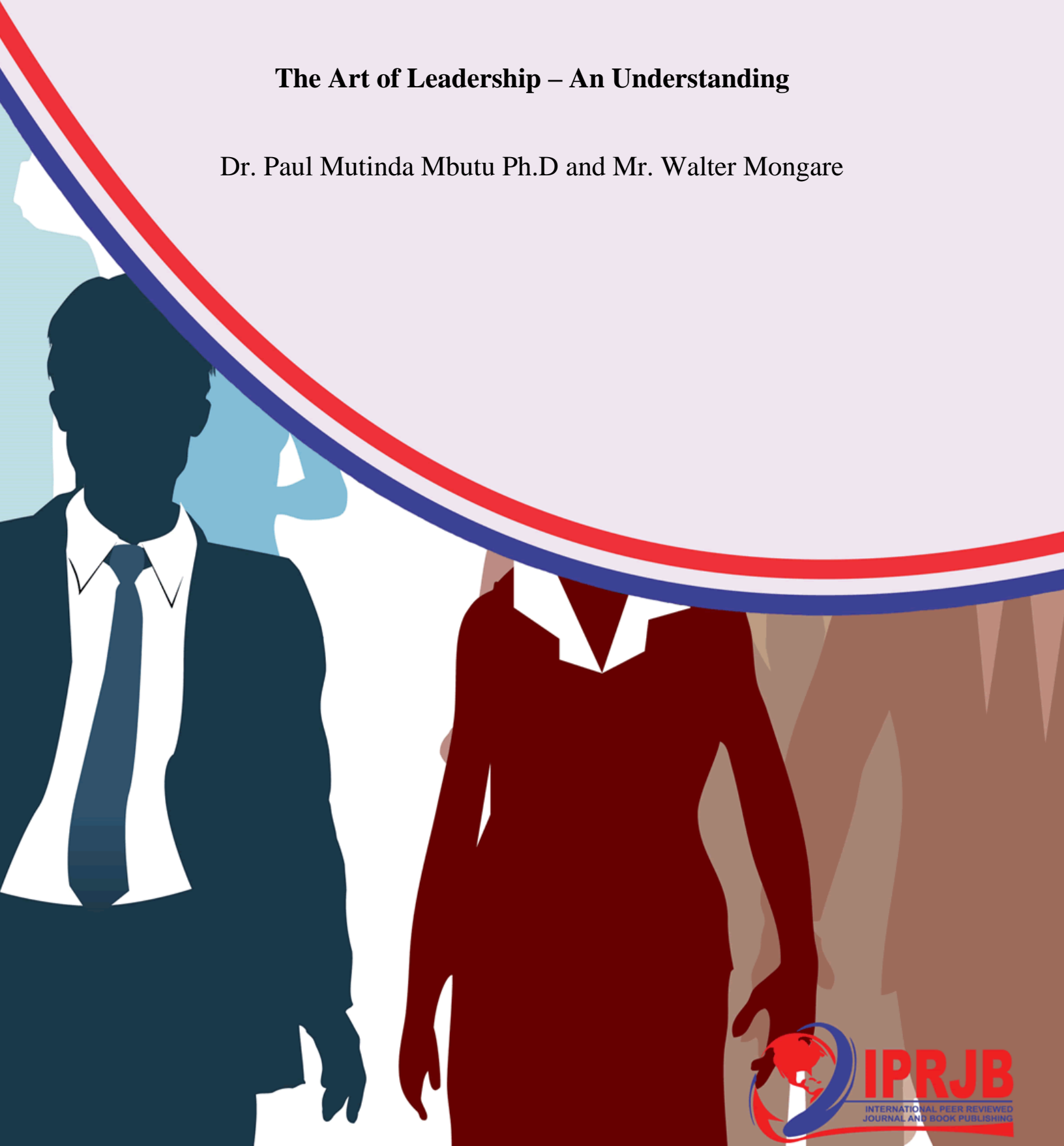


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## **The Art of Leadership – An Understanding**

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to give a general overview of the term “leadership” as used and explained by different authors and how it is situated in the context of group or organizational communication. I will attempt to give various definitions of key terms and concepts used in leadership discourse. Key questions like; what is leadership? What does it mean? Who is a leader? What does a leader do? Types of leaders and types of leadership styles or approaches will be explored.

**Methodology:** The paper adopted a desktop methodology research design. Key words such as leadership styles, leadership, leader, leadership approaches, and leadership communication skills were used to source published papers from popular search engines such as google and scholar. The published papers were then assessed for quality and those found relevant were used to generate results. The type of data analysis method used was qualitative data analysis. Specifically, content analysis was used to identify key themes and research gaps from papers.

**Findings:** Transformational leadership was found to be a critical fundamental tool, particularly in the concept of getting others to buy into necessary changes in the environment, such as workplaces, communities, and government institutions. Another finding is that leadership is the transformational credibility and capacity of men and women in institutions, communities, regions, nations, and international settings to influence people emotionally, intellectually, relationally, and willfully toward shared vision, purpose, mission, goals, objectives and activities. Therefore, any leader taking up this model must continue to be an inspiring presence, one who leads by example and is responsible for motivating others. It appears to be a form of leadership well-suited to these current times characterized by uncertainty, and societal instability.

