PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP FINAL PAPER

A Term Report by

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Introduction to Leadership: Principles and Practices

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Certification of Original Work

I hereby certify that this Term Report constitutes my own product, that where the language of

other is set forth, APA guidelines (as modified for this class) have been followed, and that

appropriate credit is given where I used the languages, idea, expression or writing of others.

Alexis Rose Ribakoff

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Introduction

Over the course of this semester we have learned topics that have helped me explore aspects of my leadership style. These concepts helped me to understand the type of leader I am currently and the type of leader I want to be later in life. I discovered what values I highly value as a person and as a leader. One of those being empathy which I think is the most important trait to have as a leader. Traits like empathy make for an ethical leader. Overall, this class has taught me that there's a lot that goes into being a leader. Leadership is process of give and take and how you view the world around you affects how the world views you.

Definition of Selected Terms

The following selected terms were defined to clarify their meaning in the context of this Report:

1. Personality: the complex of characteristics that distinguishes an individual or a nation or group. (Merriam-Webster)

2. Vision: The ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom. (Oxford Dictionaries)

3. Values: Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. (Business Dictionary)

4. Practice: to perform or work at repeatedly so as to become proficient. (Merriam-Webster)

5. Mastery: having great skill at something or total dominance over something. (Vocabulary.com)

6. Habit: something that you do often or regularly. (Collins Dictionary)

7. Ethics: The basic concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct. It includes study of universal values such as the essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights. (Business Dictionary)

8. Hardiness: alternatively referred to as personality hardiness or cognitive hardiness in the literature. Described as a pattern of personality characteristics that distinguished managers and executives who remained healthy under life stress, as compared to those who developed health problems. (Wikipedia)

Assessment and Application of Personality/Temperament to Leadership Practice

I believe myself to a positive and a happy person. Although sometimes I tend to be pessimistic, overall I would say that I am a positive person. I also think that I am funny and I know how to make people laugh. Whenever someone is sad or does not feel well I always try to make it my mission to make them feel better even just by making them laugh which is such a small thing. I also believe that I am easygoing. I do not like confrontation and because of that I usually will just go with the flow as opposed to interjecting my opinion which causes disagreements. It is not that I hold my opinions back, it is more that I just genuinely do not care one way or another when it comes to a lot of things. I also believe myself to be an empathetic person. Because I have gone through so much in my life, I am able to relate to people when they are going through hardships. I am able to put myself into other people's shoes very easily and see where they are coming from. Sometimes, this makes me look like the devil's advocate but in reality, I am just able to see where people are coming from and why they believe in the things that they believe. I believe myself to be an extroverted person because I am not afraid to talk to people nor am I afraid to show who I really am with fear of judgment.

I believe that all these personality traits that I have will affect my present and future leadership practice in a positive way. This is because I want to be a teacher and being a teacher means that you have to be positive, happy, and easygoing. Likewise, as a teacher, you need to be empathetic towards your students and their parents. For example, if a parent and I have a disagreement on how I reprimanded their child's actions, I have to put myself in their shoes and see where they are coming from on this issue. I have to remember that while I am their child's teachers, they are the parents. One trait of mine that I think might have a negative impact on my present and future leadership practice will be the fact that I do not like confrontation. I will need to learn that as a teacher and as a leader, I am going to have to do this. Overall, I think that most of my personality traits will help me later in life when I become a leader for other people.

Personal Leadership Vision

As a leader, I have a vision of what how I want to lead in the future. As a leader, I believe one of the biggest things I value is being able to practice what you preach. Therefore, when I am a leader in the future or a teacher, I believe that it is important for me to also adhere to what I tell other people to do. One small example might be the use of cell phones in the classroom. If I tell my students that there is a no cell phone policy, then I also have to adhere to this rule for myself. I cannot look like a hypocrite to the people that are supposed to be taking orders from me.

Likewise, I think that it is important for a leader to respect their followers in the same way that their followers respect them. Leaders need to value their follower's loyalties and remind them that they are important to the organization. When I have my own classroom of kids, I believe that it is important for me to acknowledge when one of my students does something well. I also think it is important for me to acknowledge my students when they do something or say

something that may not be right because I want them to keep taking risks and answer things even if they may be wrong. I think that it is important to acknowledge people's efforts and to not disregard them when their answer may not be the thing that their superior is looking for. Trust is something that should be valued in a classroom setting. "The most important action that a leader must take to encourage the building of trust on a team is to demonstrate vulnerability first" (Lencioni). Therefore, my personal leadership vision for myself is a leadership style that is not hypocritical nor degrading when it comes to the needs and feelings of my followers or in my case, future students.

