



Received: 20 February 2017
Accepted: 06 May 2017
Published: 22 May 2017

*Corresponding author: Timothy E. Martin, University of Alabama, Chicago, IL, USA
E-mail: temartinjr@gmail.com

Reviewing editor:
Jamie Halsall, University of Huddersfield, UK

Additional information is available at the end of the article

SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Framing leadership: The social construction of leadership within the academic field of communication studies

Timothy E. Martin Jr.^{1*}

Abstract: The study and advancement of leadership instruction is tied to many academic disciplines and is continually evolving. Within Communication Studies, instructional approaches are informed by past voices. Those voices influence an individual's and discipline's pedagogical approach for developing leadership curricula. Through examining socially-constructed language of instructors and scholars in the academic field and discipline of Communication Studies, common themes emerged that support the development of a disciplinary frame. This study offers a frame for how educators in the communication field, who teach leadership curricula, approach the instruction of leadership related concepts and how leadership is commonly approached within the discipline. This study reviews related literature, analyzes the language of leadership found in Communication Studies and outlines pedagogical implications to be considered. The results of this study are particularly relevant for those educators and practitioners who are interested in developing leadership curriculum. The results of this study are important in helping us determine legitimacy and effectiveness of the many leadership development approaches advocated today by understanding better common approaches from Communication Studies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Timothy E. Martin Jr. received his MA in Communication Studies from the University of Alabama. His area of research is organizational communication, intercultural communication, leadership training, and blending communication theory with student affairs practice. This paper is part of a larger research project examining leadership discourse in the separate academic disciplines of Communication Studies, Business, and Higher Education. This paper's goal is to begin developing a better understanding of what leadership concepts should be included in leadership books, curriculum, and training by understanding how leadership is socially constructed in different contexts. Timothy is currently the Assistant Director of Residence Life at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, Illinois.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The results of this study are particularly relevant for those who are interested in developing leadership curriculum or who view themselves as a part of leadership studies. The common frames that emerged through this study provide a strong foundation and case for what should be included when seeking to develop a leadership course, training, or any kind of leadership curricula. How does the way leadership is constructed differ across academic disciplines? The area of Communication Studies is a discipline that is often involved with developing leadership-based curricula; therefore it provides fertile ground for which to apply social constructionist and framing methods in examining how the discipline may approach leadership instruction. Ultimately, the results of this study are important in helping us determine legitimacy and effectiveness of the many leadership development approaches advocated today, by better understanding common approaches from Communication Studies.

Subjects: Communication Studies; Instructional Communication; Development Communication; Group Communication

Keywords: leadership; social construction; framing; communication studies; pedagogy

1. Introduction

The ability to lead effectively is a desired skill for professionals in today's fast-paced global society. There are both professionals and educators who are considered knowledgeable in this area, while leadership literature is continually published and framed from many disciplines applicable to the emerging field of leadership studies. There is a proliferation of popular literature, academic programs, seminars, and trainings claiming an expertise in the study and application of leadership. However, how is legitimacy for these approaches determined? Currently there is no framework or measuring stick by which to gauge the legitimacy of these approaches. The discipline of communication provides excellent resources for those developing theoretical frameworks from which to teach leadership. Previous research (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010) provides a foundation for approaching leadership as being socially constructed. However, how does the way leadership is constructed differ across academic disciplines? In what ways does the discipline of communication define and frame leadership? The area of Communication Studies is a discipline that is often involved with developing leadership-based curricula; therefore provides fertile ground for which to apply social constructionist and framing concepts in examining how the discipline may approach leadership instruction.

While this research was conducted at an educational institution in the United States, the voices represented in this research are not from any particular socio-cultural context but represent a range of social, political, and cultural contexts. To assist with addressing socio-cultural factors and the possible influence they may have in this study, it is important to note that elements of Fairhurst and Grant's (2010) sailing guide assist with identifying these. When examining leadership within Communication Studies paying attention specifically to the concept of little "d" discourse which refers to talk and text in situated organizational contexts and monomodal approaches which focus solely on the discourse of leadership, and how language generates meaning we can more easily identify socio-cultural factors of influence. This will be outlined further in the literature review and analysis. Ultimately, the results of this study are important in helping us determine legitimacy and effectiveness of the many leadership development approaches advocated today by understanding better common approaches from Communication Studies. Helping us find the ways the discipline of communication defines and frames leadership.