**Unique contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice:** The paper sheds light on the role that leader’s personal communication skills play in leadership. Transformational leadership is a theoretical dimension to leadership styles and types that merits consideration. Policy makers may prescribe the need for transformational leadership in the various policy documents such as the constitution sections which advocate for leadership and governance among public and private institutions. Leaders in all fora could apply transformational leadership in a bid to improve leader-follower performance outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Leadership, Leaders, Leadership Approaches, Contingency Approach, Transactional, Leadership Communication Skills, Transformational, Charismatic Leadership*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION: DEFINITIONS

In her book, *The End of Leadership*, Kellerman (2012), decries the growing gap between leadership theory and how it is understood and practiced by authors and consultants of the leadership and management industry. Kellerman questions the extent to which leadership can be taught, which for the purpose of this paper underscores the challenges that implementation of leadership is faced with from a global to the local scene.

Leadership is a term that has received different and varying definitions in today's literature – meaning that there is no “one” definition that is considered classical. In an attempt to define leadership, Fairhurst (2007) observe that the definition he prefers for leadership is the simple one by Robinson (2001) which states: “leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or actions are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them” (p.93). On the other hand, Hackman and Johnson (2004) define leadership as “human (symbolic) communication, which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others to meet shared group goals and needs” (p.12). Northouse (2004) point out that the following components can be identified as central to the phenomenon of leadership, namely: a) leadership is a process, b) leadership involves influence, c) leadership occurs within a group context, and d) leadership involves goal attainment. Thus, based on those components, Northouse define leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p.3).

Northouse (2004) argue that defining leadership as a **process** means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader, but is a transactional event that occurs between the leader and his or her followers. He goes on to say “process” implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers. It emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event but rather an interactive event” (p.3). In the same vein, Fairhurst (2007) argue that leadership is a **process** of influence and meaning management among actors that advances a task or goal. Leadership involved influence component means that it is concerned with how the leader affects followers. Influence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without influence, leadership does not exist (Northouse, 2004, p.3). Fairhurst (2007) points out that leadership as influence and meaning management need not be performed by only one individual appointed to a given role; it may shift and distribute itself among several organizational members. Northouse (2004, p.3) argue that leadership occurs in groups. Groups are the context in which leadership takes place. Leadership involves influencing a group of individuals who have a common goal. The group that he talks about can be a small task group, a community group, or a large group encompassing an entire organization. Hackman and Johnson (2004) assert “viewing leadership from a communication perspective recognizes that leadership effectiveness depends on our willingness to interact with others and on developing effective communication skills” (p.20). Northouse (2004, p.3) further observe “leadership includes attention to goals”. This means that leadership has to do with directing a group of individuals toward accomplishing some task or end. Thus, leaders direct their energies toward individuals who are trying to achieve something together. For that reason, leadership occurs and has its effects in contexts where individuals are moving toward a goal. The goal is the group driving force. In other words, leadership is the art of influencing followers towards achieving a common goal. Vroom and Jago (2007) define leadership as a “process of motivating

people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things” (p. 18). To me, the research gap that exists and demonstrated by current literature is leadership that is transformational in nature that instills credibility and capacity in men and women in institutions, communities, regions, nations, and international settings to influence people emotionally, intellectually, relationally, and willfully toward shared vision, purpose, mission, goals, objectives and activities. The next logical question is to discuss the nature of leadership approaches.

## 2.0 THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

Northouse (2004, p. 4) points out that the nature of leadership can be understood by looking at the questions such as how leadership as a trait differs from leadership as a process; how appointed leadership differs from emergent leadership; and how concepts of power, coercion, and management differ from leadership. From the traits approach, Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 64) argue that early social scientists believed that leadership qualities were innate; an individual was either born with the traits needed to be a leader or he or she lacked the physiological and psychological characteristics necessary for successful leadership. This trait approach suggests that nature plays a key role in determining leadership potential. Similarly, Northouse (2004) share the same perspective in that the trait perspective suggests that certain individuals have special innate or inborn characteristics or qualities that make them leaders, and it is these qualities that differentiate them from non-leaders.

Bryman (1992) cited by Northouse (2004, p.14) argue that some of the personal qualities used to identify leaders include unique physical factors (e.g., height), personality features (e.g., extroversion), and ability characteristics (e.g., speech fluency). Unfortunately, this viewpoint assert that leadership traits resides in select people and restricts leadership to only those who are believed to have special, usually inborn, talents. Some of the traits that are central to this approach are: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. Northouse (2004, p. 22) point out that the strength of the trait approach is that it fits with the notion that leaders are the individuals who are “out front” and “leading the way” in our society.

The second approach is the situational approach which suggests that the traits, skills, and behaviors necessary for effective leadership vary from situation to situation. Thus, a leader is not always successful in every situation. A leader’s effectiveness depends on his or her personality, the behavior of followers, the nature of the task, and many other situational factors.

The third approach is the functional approach which basically looks at the way leaders behave. The underlying assumption of the functional approach is that leaders perform certain functions that allow a group or organization to operate effectively. An individual is considered a leader if he or she performs these functions. This approach attempts to identify specific communicative behaviors associated with leadership (Hackman and Johnson 2004, p. 64).