Articulation and Amplification of Leadership Values

As a leader and as a person, I have certain values that I uphold more than others. Some of those values are love, health, family, loyalty, and morality. When we did that activity in class where we had to go through a deck of values and pick the ones that we resonate with the most, those were the values that I chose. I chose each of those values for a specific reason. I choose love because I think that is the center of it all. Love connects to so many different aspects of a person's life. For example, you can have love for people but you can also have love for things that you do and for memories you hold. Likewise, I chose health because that is something that we take for granted every day unless we are face to face with its wrath. Our health is something that can be easily stripped away for us which is why I try not to take it for granted and value it so dearly. I chose family because I believe that your family can be made up of people who are blood-related to you but are also people who you just consider your family because of that connection that you have with them. I picked this card because I believe that you can find your family anywhere. I picked loyalty as one of my main values because to me, it is important for the

people that I care about remain loyal to me and to always be there for me when I need them to

be. Because I am a loyal person I value loyalty very highly because I want them to treat me the

way that I treat them. Lastly, I chose morality because it is important to me that I and the people

I choose surround myself with have good intentions and good values.

Ethical Practice

Ethics and ethical values are an important part of being a leader. It is so easy for a leader

to become an unethical leader and lead in a way that only benefits themselves and not the rest of

the group. Ethics can be referred to as, "standards of behavior that tell us how human beings

ought to act in the many situations in which they find themselves- as friends, parents, children,

citizens, business people, teachers, professionals, and so on" (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, &

Meyer). Some ethical values that I believe that all leaders should have are honesty, loyalty,

trustworthiness, and accountability. Without these ethical values, it is very easy for a leader to

make unethical decisions. A leader should be honest because they are not just doing something

for their own sake, they are doing it for a greater cause and for a larger group of people.

Therefore, if they were to keep facts hidden from their followers, this would break the trust

between a leader and a follower. Being honest is an integral part of being a leader. As a leader, it

is also important to be loyal. Leaders need to be loyal to their organization or cause as well as

their followers. In order to build trust in a relationship, leaders need to be loyal to the people who

are loyal to them. Furthermore, trustworthiness and accountability are two very important aspects

of being an ethical leader. This is because being trustworthy means that your followers can rely

on you to do what you say and to practice what you preach. Likewise, being accountable means

that your followers can also rely on you to own up to your actions or the actions of the

organization.

Hardiness Assessment and Fortification Plan

The Hardiness Assessment is a test that gages people's ability to work under stressful

situations. The three components of the Hardiness Assessment are commitment, control, and

challenge. According to AmeriHealth' research on Stress Awareness Health Education Program,

"Stress-hardy people realize they have control over their feelings. They may not necessarily have

any control over the situation, but they can control how they react to that situation. Stress-hardy

people view things as challenges instead of seeing them as being difficult. Stress-hardy people

are committed to something, such as family, school, or career goals" (AmeriHealth). Because of

these findings, I can conclude that I am fairly positive stress-hardy person. This is because while

I am an optimistic person, I do let stress overtake me sometimes. I believe that while I am

committed and I like to have control over certain things, I sometimes do not know how to handle

challenges. Like most people, I would rather do things in an easier way so when challenges arise,

I sometimes do not know how to handle them so I then become stressed. Although once I get

started on a challenge then I can usually accomplish it, it's just the initial shock of a challenge

being presented that trips me up. Therefore, in the future, I am going to try to not get scared or

stressed by challenges that arise in my life. This will ensure that I can become a completely

positive stress-hardy person.


Personal Leadership Development Plan

As time goes on and as my education progresses, I am going to learn how to become a better leader. My leadership style now is definitely going to change as I grow. The more I learn about leadership, the better I will be at applying it to my own life. For example, when there's a group project, I tend to take the lead. When I am in a situation with other people, I am not afraid to let my voice be heard. When I am doing my summer jobs where I have to be responsible for a group of children, I am a leader. At my summer job at a camp, I am responsible for up to twenty children on any given week. Before my first year at this camp, I never really put into effect what I had been taught all these years about leadership. At this camp, I was the sole person who made the decisions that benefitted my group. Not only was I legally obligated to make those decisions for a group of minors, but it was also just expected because I was the oldest person in the group and therefore the wisest.

