Two Textbooks That Had A Profound Influence

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Throughout the doctoral matriculation, two textbooks had overwhelmingly influenced my stance on organizational leadership and challenged my critical thinking skills. The two books not only provided the framework for leadership in today's globalized society but stimulate discussion for business leaders and doctoral level students such as myself. This paper is a synopsis of both texts and highlights the importance of understanding organizational culture and the contemporary issues facing leaders in the 21st century. These textbooks are:

Rosenbach, W. E., Taylor, R. L., & Youndt, M. A. (2012). *Contemporary issues in leadership*

(7th ed.). Boulder, CO: The Perseus Books Group.

and

Schein, E. H., & Schein, P. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). San

Francisco, CA: Wiley, John & Sons.

Organizational Culture and Leadership

The fifth edition of Schein and Schein's (2017) *Organizational Culture and Leadership* is more than a reference guide for business leaders and scholars seeking a deeper understanding of the inter-relationship between organizational culture and leadership. Schein and Schein examined and explained the abstract concept of organizational culture and its relationship to leadership by laying the groundwork for future studies. Each of the four parts of the book highlighted the importance of understanding aspects of organizational culture related to cross-cultural leadership in a multicultural world as well as the importance of commitment to cultural diversity.

The dominant theme in Schein and Schein's (2017) book is organizational diversity. According to Schein and Schein, an organization with diverse cultural resources is better able to cope with unexpected events. Therefore, leaders are encouraged to stimulate diversity and

express the view that diversity is necessary. The thesis of Schein and Schein's work is that communication and information are central to an organization's well-being and ability to optimize leaders' chances for success. Moreover, the authors asserted that leaders must therefore; create a multi-channel system that facilitates communication across the organization's culture.

Numerous scholars have written about leadership because of its effect on organizational culture and performance. However, Schein and Schein's (2017) in-depth three-level model of how to define and think about culture has been a resourceful tool for my concentration on cross-cultural leadership. Understanding the impact of culture on leadership is essential to developing and facilitating effective leaders for the 21st century (Kumar & Chokar, 2013; Marquardt, 2011). Schein and Schein focused on the significance of inter-relations between organizational culture and effective leadership in respect of its dynamics, leadership style, and its impact on organizational performance.

Schein and Schein (2017) argued the importance of the relationship between cross-cultural leadership and cultural diversity by discussing the creation of organizational culture and how organizational culture continues to evolve. In the past two decades, culture has been the object of study for the purpose of understanding the organizational environment (Machado & Carvalho, 2008). The complex system of culture has been managed, manipulated, and influenced by human intervention. Schein and Schein explained, "When founders create a new organization, it is the totality of their own thinking that gets transmitted into the new organization through all the mechanisms of culture" (p. 203). Therefore, culture is a unified set of assumptions of the organization's leadership.

Influence of the Text

The continuous evolution of the dynamics of organizational culture and leadership has played a vital role in the success of my leadership development. Schein and Schein's (2017) analysis defined my understanding of how effective leadership can influence organizational culture and how organizational culture plays a determining factor in the achievements of a leader. Based on Schein and Schein's diagnoses' of organizational culture, I recognized the significance of organizational sustainability. I also realized the importance of leadership development and that the formation of organizational culture are vital arteries to the success of an organization's lifespan. For the past twenty years, I have operated a global commercial real estate firm. Schein and Schein provided an outlet for me to integrate my core Christian values with the cultural dynamics of the brokerage firm.

Moreover, I learned that the challenge leaders face with the dynamics of learning culture and leadership varies by the organization. The notion that leaders can shape the organizational culture by utilizing the appropriate leadership style and exercising certain power is profound. The depth of intellectual insight Schein and Schein (2017) displayed identifying three significant levels of cultural analysis is astounding. The authors argued the implications of each level as it pertained to the overall cultural phenomenon of organizational leadership. Furthermore, Schein and Schein contended that climate is a manifestation of the organizational culture, whereas, other cultural scholars (Ehrhart & Schneider, 2016) presented opposing positions that depicted climate as the equivalent to the culture fashioned by the organization's leadership.

Organizational leadership has been explored and analyzed by various scholars because of its importance for organizational performance (Schein and Schein, 2017; Hatch, 2000; Stanislavov, 2014). Schein and Schein (2017) maintained that there is an embedded relationship

between culture and the vision of leadership. The success or failure of an organization often depends on the leader's ability not only to craft a strategy and develop a mission and vision statement—but also to promote an organizational culture that can steer or direct employees towards accomplishing the organization's objectives.

Schein and Schein (2017) and Livermore (2015) described culture as one of the driving factors in how to effectively negotiate, build trust, foster innovation and motivate people toward a shared organizational objective. Kluckhohn and Kelly (as cited in Livermore, 2015) defined culture as the beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, and attitudes that distinguish one group from another. This definition compliments Schein and Schein's (2017) understanding of leadership formation where the authors noted that leadership involves the creation of the culture at each stage of an organization's maturity and growth.