This paper uses discourse analysis to examine the ways in which leadership is socially constructed within the discipline of Communication Studies and how that construction influences the pedagogical approach for developing leadership curricula. This study reviews related literature, analyzes the language of *leadership* found in Communication Studies, and outlines theoretical and pedagogical implications to be considered. There are growing amounts of popular literature flourishing with discussions of leadership within the organizational, group, and interpersonal settings yet still competing definitions of what leadership involves and the best practices surrounding leadership development and instruction. Leadership is a growing field tied to many academic disciplines, and the study of leadership is continually evolving. Within collegiate education each discipline asserts a framework from which leadership is defined, explained, and taught. Framing refers to the way people organize experiences. Discursive frames from disciplines may have different common themes. Specifically this study investigates how educators in the respective field of Communication Studies communicate about leadership, to assist in analyzing how communication as a discipline defines, explains, and frames the concept of *leadership*.

2. Literature review

In this literature review, I will be examining the concept of social construction and framing to assist describing how people organize experiences and knowledge. Understanding the basic relevant concepts of leadership will assist, and then further investigation into literature concerning discourse will

contribute by describing how instructors and scholars communicate socially constructed frames. Finally, the literature review examines relevant literature within the academic discipline of Communication Studies that provides support to the overall investigation of the social construction of leadership, specifically the language of leadership within this academic discipline. There are currently no other studies of social constructions of leadership curricula from any academic discipline. However, this research is part of a larger study that did the same examination of both Business and Higher Education academic disciplines.

In instituting discourse as a method for establishing personal identity, it is relevant to recognize this as a form of social construction. Discourse, as talk and text within organizational contexts, is socially constructed and provides insight into the language used in different contexts. Social constructionism is founded on the premise that language creates reality. Developed by Berger and Luckmann (1966), it establishes that “reality is both revealed and concealed, created and destroyed by our activities” (Pearce, 1995, p. 89). This perspective provides a framework from which one can examine leadership as a process of social construction, with Fairhurst and Grant’s (2010) development of a guide containing four dimensions. Fairhurst and Grant are specifically interested in further developing the concept of social construction and providing a guide from which the history of social constructionist theory can be analyzed and further research can be developed. Social constructionists believe that “people make their social and cultural worlds at the same time these worlds make them” (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 173). Since “realities are constructed through social processes in which meanings are negotiated, consensus formed, and contestation is possible” (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 174), there are many directions this theory can be taken. Fairhurst and Grant lay out a helpful structure of continua on which the social construction of leadership can be mapped. This is what they determine and label as being the “sailing guide to the social construction of leadership” (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 174) and include construction of social reality-social construction of reality, theory-praxis, critical/emancipatory-pragmatic/interventionist, and multimodal-monomodal. To better understand these dyads one must inspect each part and how it relates to the purpose of examining the discourse of leadership.

In the first of Fairhurst and Grant’s (2010) dimensions, the *construction of social reality* centers on cognitive creation of social reality and, when applied to leadership, provides a way to understand how leadership as a social reality is cognitively constructed. Moving along the continuum towards the other extreme is the *social construction of reality* that is centered on the action of social construction and when applied to leadership provides deeper understanding by focusing on social leadership interactions and how they contribute to developing leadership discourse. Fairhurst and Grant explain that the “distinction is key for social constructionist leadership studies because the former emphasizes the cognitive products of social interaction—constructions of social reality involving categories, implicit theories, attributions, and sense-making accounts—whereas the latter emphasizes the interactions themselves” (2010, pp. 177–178). Therefore, in addition to a discourse analysis from within the discipline, a social constructionist framework of understanding is also beneficial. This study utilizes as its foundational approach the *social construction of reality* position, thus centering its approach on the action of social construction.

Fairhurst and Grant’s (2010) dimension of *theory verses praxis* involves the difference between abstract theory and theories that are in use. There may be a range of theories formulated with varying usefulness and some may never be practically applied. Other theories may be prevalently utilized and applied within academia. Fairhurst and Grant state that this “second distinction turns on the understanding of constructionist leadership research that privileges theory, whereas other work emphasizes praxis ... this dimension might be more properly phrased as theory verses theories in use” ((Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 182). This dimension is particularly useful and has the potential to be rather salient when investigating what theories are referenced and what theoretical application is present within the academic disciplines examined in this study. This study advances no particular position on theory or praxis; however, is seeking to discover where those within this discipline position themselves.

