job satisfaction, alignment, and commitment, as opposed to turnover intention and possible turnover when a psychological contract has been broken.

According to Sull et al. (2022), a toxic corporate culture is 10 times more important than compensation in contributing to turnover and is, by far, the strongest predictor of attrition in the industry. Some of the leading contributing elements to toxic cultures include failure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; workers feeling disrespected; and unethical behavior. One of the study's participating managers stated:

I believe we have a culture that I perceive as an inert one. It is not taking us anywhere. . . . Our values, beliefs, norms, and what we stand for are not motivating. It doesn't inspire me nor motivate or inspire others. . . . My boss is not a leader [and] is a follower too.

Another participant added that "our culture does not promote creativity. We lack the cultural values and norms that emphasize the need for employees to feel empowered, experiment, and take risks. . . . Over time, people who do not fit, quit!" Commenting on the political/cultural environment, one manager stated that "while promoting from within bolsters strong values and commitment, promoting based on loyalty to the leader or personal relationships doesn't build loyalty . . . it nourishes the political atmosphere and discourages people from working hard."

Consequences of Failed Leadership Behavior

The study sample identified more than 20 different consequences of failed leadership behavior, including turnover intention and turnover, toxic environment, tension, occupational stress, low morale, lower job performance, lower job

satisfaction, lower motivation, and absenteeism, among others. Note that other consequences are also important to understand. Figure 3 illustrates the consequences of failed leadership and their frequency.
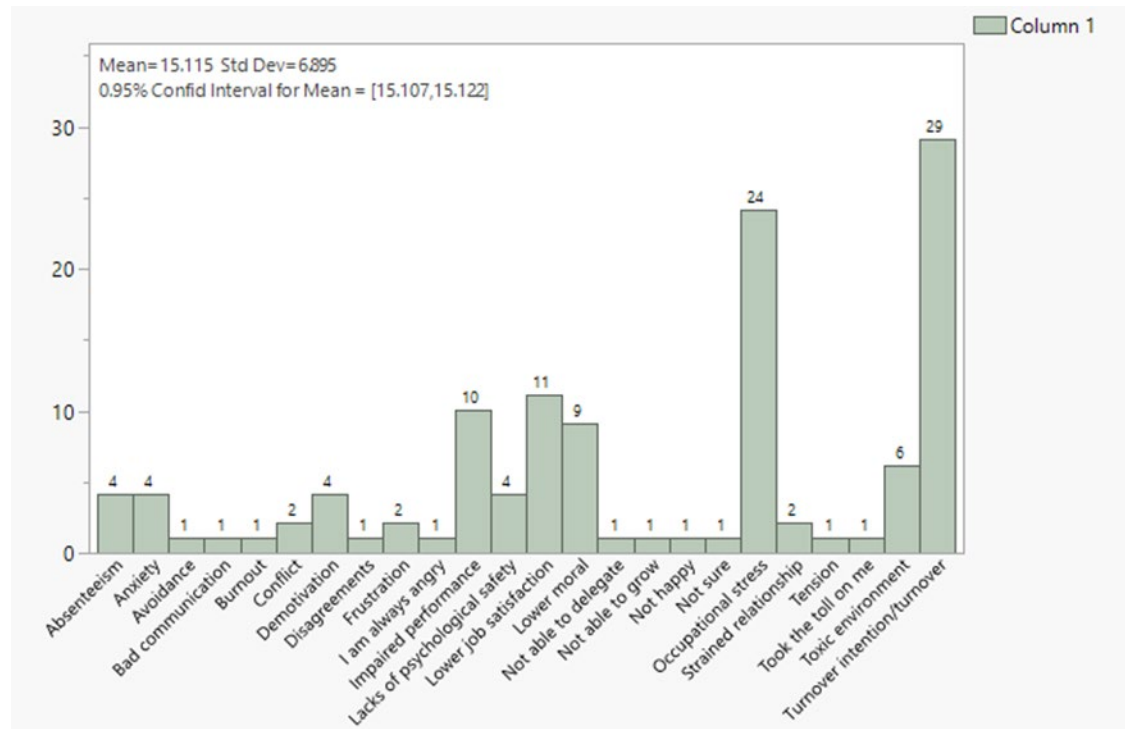