A fourth approach is the style. The style approach focuses exclusively on what leaders do and how they act. Northouse (2004, p. 65) point out that researchers studying the style approach determined that leadership is composed of essentially two general kinds of behaviors: *task behaviors* and *relationship behaviors*. Task behaviors facilitate goal accomplishment – they help group members to achieve their objectives, whereas relationship behaviors help subordinates feel comfortable with themselves, with each other, and with the situation in which they find

themselves. Hackman and Johnson (2004) argue that leadership boils down to two primary ingredients: work that needs to be done and the people who do the work. Without these ingredients there is no need for leadership. A superb summary of task and relationship behaviors.

The leader employing the task style is primarily concerned with the successful completion of task assignment. The task-oriented leader demonstrates a much greater concern for getting work done than for the people doing the work. The task leader is often highly authoritarian. In contrast, the interpersonal or relational leader is concerned with relationships. This style similar to the democratic style, emphasizes teamwork, cooperation, and supportive communication (Hackman and Johnson 2004, p. 47). The central purpose of the style approach is to explain how leaders combine task and relationship behaviors to influence subordinates in their efforts to reach a goal.

### **The Contingency Approach**

When other approaches do not work, the leader should consider the contingency approach. This approach is based on the assumption that the relationship between leader behaviors and traits and effectiveness depends on characteristics of the particular situation the leader is in. Jex and Britt (2008, p. 310) point out that the task of a leader, according to the contingency approach, is to first “read” the situation to determine what behaviors would be most appropriate. Once this is determined, the leader has to adjust his or her behavior to meet the demands of the situation. Modern theories that have been developed in the last 30 years and now considered leadership contingency theories include: 1) Fiedler’s contingency theory, 2) Path-Goal theory, 3) Vroom-Yetton-Jago model, and 4) Leader-member-exchange (LMX) model.

Fiedler contingency model proposes that the success of a leader depends on the interaction between characteristics of the situation and characteristics of the leader (Jex and Britt 2008, p. 311). According to Fiedler, situation favorability depends on three factors: Leader-member relations, Task structure, and Position power. The leader-member relations, reflects the extent to which a leader gets along well with his or her subordinates. Task structure, reflects whether the subordinates are working on a task that is very straightforward or whether the task is vague and unstructured. The position power of the leader is the amount of formal authority that a leader has over his or her subordinates. Jex and Britt (2008) argue that from a leader’s perspective, a high rather than a low position power is desirable. Thus, when position power is high, subordinates will typically do what the leader wants, and the leader does not have to exert a great deal of force over employees. However, when a leader’s position power is low, subordinates may still do what the leader wants, but the leader may have to expend a great deal of effort in order to make that happen.

The Path-Goal theory represents a very ambitious attempt to blend leadership and employee motivation into one theory. The basic idea behind this theory is that the role of a leader is really to help his or her subordinates become successful. Stated differently, the function of leaders is to show subordinates the “path to the goal” (Jex and Britt 2008, p. 316). What this theory states is that a leader must be able to adapt his or her leadership style to the subordinates being supervised and the situation. House (1971) cited in Jex and Britt (2008, p. 316) proposed that to be successful, a leader must be capable of utilizing the four different leadership styles: directive leadership, supportive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and participative leadership.

The essence of this theory is that: leaders need to possess a broad repertoire of behaviors that they can strategically call on depending on key aspects of the situation and characteristics of subordinates.

The Vroom-Yetton-Jago model (Vroom & Jago, 1988, 2007; Vroom & Yetton, 1973) is a contingency theory of leadership that focuses on one aspect of leadership: decision making. According to this model, leaders will be more effective to the extent that their decision-making style is compatible with the situations they face. Further, according to this model, in order to determine which decision-making style is most appropriate leaders must analyze a situation for the presence or absence of the following attributes: 1) the need for a quality decision; 2) whether the leader has sufficient information to make the decision alone; 3) the degree to which the problem is structured; 4) whether subordinates' acceptance is needed for implementation; 5) whether subordinates will accept the leader's decision; 6) the degree to which subordinates share the organization's goals; 7) whether there will likely be conflict among subordinates as to the most preferred decision; and 8) whether subordinates have enough relevant information to make a decision on their own. Thus, according to this model, these eight situational attributes will determine a "feasibility set" of decision-making strategies. Jex and Britt (2008, p. 321) argue that from a practical point of view, the Vroom-Yetton-Jago model is one of the more useful leadership theories that has been developed, because it provides leaders with some specific guidelines for making decisions, rather than merely describing leadership processes.

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) model was originally called the "Vertical Dyad Linkage Model of Leadership" developed by Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975). Jex and Britt (2008) observe that the term *Vertical Dyad* was originally used to describe this theory because of its emphasis on the unique relationship between leaders and subordinates. Then later it changed the name to LMX because this relationship is really one that reflects social exchange between the leader and the subordinate. According to Dansereau et al. (1975), within work groups there are typically two sets of employees: the in-group and the out-group. The in-group consists of employees who are trusted confidants of the leader, and the out-group consists of the group of subordinates who have more formal relationships with the leader. What this theory suggests is that it is desirable for leaders to develop positive exchange relationships with their subordinates. However, this may not be possible 100% of the time, but organizations may be able to facilitate the development of high-quality exchange relationships by training managers in such skills as communicating with subordinates, providing feedback, and engaging in coaching activities (Jex and Britt 2008, p. 322). The next section looks at who leaders are and their functions and skills.