Criticism of the Text

I believe an effective organizational leader understands the relationship between culture creation and leadership actions. Krapfl and Kruja (2015) criticized the point that organizational culture was based on both—the broader culture of which the organization is a part and the behavior of the organization's leader. As oppose to Schein and Schein's (2017) cultural assessment of what leaders need to know about macro cultures. Schein and Schein defined macro cultures as, "nations, ethnic groups, and occupations that have been around for a long time and have, therefore, acquired some very stable elements, or 'skeletons,' in the form of basic languages, concepts, and values" (p. 77). In defense of Schein and Schein's assertion, Focus (2009) emphasized that organizational leaders are expected to have a vision, but how leaders display vision differs from culture to culture. Therefore, leaders command a significant influence in shaping organizational culture.

Researchers have suggested that leaders can empower employees and influence organizational culture by engaging them in decisions that directly affect them (Bennis & Nanus 1985; Hatch, 2000). These factors coupled with Schein and Schein's (2017) conservative approach to organizational leadership provided concrete evidence for the relevance of cultural assessments. Schein and Schein illustrated that a culture assessment could be either a vast bottomless pit or a focused exercise around specific issues based on the problem an organization is trying to solve.

Influencing Factors

Schein and Schein's (2017) perspective profoundly influenced my understanding of the mechanics behind organizational culture and leadership. According to Schein and Schein, the underlying assumption relating to organizational culture and leadership has become so taken for granted that individuals "…find little variation within a social unit" (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 21). Therefore, one can discuss the three major levels of culture, and their implications at various levels. These levels range from the very tangible, overt manifestations that individuals can see and touch to the intensely embedded, unconscious, underlying assumptions that Schein and Schein defined as the "essence of culture or its DNA" (p. 17). Throughout the text, Schein and Schein provided vivid descriptions that allowed the reader to interpret the authors point effortlessly.

I appreciate how Schein and Schein (2017) used outside resources to qualify statements. Schein and Schein noted that anthropologists and sociologists had studied culture for a long time, resulting in many models and definitions of culture, but took a different approach in defining the structure of culture and its inter-relationship with leadership utilizing a model. The authors

presented a three-level model of culture as a way to describe and analyze any cultural

phenomenon—including organizational leadership.

Conclusion

It would be difficult to discount Schein and Schein's (2017) *Organizational Culture and*

Leadership as a reference guide for business leaders and scholars seeking a deeper understanding

of the inter-relationship between organizational culture and leadership. Schein and Schein drives

home the point that "Culture as a set of basic assumptions defines for us what to pay attention to,

what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in

various kinds of situations" (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 22).

Overall, Schein and Schein (2017) defended the structure of culture through case studies

and highlighted the importance of leadership. The authors provided me with vital information

about the integral role in the formation and vision of organizational leadership. Also, the authors

outlined and addressed the creation of organizational culture and its evolutionary process. Schein

and Schein assessed culture and leading planned changed for a new generation.

Various scholars have written about organizational leadership because of its effect on

culture and performance. Being able to understand the significance of leadership to

organizational culture is crucial for the 21st-century leader. The dynamics of an organization's

culture, leadership, and learning style is vital to a leader's success or failure. Schein and Schein

(2017) is the motivation millennials need. Because globalization is creating new opportunities in

the workplace and leaders have to understand organizational culture and the challenges it

presents to be successful.

Contemporary Issues in Leadership

The seventh edition of Rosenbach, Taylor, and Youndt's (2012) *Contemporary Issues in Leadership* contained articles from a variety of academic, professional, and practitioner-oriented publications from around the world. The five parts of the book focused on the heart, the relationship, the journey, the hazards, and the soul of the contemporary issues in organizational leadership. The overarching theme of the book illustrated the challenges posed to a new generation of leaders. This book is a captivating resource guide for understanding leaders and leadership from a contemporary perspective. Noticeably, this book is the result of a close collaboration between a team of authors who genuinely understand the contemporary issues in leadership and not afraid to address them.

Each of the article presented by Rosenbach et al. (2012) recognized the critical need for effective leadership. However, the major theme that emerged from the book was the importance of followership. According to the authors, followership is an integral component of leading that has gained considerable recognition in the discipline of leadership. Rosenbach et al. asserted that the reciprocal relationship between the leader and followers has progressively become the subject of research**.** Rosenbach et al. went on to state that gaining insights to leaders and how they lead requires understanding the elements of effective followership.