Figure 3. Consequences of failed leadership behavior

Turnover Intention and Turnover. The majority of the study respondents, 29 managers (about 67%) viewed turnover intention and possible turnover as serious consequences of failed leadership. While *turnover intention* is referred to as the cognitive precursor of a leaving behavior from an organization (Steel & Ovalle, 1984), *turnover* is the voluntary separation behavior of someone from the organization (Coomber & Barriball, 2007; George & Jones, 2012). Sun and Wang (2017) asserted that good leadership—specifically, transformational leadership complemented with a collaborative culture—is instrumental in preventing employees from forming intentions to leave and lowering an organization's voluntary turnover rate. Similarly, other studies concluded that transformational leadership positively influences employees' turnover intention by ensuring job satisfaction and commitment to an organization (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019; Lim et al., 2017). It is the lack of commitment, coupled with job

dissatisfaction—extrinsic and intrinsic—that plays a major role in turnover intention or actual turnover behaviors.

Studies' findings have concluded that turnover intention strongly contributes to actual employee turnover (Biron & Boon, 2013; Rahman & Nas, 2013). Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggested that "a key factor in why people stay in the organization is their managers. It's equally important in why people leave organizations. People don't generally quit companies, they quit managers" (283). One of the study participants noted that "as I am demotivated and unhappy with our toxic culture, I am withdrawn and keep thinking [I] to want to leave. . . . I have a horrible boss!" Another participant shared a similar sentiment, adding:

> My organization is synonymous with high turnover. A few years ago, our organization added about twelve new employees and three different managers for various functions. However, in less than a year, only about three employees and one manager [have] stayed. . . . Unfortunately, there's limited intervention by the CEO, which many of us believe is a big part of our problem. . . . We have a revolving door.

According to George and Jones (2012), turnover is costly to organizations as it involves the cost of hiring and training new people. Additionally, it brings disruption for existing organizational members and possible project delays, and it causes negative emotionality for other team members, especially when the quitting employee is a member of that team. Similarly, Elçi et al. (2012) concluded that while employees' turnover can be understood and explained through their intention, ethical leadership and leadership effectiveness negatively affect the turnover intention of employees. Other factors, including organizational commitment, work-related stress, job satisfaction, self-esteem, and supervisor support affect turnover intention and, subsequently, turnover (Siong et al., 2006).

Occupational Stress. Twenty-four participants (56%) stated that occupational stress is one key factor connected to failed leadership behavior. This notion is shared by Jacobs (2019), who asserted that "occupational stress can result from a variety of workplace factors that can range from subtle (e.g., unjustified reprimand by a leader) to more pervasive (e.g., work overload or continuous bullying from a leader)" (para. 5). The stress in today's organizations is real and

serious. Some employees burn out and leave the organization; others might cope by seeking counseling for mental, physical, or behavioral health issues. Others cope by abusing alcohol or drugs. Regardless, it is a losing situation for any organization. A situation like this is an organizational pacing challenge.

There's substantial evidence in the literature on occupational stress (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013; Mosadeghrad, 2014; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989) indicating that stress resulting from workplace factors—including leadership—might lead to undesirable physiological consequences (e.g., headaches, dizziness, stomachaches, backaches, hives, heart attacks, and impaired immune system functioning); psychological consequences (e.g., being in a bad mood or feeling anxious, worried, bitter, scornful, upset, or hostile); and behavioral consequences (e.g., impaired performance, strained interpersonal relations, absenteeism, and turnover). As one study participant stated:

> I keep having a stomach churning at any time I sit down with my boss to review our work progress or at any time I meet with him regardless. He is a big part of my anxiety. . . . I do not feel good physically or emotionally. . . . I am always on the edge! I am constantly stressed out and always on the [lookout] to leave the company.

Another study participant added:

> I am demotivated and feel dispensable. I am always looking for a different job at a different organization. [The] reasons I did not leave yet—I have a family, and I am afraid to fall into the same style somewhere else. . . . We suffer from anxiety and stress.