### **3.0 LEADERS, FUNCTIONS AND SKILLS**

According to Northouse (2004), "leaders are the people who engage in leadership, and those individuals toward whom leadership is directed are referred to as followers" (p.3). Thus, both leaders and followers are involved together in the leadership process-and both need each other. Yukl (1998) argue that when we think of leaders, we recall times of turbulence, conflict, innovation, and change. That's the image the concept of a leader connotes. Northouse (2004) observe, "although leaders and followers are closely linked, it is the leader who often initiates the relationship, creates the communication linkages, and carries the burden for maintaining the relationship" (p.3). The two – leader and follower cannot do without the other. Leaders and

followers need to be understood in relation to each other (Hollander, 1992). They are in the leadership relationship together—two sides of the same coin (Rost, 1991).

Outstanding leaders enable followers to become leaders themselves. Followership expert Kelley (1992) sums up the work of followers and leaders this way: “in reality followership and leadership are two separate concepts, two separate roles .... Neither role corners the market on brains, motivation, talent, or action. Either role can result in an award-winning performance or a flop. The greatest successes require that the people in both roles turn in top-rate performances. We must have great leaders and great followers” (p.41). Looked at from that perspective of a relationship, leaders perform certain functions for the relationship to continue.

Hackman and Johnson (2004, pp. 6-7) point out that leadership shares all of the features of human communication. First, leaders use symbols to create reality. Leaders use language, stories, and rituals to create distinctive group cultures. Second, leaders communicate about the past, present, and future. They engage in evaluation, analysis, and goal setting. Thus, effective leaders create a desirable vision outlining what the group should be like in the future. Third, leaders make conscious use of symbols to reach their goals. Leaders create an agenda by establishing direction and communicating long-range views of the big picture. This process involves developing a desirable and attainable goal for the future, otherwise known as a vision (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, pp. 13-14). In addition, leaders mobilize others by aligning people. Alignment focuses on integration, teamwork, and commitment. They also execute their agenda by motivating and inspiring. This process focuses on empowerment, expansion, and creativity. More importantly, leaders exert a greater degree of influence and take more responsibility for the overall direction of the group. Followers, on the other hand, are more involved in implementing plans and carrying out the work.

The presence of a shared and meaningful vision is a central component of effective leadership. They are always alert. Thus, Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 23) point out that successful leaders are experts in processing cues from the environment. They attend to current events, to the activities of other groups and organizations, and to their own group norms and cultures, as well as to the physical environment. Most importantly, they solicit feedback from others. That brings the aspect of listening – listening that accurately interprets verbal and nonverbal messages. In the same light, effective leaders are skilled at sharing and responding to emotions. For example, they know how to communicate affection, liking, and excitement to followers. In addition, they know how to channel their emotions in order to achieve their objectives and to maintain friendly group relations (Hackman and Johnson 2004, p.25). Looking at the above definitions, I would define leaders as men and women who have the credibility, capacity and commitment to influence people around them toward higher standards of values, vision, and action whether in a group as small as a family, community or as large as an international forum.

### **Personal Skills**

Based on field research in administration and his own firsthand observations of executives in the workplace, Katz (1955) suggested that effective administration (i.e., leadership) depends on three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Katz argues that these skills are quite different from traits or qualities of leaders. Northouse (2004, p.36) made the distinction that skills imply what leaders can accomplish, whereas, traits imply who leaders are (i.e., their innate

characteristics). Technical skill is having knowledge about and being proficient in a specific type of work or activity. It requires competencies in a specialized area, analytical ability, and the ability to use appropriate tools and techniques (Katz, 1955, cited by Northouse 2004, p.36). In other words, technical skills involve a “hands on” activity with a basic product or process within an organization. On the other hand, human skill is having knowledge about and being able to work with people. It is quite different from technical skill, which has to do with working with things. Thus, human skills are “people skills”.

Northouse (2004) argue “to be a leader with human skills means being sensitive to the needs and motivations of others, and taking into account others’ needs in one’s decision making. In short, human skill is the capacity to get along with others as you go about your work” (p. 37). On the other hand, conceptual skills are abilities to work with ideas and concepts. Whereas technical skills deal with things and human skills deal with people, conceptual skills involve the ability to work with ideas (Northouse 2004, p.38). Thus a leader with conceptual skills is comfortable talking about the ideas that shape an organization and the intricacies involved. For that reason, a leader with conceptual skills works easily with abstractions and hypothetical notions. This kind of skill is most important at the top management levels in the sense that it has to do with the mental work of shaping the meaning of organizational or policy issues- understanding what a company stands for and where it is or should be going. Closely related is the term “envision”. Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 23) argue that the term, “envisioning” describes one additional conceptual activity needed for leadership. As leaders, we must be able to take the inputs we receive from linking with others and the environment and convert them into an agenda or vision for the future.

### **The Skills Model**

This model was developed by Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., (2000, p. 12) and was characterized as a capability model because it examines the relationship between a leader’s knowledge and skills (i.e., capabilities) and the leader’s performance. Northouse (2004, p.39) argue that leadership capabilities can be developed over time through education and experience. The skills approach suggests that many individuals have the potential for leadership. Thus, if people are capable of learning from their experiences, they can acquire leadership. Again, this approach frames leadership as the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that make effective leadership (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding et al., 2000, p. 12, cited in Northouse 2004, pp. 39-40).