These new experiences that I take on will be the real stepping stones into who I will become as a leader. From just that one summer, I learned many things about myself and how I lead. For example, I learned that I do not like to be told what to do unless I directly ask for help. I also learned that when I lead I tend to want to stick to a certain schedule when in reality I do not always need to be so exact in everything I do. That area of my leadership is something that I need to work and I know I will fix through my future leadership endeavors.

Depiction of Personal Leadership Practice Model

Figure 1

Personal Leadership Practice Model
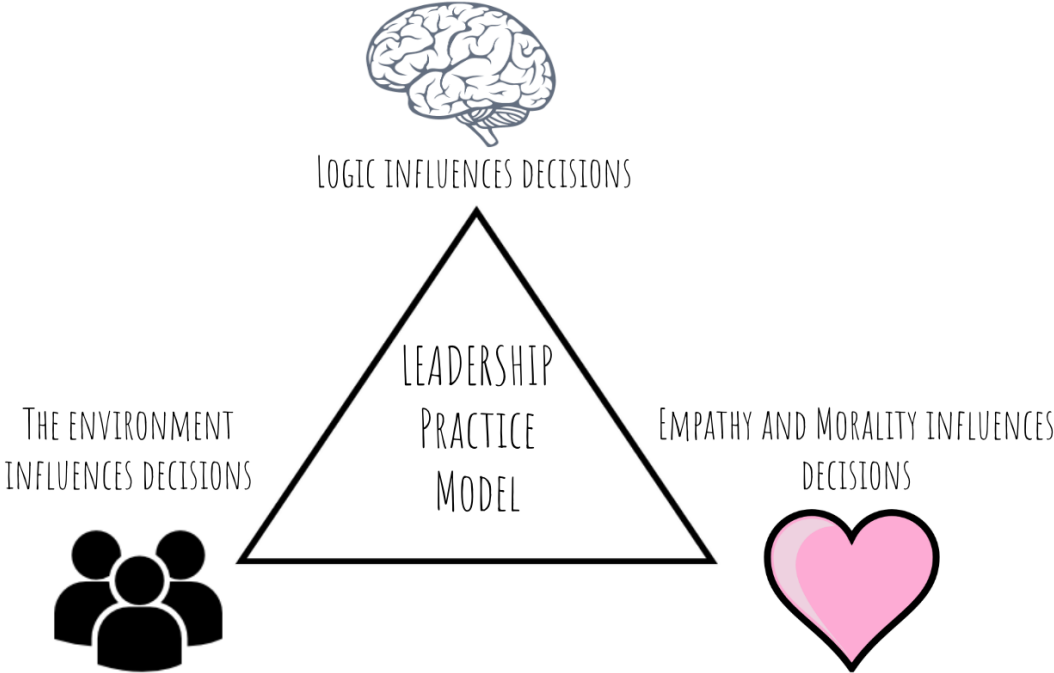
My personal depiction of leadership model is based on three different factors. Those three

factors being the environment, personality traits such as empathy and morality, and logic. The

environment connects to the people and situations I am in. Depending on the situation, I am

going to lead differently. External factors that come along with environmental changes are

influencing factors on my leadership. Likewise, traits such as empathy and morality influence

my leadership decisions as well. With empathy, "This entails learning to walk in someone else's

shoes. Being able to empathize is a sign of our maturity" (Lopez). Those traits are traits that I

strive to always have when I am in a leadership position. I want to always practice those traits

when I am leading because I feel that having those traits make for a ethical leader. Having those

traits also allows the leader to connect with the people they are leading on a more personal level.

Furthermore, logic influences my leadership decision because everytime I make a decision while in a leadership position, I need to use the most logical and thought out approach to handle problems. I believe it is important for leaders to use logic in everything they do because without it their decisions may not benefit the greater good. In addition, I put them in on the corners of a triangle because I believe each of these things connect to one another and work together as one process even though they are different parts. Therefore, while each part is its own separate being they work together as equals when it comes to my personal leadership style.

Conclusion

Overall, I believe that my empathic leadership style will end up helping when I decide to pursue the leadership role of a elementary school teacher later in life. In order to be the most effective teacher and leader that I can be, I have to be able to practice what I preach in and out of the classroom setting. One example of this would be to be honest to the people who I am supposed to be a role model for. An ethical leader is one who practices honesty, loyalty, trustworthiness, and accountability. In order to effectively practice those traits, I am going to have to work on being the best leader I can be. I believe that this will come with time due to the many working experiences I will likely take on as well as all the challenges that go along with them. Therefore, using my personal leadership practice model and assessments like the hardiness test, I will come to understand myself as a leader and hopefully become this leader who I aspire to be.

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