Similarly, another participant said that "working there made me stressed; I had to work harder to prove myself and continue to be productive. Eventually, I left. . . . It taught me not to handle others the way I was treated by my former boss!" The stress concern was also articulated by another study participant, who said that "I take my stress home. I am miserable at all times. While others enjoy their evenings and weekends, I don't! I don't feel good on Sundays knowing that Monday is the beginning of another stressful working week with my boss. I keep my stress to myself. . . . I have a family to feed!"

Lower Job Satisfaction. Eleven participants (26%) stated that low job satisfaction is caused by failed leadership behavior. A few research studies have

concluded that employees' direct supervisors have the greatest influence on their job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019; Avolio et al., 1999; Mardanov et al., 2008; Tuna et al., 2011). Perhaps one of the most important determinants of job satisfaction is the situation at work. How interesting, challenging, or boring the tasks a person performs are depends on factors like the physical work environment, the quality of interaction with others, and the way an organization treats its employees (Brief, 1998; George & Jones, 2012; Ghazzawi, 2008).

When dealing with leaders who are not compassionate or supportive of their teams, the emotional dissonance is a greater source of stress for employees. According to George and Jones (2012), emotional labor is a consequence of job dissatisfaction and leads to poor performance, high turnover, and frequent absenteeism. Similarly, De Clercq et al. (2019) concluded that employees who face uncivil behaviors at work are more likely to be unhappy and experience negative feelings about their jobs. Job dissatisfaction was also associated with employees' lower propensity for undertaking voluntary efforts to assist other organizational members. One study participant stated that "I do not feel good about being there. I am always unhappy and nervous; I constantly think about my future and for how long I will take the abuse. . . . I am like others—very unhappy and only buying time."

Impaired Performance. Ten study participants (23%) believed that leadership behavior affects job performance. Employees' performance of tasks is subject to their identification with a leader or organization, which is relevant to their conformity with the norms and standards required of them to perform (Bass, 1985; Tuna et al., 2016). Bass (1985) asserted that transformational leadership creates organizational identification and promotes desirable values, as opposed to transactional leadership's limited impact. One study participant stated, "ours is a tense environment; you cannot share freely. I hated my job as I got lots of psychological problems. My performance is lacking and way beyond what I am capable of."

Employees' performance is directly connected to effective leadership. It is through the effects of comprehension, analysis, planning, and motivation that

leaders augment the level of employees' performance (Iqbal et al., 2015). Similarly, Belonio (2012) concluded that leadership style affects various aspects of employees' job satisfaction, which then affects job performance. Impaired or ineffective performance, as documented by Miner (2002), includes motivational problems, emotional problems, work-group problems, organizational problems, and problems related to the work situation. Interestingly, all of these problems are connected to leadership, or more accurately, the lack of leadership.

Lower Morale. Nine participants (21%) stated that lower morale is a consequence of failed leadership behavior. The above-mentioned conceptualizations of failed leadership could negatively affect people's emotions and moods. George and Jones (2012) defined *emotions* as overt reactions that express feelings about events. They argued that all emotions share key properties; they always have an object—something or someone that triggers them. A *mood,* however, is an unfocused, relatively mild feeling that exists as background to our daily experiences. It can fluctuate rapidly from good to bad. Emotions and moods can influence people's behavior at work in terms of job performance. Negative emotions can distract a worker, affect decision-making capabilities, and even affect memory (George & Jones, 2012). One study participant stated:

> People who don't understand our boss do exactly what he wants them to do as opposed to what they should do. . . . People are having low morale and getting stressed out. . . . They don't like him or respect him. They try as much as possible to avoid him. The irony is [that] you will need to be tough and stand up to him to get promoted. People who avoid him usually stay behind or quit. The impact on the organization is severe. We have a high turnover rate and low morale. . . . This lower-than-usual morale is always justified by him and our upper managers as a consequence of a high-stress industry.

Lower subordinates' morale was supported by another study participant, who stated that she is suffering from low morale as a consequence of not having a good leader. She said:

> I am, like others, . . . [am] suffering from low morale. I tend to strengthen myself and focus on the positive things; it is not easy. . . . I am unmotivated, stressed out, and have low morale even if I am away from work.