The skills model is composed of five different components: 1) competencies, 2) individual attributes, 3) leadership outcomes, 4) career experience, and 5) environmental influences. The problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge are the three competencies that are the key factors that account for effective performance (Northouse 2004, p.40).

According to Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., (2000), problem-solving skills refer to a leader’s creative ability to solve new and unusual, ill-defined organizational problems. The skills include being able to define significant problems, gather problem information, formulate and generate prototype plans for problem solutions. It also demands that leaders understand their own leadership capacities as they apply to the unique problems and possible solutions to those problems within their organization. Thus, for leaders to solve organizational puzzles, the skills-based model suggests that problem-solving skills are essential. On the other hand, social



judgment skills refer to the capacity to understand people and social systems (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, Marks, & Gilbert, 2000, p. 46). These skills enable leaders to work with others to solve problems and to marshal support to implement change within an organization. In other words, these are the skills that are necessary to solve unique organizational problems.

Mumford and colleagues have delineated social judgment skills into the following categories: 1) perspective taking, 2) social perceptiveness, 3) behavioral flexibility, and 4) social performance. For leaders, perspective taking simply means understanding the attitudes that others have toward a particular problem or solution. It is empathy applied to problem-solving. It also means being sensitive to other people's perspectives and goals – being able to understand their point of view on different issues (Northouse, 2004, p. 42). Similarly, according to Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, and Mumford (1991), perspective taking skills can be likened to social intelligence. They are concerned with knowledge about people, the social fabric of organizations, and the interrelatedness of each of them.

Social perceptiveness on the other hand refers to having insight and awareness into how others within the organization function. It involves asking questions like: what is important to others? What motivates them? What problems do they face and how do they react to change? Zaccaro et al., (1991) point out that social perceptiveness means understanding the unique needs, goals, and demands of different organizational constituencies. Northouse (2004, p. 42) puts it succinctly that these skills allows the leader to “take the pulse” of employees on any issue at any time. Behavioral flexibility is the capacity to change and adapt one's behavior in light of an understanding of others' perspectives in the organization, whereas social performance includes a wide range of leadership competencies – which suggests that leaders need to be able to effectively communicate their own vision to others. It also means that when there is resistance to change, leaders need to function as mediators. To this end, skill in conflict resolution is an important aspect of social performance competency. In all, Northouse (2004) argue that social performance includes many related skills that may come under the umbrella of being a “good communicator.”

Knowledge on the other hand directly influences a leader's capacity to define complex organizational problems and to attempt to solve them (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000). It is knowledge and expertise that make it possible for people to think about complex systems and issues and identify possible strategies for appropriate change. Thus, it is knowledge that allows people to use the past to constructively confront the future (Northouse 2004, p.44).

### **Individual Attributes**

Individual attributes also impact leadership skills. For that reason, individual attributes that have an impact on leadership skills and knowledge include: 1) general cognitive ability, 2) crystallized cognitive ability, 3) motivation, and 4) personality. Northouse (2004) argue that general cognitive ability can be thought of as a person's intelligence. It includes perceptual processing, information processing, general reasoning skills, creative and divergent thinking capacities, and memory skills. Crystallized cognitive ability, on the other hand refers to intellectual ability that is learned or acquired over time. It includes being able to comprehend complex information and learn new skills and information, as well as being able to communicate to others in oral and written forms (Connelly et al., 2000, p. 71).

Concerning motivation, Northouse (2004, p.45) observe that taken together, the three aspects of motivation, i.e., willingness, dominance, and social good prepare people to become leaders. Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., (2000) argue that the skills model hypothesizes that any personality characteristic that helps people to cope with complex organizational situation is most likely related to leader performance.

Examining these skills, Northouse (2004, p. 46) assert that effective problem solving and performance represent the outcomes of leadership. These outcomes are strongly influenced by the leader's competencies (i.e., problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge). He goes on to argue that when leaders exhibit these competencies, they increase their chances of problem solving and overall performance. Zaccaro et al., (2000) point out that the criteria for good problem-solving are determined by the originality and the quality of expressed solutions to problem situation. And that good problem solving involves creating solutions that are logical, effective, and unique and that go beyond given information.

Equally important, environmental influences represent factors in a leader's situation that lie outside the leader's competencies, characteristics, and experiences. The environmental influences are a part of the skills model but not usually under the control of the leader – however, they affect his or her performance.

### **Leadership Communication Styles**

The most effective leadership communication style, according to Black and McCause (1964) cited by Hackman and Johnson (2004, p.5) is team management (9,9). Implementation of the 9,9 style in organizational contexts is associated with increased productivity and profitability, increased frequency of communication, and improved leader-follower relations.