Fairhurst and Grant's (2010) third dimension revolves around understanding power and dominance. *Critical/Emancipatory* is located on one end of this dimension's continuum and focuses on what leaders are doing. When applied to this study, it can add a lens to examine what leadership educators and practitioners are saying in relation to power dynamics. This category is dependent on whether academics and professionals are determined to critique, criticize, and expose power dynamics within their discourse of leadership or if they are positioned more on the other end of the of this dyad. Opposite of *critical/emancipatory* on the continuum is *pragmatic intervention* where, in this study, educators would to blend more into the background still intervening, but doing so more strategically and less directly. Fairhurst and Grant were interested in this dyad, not as it relates to leadership studies, but how it "concerns itself with the explicitness of power dynamics in social constructionist research" (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 190). This study is not concerned with power dynamics, but seeks to use this dyad of critical/emancipatory verses pragmatic interventionist to establish a foundation that could possibly advance understanding of the differences and similarities in relation to power dynamics while examining the social construction of leadership within Communication Studies.

Fairhurst and Grant's (2010) fourth dimension involves the attention to language as it is related to leadership. *Monomodal* approaches focus solely on the discourse of leadership, and how language generates meaning. *Multimodal* approaches to leadership study and instruction would involve a focus on other constructions of meaning or other ways of explaining leadership besides just language such as the material or institutional (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Fairhurst and Grant were concerned "whether researchers limit their attention solely to leadership actors' language in organizations or whether they focus on other means of generating meaning" (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, p. 190). This study aims to see where this discipline aligns itself while taking the *Monomodal* position choosing to focus solely on the leadership discourse and language within this discipline that contributes to leadership study and practice and supports constructing a disciplinary frame.

These dyads viewed on a continuum and seen as dimensions where philosophical differences are opposite each other and can be used as a map for clarifying where certain views that emerge in the language are aligned. According to Fairhurst and Grant, these "dimensions are not mutually exclusive, authors and their work could straddle all of these dimensions simultaneously, and thus the guide is an appropriate way of evaluating their crossovers and fusions" (2010, p. 177), and can be applied to the context of leadership. The dyads of this guide, although useful in this study when investigating the social construction of leadership, also provide useful tools when applied to our examination of how disciplines approach leadership. When scholars, practitioners, or instructors approach developing leadership curriculum, it is valuable to apply these dimensions or hybrid of dimensions as a lens for deeper understanding into the approach they might be taking.

It is also important to recognize the concept of framing as relevant to how individuals develop understanding and convey meaning. In order to develop a better understanding of how people understand our experiences, Goffman (1986) advanced Bateson's (1955) concept of bracketing into the concept of framing. A frame is the word used to refer to the basic elements of how people organize experiences. Framing is essentially the ability to "choose one particular meaning (or set of meanings) over another. When we share our frames with others (the process of framing), we manage meaning because we assert that our interpretations should be taken as real over other possible interpretations" (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996, p. 3). Essentially the framing process is a construction process for "when we connect with others through our framing of 'the situation here and now,' we shape reality" (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 43). By understanding concepts such as social constructionism; the process of framing; and additionally notions such as little "d" discourse and big "D" Discourse; we see ultimately "meaning creation is the milieu in which all communications operate" (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 47), therefore establishing these aspects of the communicative process as relevant when examining the *meaning creation of leadership* within the discipline of Communication Studies. Fairhurst and Sarr's (1996) and Fairhurst's (2010) examination of how leaders use language to frame situations and events is both relevant and foundational for this study due to the direct application of framing

to leadership. Their work specifically applies the concept of framing to the study of leadership, a valuable approach that influences this study. Ultimately what is looked for within leaders is socially constructed by the context and environment. Therefore, we must first understand the discourse that contributes to the linguistic frames surrounding leadership concepts. The next section will identify several terms and concepts relevant to discourse analysis.

The term “discourse,” as established by Foucault (1973, 1995), is defined as a group of statements belonging to a single system of formation (Foucault, 2010) and understood as the way collective experiences are shared and communicated (Fairhurst, 2011). Thus “discourse” can have different descriptions and explanations depending on the system it is derived; therefore, to provide an accurate and clear definition for use within communication it is best to reference Alvesson and Kärreman’s (2000) understanding of both the scale and range of discourse. Their foundational work applied these ideas to studying organizational communication, and the concept of big “D” *Discourse* and little “d” *discourse* is applicable to various contexts. The analysis of little “d” *discourse* often involves micro examinations or linguistic analysis of texts in context. Originally the distinctions in discourse analysis came out of the field of linguistics, introduced by Gee (1990) and have influenced scholar’s approaches to discourse analysis today. Specifically the concept of little “d” *discourse* refers to talk and text in situated organizational contexts. This understanding of little “d” *discourse* is prevalent within organizational communication, and it is beneficial to recognize this concept’s applicability to other communicative situations, especially that of the leader-member relationship. Opposite the concept of little “d” *discourse* is the distinction of big “D” *Discourse* referring “to culturally standardized interpretive frames historically rooted in systems of power/knowledge. Such systems are embodied in fields of knowledge and everyday practices” (Jian, Schmisser, & Fairhurst, 2008, p. 305). Understanding discourse is an important piece of understanding communication, and particularly relevant to leadership instruction and curriculum development. This study’s chosen method of discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) specifically requires an understanding of discourse. This is a crucial element in improved understanding of communication’s role within leadership, and provides a term to be utilized as a framework for analyzing and discovering what the little “d” *discourses* are within disciplines and if big “D” *Discourses* are actually being culturally constructed.