Conclusion

What is obvious from this study and others regarding failed leadership is that this phenomenon of leadership is common, and dealing with it is not an easy task. The findings from the study's interviews were striking. Although many characteristics relevant to subordinates' perceptions, antecedents, and consequences of their failed leaders were identified and documented, the focus was on the attributes that got the most attention from the responding managers (at least 20%). The results show that the concept of failed leadership is associated with certain behavioral characteristics as experienced and/or perceived by leaders' subordinate managers, including negative, judicious, critical, or doesn't project positive energy; not sincere, not trusting, or vague; micromanager; self-centered, selfish, egocentric, or know-it-all; not civil, hostile, not pleasant, or insulting; lacks people skills; and closed-minded or opinionated. Additionally, study participants' attribution of causes of the leaders' displayed behaviors included personality factors, a person's attributes, and situational factors, including organizational culture.

The current study has shown that there can be devastating effects on individuals, groups, and organizations. The consequences of this pattern of failed leadership on the followers include a variety of outcomes, such as demotivation, turnover intention and turnover, occupational stress, job dissatisfaction, lower performance, and lower morale. When leaders are put in the wrong place or situation, they can lead people down the wrong path. The practices of failed leaders can lead their organizations into downward spirals. However, for good leaders who are perceived by followers as such, job satisfaction, dedication, and commitment have no end.

Practical Implications for Organizations

As is clear from this study, failed or ineffective leadership is common. Accordingly, the study findings have important implications for organizations that need to be considered when addressing these major challenges.

- *Awareness Training:* Leadership characteristics and behavioral awareness training is needed to enhance leaders' understanding of both ineffective as

well as effective leadership styles and behavioral norms. Leadership skill-building training must focus on providing managers and leaders with specific behavioral tools to improve their interactions with subordinates and others in the workplace.

- ***Careful Selection and Personality Tests:*** Organizations should pay careful attention when selecting people for managerial/leadership positions. The selection must also be based on a personality test that measures basic aspects of the prospective manager/leader's personality. Careful selection needs to be validated when promoting managers and/or leaders. Careful assessment and selection ensures that managers and leaders with the right skills and attributes will perform more effectively.

- ***Behavioral Modeling Training***: Behavioral modeling is one of the most widely used methods of intervention for teaching supervisory-type skills and other needed skills. It involves showing managers and/or leaders the correct method of doing something, including teaching managerial and leadership behavior, letting trainees practice the right methods, and then providing feedback regarding their performance.

- ***Creation of a Safe, Supportive Environment and a Healthy Culture:*** Organizations should create a healthy working environment in which people can freely express themselves and leaders empower and demonstrate compassion to organizational members. Building a healthy culture and having needed leadership at all levels of the organization are determinants of a sustainable, effective, and healthy organization.

- ***Executive Coaching:*** An executive coach may provide an organization with the means to improve its top managers' and leaders' effectiveness. An executive coach usually questions subjects' superiors, peers, subordinates, and in some instances, family members to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to counsel them so they can overcome their weaknesses and capitalize on the strengths.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this empirical research is an attempt to contribute to the knowledge on failed leadership, it has several limitations; subsequently, the study conclusions are made with caution. One limitation of the study might be possible respondent bias, as it may be argued that some respondents might not have been able to objectively connect and think through the questions when they responded. Accordingly, the study results could have been overstated. A second limitation is relevant to the study sample (43 participants, mostly from Southern California). It is suggested that future research should have a larger population sample to enhance the generalizability of the results. A final limitation of the study is related to the use of a convenient sample. Studies in different regions or countries might produce different results. Therefore, the generalizability of these findings to other countries or cultures is not reasonable. Similarly, more studies comprised of managers and leaders from different regions and possibly different cultures are needed to draw a better generalization and allow for future meta-analyses.

Future research would benefit greatly from more comparative research and semi-structured interviews with focus groups of employees, managers, and leaders to examine this phenomenon of leadership and increase the study's reliability. Despite these limitations, the current results provide important findings and useful contributions to the ongoing research on failed or ineffective leadership.

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