According to House and Terence Mitchell, cited by Hackman and Johnson (2004, pp. 70-71), the ability to motivate followers is influenced by a leader's communication style as well as by certain situational factors. Four communication styles are identified, namely: 1) Directive leadership, which involve procedure-related communication behavior that includes planning and organizing, task coordination, policy setting and other forms of specific guidance; 2) Supportive leadership, deals with interpersonal communication focusing on concerns for the needs and well-being of followers and the facilitation of a desirable climate for interaction; 3) Participative leadership, involves communication designed to solicit opinions and ideas from followers for the purpose of involving followers in decision making; and 4) Achievement-oriented leadership, which involves communication focusing on goal attainment and accomplishment, emphasizing the achievement of excellence by demonstrating confidence in the ability of followers to achieve their goals. These four communication styles are comparable to the three leadership communication styles: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. Out of the three, the democratic leaders is the best because he or she engages in supportive communication that facilitates interaction between leaders and followers. The leader adopting the democratic communication style encourages follower involvement and participation in the determination of goals and procedures (Hackman and Johnson 2004, p.38). Also democratic leaders assume that followers are capable of making informed decisions and does not feel intimidated by the suggestions provided by the followers but believes that the contributions of others improve the

overall quality of decision making. However, the only negative element with democratic leadership is that it can become mired in lengthy debate over policy, procedures, and strategies.

Authoritarian leadership is effective in terms of output (particularly when the leader directly supervises behavior) but generally ineffective in enhancing follower satisfaction and commitment. The Laissez-faire style on the other hand can be effective when it represents guided freedom or when it is used with highly knowledgeable and motivated experts. In many situations, the costs associated with the authoritarian and laissez-faire styles of leadership can seriously hamper a leader's effectiveness (Hackman and Johnson 2004, p. 46).

The most significant task of senior leaders, according to Goleman and his colleagues (2002), is to foster a positive emotional climate. They introduce the term "primal leadership" to describe how effective leaders create or "prime" good feelings in followers. Creating a positive emotional climate brings out the best in leaders and followers alike, an effect called resonance. Hackman and Johnson (2004) argue, "the benefits of resonance include more optimism about reaching objectives, increased creativity, greater cooperation, and sustained focus on the task, all of which contribute to higher profits and growth" (p. 25).

Another significant concept in this discourse is emergent leadership. This type of leadership is not assigned by position, but rather it emerges over a period of time through communication. Fisher (1974) cited by Northouse (2004, pp.5-6) observe that some of the positive communication behaviors that account for successful leader emergence include being verbally involved, being informed, seeking others' opinions, initiating new ideas, and being firm but not rigid. Northouse (2004) argue in addition to communication behaviors, researchers have also found that personality plays a role in leadership emergence. He further observed, "those individuals who were more dominant, more intelligent, and more confident about their own performance (general self-efficacy) were more frequently identified as leaders by other members of their task group" (p. 5).

#### **4.0 TRANSACTIONAL, TRANSFORMATIONAL AND CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP**

According to Cox (2001), there are two basic categories of leadership: *transactional* and *transformational*. The distinction between transactional and transformational leadership was first made by Downton (1973, as cited in Barnett, McCormick & Connors, 2001) but the idea gained little currency until James McGregor Burns' (1978) work on political leaders was published. Barnett et al. (2001) said that, "Burns distinguished between ordinary (*transactional*) leaders, who exchanged tangible rewards for the work and loyalty of followers, and extraordinary (*transformational*) leaders who engaged with followers, focused on higher order intrinsic needs, and raised consciousness about the significance of specific outcomes and new ways in which those outcomes might be achieved." Hackman and Johnson (2004, p.89) point out that transformational leadership is empowering and inspirational; it elevates leaders and followers to higher levels of motivation and morality. The perspective of Hackman and Johnson concerning *transactional leadership* is that it is primarily "passive" in the sense that the behaviors most often associated with such leaders are establishing the criteria for rewarding followers and maintaining the status quo. But the leaders who go beyond transaction and engage in transformational leadership demonstrate active behaviors that include a sense of mission, inspiration, emotional support, and intellectual stimulation. The same argument is expanded by

Burns (1990) cited by Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 89) that the result of transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. Judge et al., (2004) said that, “the idea of transformational leadership was developed further by Bernard Bass, now Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Organizational Behavior, at the State University of New York (Binghamton), who disputed Burns conception of transactional and transformational leadership as opposites on a continuum. He suggested instead that they are separate concepts and that good leaders demonstrate characteristics of both” (p. 755).

Jex & Britt (2008) define transformational leadership as “the ability of a leader to articulate a clear and important vision that will motivate followers to strive to achieve” (p.308). Interestingly, Hackman and Johnson (2004, p.91) point out that Ted Zorn (1991) discovered a relationship between the complexity of a leader’s communication system and the tendency to exhibit transformational leadership behavior. Zorn found those leaders with the most developed cognitive and communicative abilities were the most likely to be perceived as transformational by their followers.

Thus, the characteristics of transformational leaders identified by different researchers are strikingly similar. Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 91) observe that five primary characteristics appear, in one form or another, in all of the classification systems dealing with extraordinary leaders. Thus, transformational leaders are creative, interactive, visionary, empowering, and passionate. Further, since transformational leadership can convert followers into leaders themselves, these characteristics are often filtered throughout transformed groups and organizations.

Transformational leadership fosters capacity development and brings higher levels of personal commitment amongst followers to organizational objectives. According to Bass (1990), “transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (p.21).”On the other hand, Barbuto (2005) argued that, together, heightened capacity and commitment are held to lead to additional effort and greater productivity.