As a cross-cultural leader in business and ministry, the compilation of articles published in the book answered many questions about leadership that have no easy answer. One of the toughest questions concerning contemporary leaders today is can leadership be taught? Rosenbach et al. (2012) insisted that this is the wrong question and that a more relevant question is can leadership be learned? The authors argued that leadership can be learned, stressing that the study of leadership has emerged as a legitimate discipline. However, there is still little agreement

in the literature concerning what leadership really is. While some scholars suggested that there

are almost as many leadership theories, models, and definitions of leadership as there are authors

who have written on the subject (Sashkin, 2012). Rosenbach et al. admitted that the perception

of leaders and leadership myths have evaporated under the glare of scientific scrutiny. The

authors concluded that what we have learned from recent literature in leadership reveals that

there is no one best way to lead. Rather, effective leadership style will vary depending on the

organization's culture, external environment, the leader's personal traits, as well as the character

of the followers.

        In addition, Rosenbach et al. (2012) suggested that in as much as it is critical to

understand what leadership is, it is equally important to understand what leadership is not. The

authors affirmed that leadership is not based on power and authority, top-down or hierarchical.

Rosenbach et al. maintained that the essential nature of leadership is the process of the leader and

followers engaging in the act of reciprocal influence to achieve a shared purpose. In doing so,

one could argue that leadership is about getting people to work together to achieve a common

goal. However, "In far too many organizations, the leadership role is seen as the only avenue to

personal success, and therefore it is developed, encouraged, appreciated, and rewarded, whereas

followership often is not" (Rosenbach et al., 2012, p. 73).

Influencing Factors

        Based on my leadership experience, the term and theory of leadership is continually

evolving. Sashkin (2012) proposed that there has been a paradigm shift in leadership theory and

practice. Unlike other scholarly discussions about leadership, Sashkin re-examined the personal

nature of leadership regarding its human nature—character. Goleman (2012) argued that all

leaders have different ways of leading, and different situations call for different styles of

leadership and "the widespread belief that identifying individuals with the 'right stuff' to be

leaders is more art than science" (p. 21). Because of our educational backgrounds, cultural

experiences, and personal interest, everybody starts the leadership journey from a different place.

      To be a leader implies an orientation toward progress. Rosenbach et al. (2012) referred to

the beginnings of the leadership as a journey and concluded that it ends with self-awareness and

self-knowledge. Throughout the book, the assertion was made that leadership is not an event, but

a journey. A journey which final destination could be a vision or a personal goal, where one's self

provides the drive to embark on such journey. I agree with the authors' assertion. This

contributed to the reasoning behind selecting the text as part of this paper. Leadership begins in

the mind; therefore, a good leader must first be able to lead themselves and believe with

confidence that they can have a positive impact on others.

      Rosenbach et al. (2012) is one of the most empowering books about leadership I have

read. The book helps the audience recognize that regardless of sex anyone can be a good leader.

Each article provided examples from real life testimonies that added value to the readers learning

experience. "Leadership is often described as getting the best out of other people, however, the

first job of leadership is often getting the best out of yourself" (Draft, 2012, p. 125). Regardless

of gender, an individual's experiences determine their perspective on leadership.

Criticism of the Text

      Eagly and Carli (2012) examined the blame for the pronounced lack of women in

positions of power. The authors asserted that times have changed and the glass ceiling metaphor

is now more wrong than right. In light of recent events in Hollywood, one can argue that the

pendulum is swinging rapidly in the other direction. Historically, there have been leaders who

have argued against women in leadership positions. Consider the inflammatory remarks made by

President Richard Nixon, recorded on White House audiotapes. When explaining why he would

not appoint a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court, Nixon stated, "I don't think a woman should be

in any government job whatsoever…mainly because they are erratic. And emotional. Man are

erratic and emotional, too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be" (Eagly & Carli, 2012, p.

148). The research employed by the authors throughout the text offered valuable insight into the

mindset of historical leaders and how gender remains a contemporary issue in leadership.

Conclusion

The seventh edition of Rosenbach et al. (2012) reached outside of its predecessors and

explored the realms of effective leadership beyond the business environment. The book is a

classic for this generation of leaders and complete with thought-provoking ways to tackle

pertinent leadership issues. Rosenbach et al. provided contextual leadership practices for

governmental agencies, not-for-profit organizations, the military, educational systems, and social

movements. Critically, one can argue that many of the chapters in the text reiterated the same

fundamental principles of leadership. However, the authors were able to address complex matters

concerning contemporary issues in leadership and provide the reader with easy to understand

approaches to solving problems.

Overall, each article exemplified the fundamental fact that leadership is not inherent or

mechanical—but rather a deeply rooted personal characteristic trait that speaks to who we are,

what we believe, and the choices we make. In this brilliant book, the editors and the articles

selected offered insightful knowledge on how to approach the contemporary issues in leadership

with confidence. Rosenbach et al. maintained that the potential for good leadership is no longer

limited to a privileged few but widely spread in our society, adding that learning about leadership

requires an understanding of how to distinguish bad from good leadership.

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