Straker (2008) argued that transformational leaders are always visible and will stand up to be counted rather than hide behind their troops. He went on to say that such leaders show by their attitudes and actions how everyone else should behave. They also make continued efforts to motivate and rally their followers, constantly doing the rounds, listening, soothing, and enthusing. In other words, it is their unswerving commitment as much as anything else that keeps people going, particularly through the darker times when some may question whether the vision can ever be achieved. Straker (2008) underscores the fact that “ a transformational leader seeks to infect and re-infect their followers with a high level of commitment to the vision, and more than other approaches, they are people-oriented and believe that success comes first and last through deep and sustained commitment” (p. 9).

Judge and Piccolo (2004) have argued that transformational leadership is composed of four primary dimensions. The first dimension is idealized influence (charisma). This component refers to leaders setting the example of exemplary performance and dedication to the organization through conviction and emotional investment. Jex and Britt (2008) point out, “those who are charismatic tend to have a number of common traits: a captivating tone of voice, direct eye contact with the listener, animated facial expressions, and a powerful, confident, and dynamic communication style” (p. 323). They go on to argue that this type of communication style helps a leader to communicate his or her vision and to generate enthusiasm for it. It also helps more generally by increasing the leader’s appeal to his or her followers. Thus, charismatic leaders have great “presence” and make a tremendous impression on those around them.

The second dimension is inspirational motivation. One task that is often cited in this regard is providing a vision. Jex and Britt (2008) argue, “ a vision applies to all members of the organization and can thus serve as a general “rallying point” for everyone” (pp. 323-324).

The third dimension is intellectual stimulation. This dimension refers to the transformational leader’s ability to challenge subordinates and encourage them to be creative and take appropriate risks. Leaders may encourage subordinates to think outside the box in order to come up with innovative solutions that will instill a competitive advantage to the organization (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 324).

The final dimension is individualized consideration. Jex and Britt (2008) observe that this dimension refers to the leader’s ability to attend to the needs of employees and make the employees feel understood and appreciated. In many ways this dimension incorporates aspects of LMX theory into what it means to be a transformational leader. Thus, transformational leaders tend to have a charismatic communication style (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 324).

Kelly (2003) and Yukl (1989), argued that, transformational leaders elevate people from low levels of need, focused on survival (following Maslow’s hierarchy), to higher levels. Feinberg et. al (2005), said that, “they may also motivate followers to transcend their own interests for some other collective purpose, but typically help followers satisfy as many of their individual human needs as possible, appealing notably to higher order needs (e.g. to love, to learn, and to leave a legacy)” (p.471). Barbuto (2005) said, “transformational leaders are said to engender trust, admiration, loyalty and respect amongst their followers” (p. 28). This form of leadership requires that leaders engage with followers as whole people, rather than simply as an employee or follower, for example. In effect, transformational leaders emphasize the actualization of followers. In any given context, a leader is an inspiring figure who works with followers to achieve a goal. This could be in the family or a community activity. In the process, everyone helps each other to reach greater levels of achievement.

However, transformational leaders are not the only “best” leaders. Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 110) observe that charismatic leaders are the “superstars” of leadership. They say, notable historical figures such Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth I, Henry Ford, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Walt Disney likely come to mind when we think of charisma. Max Weber, writing in the early twentieth century, was one of the first scholars to use the term “charisma” to describe secular leaders. The word charisma, which Weber borrowed from theology, means “gift” in Greek. It is the leaders who attracted devoted followers through their extraordinary

powers that Weber described as charismatic. Hackman and Johnson (2004) point out “charismatic leaders excel in every function of human communication. They form strong emotional bonds with followers, emphasize transcendent visions, generate perceptions of confidence, communicate high expectations, and inspire others. However, charisma also has a dark side, often reflected in failure of vision, mis-articulation of goals, and poor management practices” (p.120).

Burns (1978) saw four categories of transformational leadership typology which are relevant to this study. These were: intellectual, reform, revolutionary, and heroic (charismatic). He said, an intellectual leader is devoted to seeing ideas and values that transcend immediate practical needs and still change and transform their social milieu. To him, the concept of intellectual leadership brings in the role of conscious purpose drawn from values. I agree when he said, that “the intellectual leader is out of step with their own time, in conflict with the status quo” (p.4). This is a leader with a vision that can transform society by raising social consciousness. This study will try to identify such leaders if they are there in the country.

The second leadership typology is reform leadership. Burns (1978) said it “by definition implies moral leadership, which means an attention to matching the means to the ends” (p.170). He further said that reform leaders transform parts of society to realize moral principles.

The third typology is revolutionary leadership, which Burns (1978) said, is leadership that “demand(s) commitment, persistence, courage, perhaps selflessness and even self abnegation” (p.169). This is the leader who does not discriminate, but rather operates on the whole. This is a leader who has the zeal to overthrow the status quo, and can result in the reconstruction of the economy, education, law, and even social class.

Bass (1985) defined a transformational leader as, “the leader who recognizes the transactional needs in potential followers but tends to go further, seeking to arouse and satisfy higher needs, to engage the full person of the follower... to a higher level of need according to Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs” (p.14). Bass (1985) further posited that, “transformational political leaders may also use their authority and power to radically reshape through coercive means the social and physical environment, thus destroying the old way of life and making way for a new one” (p.18). Examples of such leaders are: Moses, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, de Gaulle, Roosevelt, Alexander the Great, Nelson Mandela, among others.

Looking at the issue that this paper addresses, the issue of leadership, conflict resolution and peace-building, Bass (1994) said that, “for conflict within teams and small groups, there are a number of ways that transformational leadership contributes to the resolution of the conflicts.” He further said, for example, the inspirational leader creates a positive, optimistic environment for identifying the conflict and expecting its resolution. Therefore, search for super-ordinate goals is encouraged that go beyond the differing objectives of the opposing parties. Inspirational leadership is about motivating the entire organization to, for example, follow a new idea. Kelly (2003) said, “transformational leaders make clear an appealing view of the future, offer followers the opportunity to see meaning in their work, and challenge them with high standards. They encourage followers to become part of the overall organizational culture and environment” (p. 3). Through these sorts of means, transformational leaders encourage their followers to imagine and contribute to the development of attractive, alternative futures.

Bass (1994) further said, “the intellectually stimulating leader moves the team to define the conflict, to identify the facts and opinions, to determine the desired results, and to obtain open statements of opinions for which trust of the transformational leader is needed.” He also said, “different solutions with transforming super-ordinate goals need to be kept in mind, plus how they will be implemented and evaluated” (p. 142).

To support Bass’s argument, Downton (1973) argued that, when their followers are engaged in defensive avoidance, transformational leaders bring them back to reality. Panic can be reduced or avoided by inspirational leadership that points the way to safety. In general what seems to emerge from the arguments of these theorists is that groups with transformational leaders are likely to cope better with stress/conflict than those without such leadership. Downton (1973) went on to argue that, during times of social stress, inspirational leadership will be expected that revises missions, defines common objectives, restructures situations, and suggests solutions to deal with the sources of stress and conflict.

Warrilow (1978) posited that, transformational leadership theory is all about leadership that creates positive change in the followers whereby they take care of each other’s interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole. By extension, in this leadership style, the leader enhances the motivation and moral performance of his follower group.

Bass (1994) argued that transformational leadership occurs when a leader transforms or changes his or her followers in three important ways, that together result in followers trusting the leader, performing behaviors that contribute to the achievement of organizational goals, and being motivated to perform at a high level. According to Bass (1994), the theory behind transformational leaders is based on the hypothesis that leaders can exploit a need of the follower. These particular needs are not based on quid pro quo transactions, but higher order needs. These needs are those of the total person and are closely aligned with the internal motivational factors of the follower.

Having seen all that transformation leadership can do, it has not escaped criticism; for instance, a key criticism from Hall, Johnson, Wysocki & Kepner, (2002) is that within it transformational leadership has potential for the abuse of power. Transformational leaders motivate followers by appealing to strong emotions regardless of the ultimate effects on followers and do not necessarily attend to positive moral values. As Stone et al., (2003) observed, “transformational leaders can exert a very powerful influence over followers, who offer them trust and respect. Some leaders may have narcissistic tendencies, thriving on power and manipulation. Moreover, some followers may have dependent characters and form strong and unfortunate bonds with their leaders” (p. 4). Yukl (1989), described this as the dark side of charisma and goes on to note that for every example of a positive transformational leader demonstrating charismatic qualities (e.g., Mohandas [Mahatma] Ghandi), there is an equally negative example (e.g., Charles Manson) (p.226-227).

Carlson and Perrewe (1995) remind us that an organization’s culture socializes individuals into that culture. While acceptable behavior might be supported in this way, so too might socially

unacceptable behavior. Finally, Bass notes that transformational leadership can see followers manipulated in ways that may see them lose more than they gain.

The ultimate question is, what is the future of transformational leadership theory given these criticisms? Bryant (2003) responded by saying, “there seems to be an emerging orthodoxy in the literature favoring a blend of transactional and transformational leadership. However, Sanders et al., (2003) proposed an extension to both through what they call transcendental leadership. Their model suggests three structural levels of leadership accomplishment, these being transactional, transformational, and transcendental, and they suggest that a leader’s development along three dimensions of spirituality consciousness (mind), moral character (heart) and faith (soul) is associated with these levels of leadership accomplishment. They argue for the need for society and organizations to recognize the need for and embrace spirituality (p. 9).

### **Conclusion**

My overall recommendation is that transformational leadership framework is the one that fits very well in the peace-building framework that must be considered and applied. It is equally suitable for application in various societal and organizational settings. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the fact that transformational leadership is a fundamental tool, particularly in the concept of getting others to buy into necessary changes in the environment, such as workplaces, communities, and government institutions. One reason this style of leadership is a true development is its goal emphasis. The question is, how can the NGO leaders in Kenya focus their followers to address goals that will bring higher good to all and foster future peaceful co-existence? Any leader taking up this model must continue to be an inspiring presence, one who leads by example and is responsible for motivating others. Through charisma, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, transformational leaders have great potential to promote performance beyond expectations and to effect enormous changes within individuals, organizations, and nations. It appears to be a form of leadership well-suited to these current times characterized by uncertainty, and societal instability in Kenya. However, as we have seen from historical examples such as the horrors of dictators who came to power as transformational leaders, such as Hitler, Robert Mugabe, among others, there are some risks associated with this form of leadership, particularly with respect to *idealized influence*. The capacity for individual and organizational transformation must be accompanied by moral responsibility, for transformational leaders shape powerful social and institutional cultures which may either be liberating or oppressive, the focus of this study.

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