The concept of leadership is something that many believe can be recognized or pointed out; however, it is still rather ambiguous when it comes to consolidating and blending what might be considered the perfect recipe for leadership. Leadership has been looked at from many different perspectives. For those interested in examining leadership there is a difficulty in finding common ground and the “problem with leadership studies as an academic discipline and with the people who do leadership is that neither the scholars nor the practitioners have been able to define leadership with precision, accuracy, and conciseness” (Rost, 1993, p. 6). Without a universal definition it proves difficult to accurately establish terms. The extensiveness to which leadership could be defined is connected to the breadth of disciplines, situations, and contexts it could be applied. However, this ambiguity provides the opportunity to explore what common frames might be found to be interdisciplinary. Therefore, since no common definition is in place, in order to best understand leadership as a field, we must begin by exploring the various approaches and theories of leadership. Several scholars such as Bass (1990), Antonakis, Cianciolo, and Sternberg (2004), and Northouse (2009) provide comprehensive and consolidated reviews, theoretical insights, and explanations of the development of leadership as a field of study. As a whole, leadership literature can be divided into generalized categories of being either individually-focused or process-focused. Within these generalized categories there is found separate leadership frameworks and traditions.

The study of leadership as a serious pursuit originated by exploring what personal traits leaders possessed. Trait theory’s (Stogdill, 1948, 1974) dominant perspective led to the belief that only those individuals born with certain leadership traits would be leaders. These theoretical perspectives were often termed “great-man” theories due to the common thought that it was only “great” individuals who had these genetic traits. What trait research has yielded is an understanding of what leadership traits are valued in society. Continuing the trait theory approach is the concept of emotional

intelligence (Goleman, 1995, 1998). Emotional intelligence incorporates trait concepts into a foundational perspective establishing the importance of personal emotional understanding and our intellectual ability to learn in addition to our sociability. Therefore emotional intelligence provides a series of both personal and social competencies that can be developed by an individual in order to improve their effectiveness as a leader. When the “great man” framework of trait theory, primarily the genetic trait perspective, was challenged, the trait research navigated towards being more situational rather than innate in how traits are both expressed and are beneficial to effective leadership (Blank, Green, & Weitzel, 1990; Graeff, 1997; Vecchio, 1987). This shift led to leadership traits being important only as they are situationally dependent. An extension of this thought is the perspective of situational leadership. Scholarship from this perspective established by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) advocates leadership is not necessarily trait-based but situation-based. Research continued by Hersey and Blanchard (1988) and Blanchard, Zigarmi, Zigarmi, and Blanchard (1985) advanced and refined this conception that leadership approaches are dependent upon and change according to the current needs within situations. In essence, the situation calls forth a relevant and valuable leadership style.

Both the situational and trait approaches fall into the category of being individual-focused. These perspectives focus on characteristics of a leader and how a leader responds within situations that arise. With the introduction of the Leader-Member Exchange Theory there is seen a shift to understanding leadership more as a process, rather than based on individual qualifications. This theory establishes the interaction between leaders and members as the central component within the process of leadership. Focusing on the dyadic relationship of leaders and followers research from Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), Graen (1976), and Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991, 1995) has led to the development of a model establishing relationship development and processes as instrumental in effective leadership. Evaluating leadership as a relational process establishes new avenues from which leadership can be considered. When considering leadership as a process, terms such as power, control, and influence often arise. Incorporating concepts such as visionary and charismatic leadership into a method of influence through leadership is the widely accepted theory of Transformational Leadership. Established by Downton (1973) and advanced by Burns (1978), Bennis and Nanus (1985), Bass and Avolio (1994), Bass (1985, 1998), Howell and Avolio (1993), Kouzes and Posner (2002), and Bass and Riggio (2006), the theory of transformational leadership is the dominant perspective in today’s leadership literature. Transactional leadership is more centered on the exchange that takes places involving leaders. Providing a theoretical perspective to advocate leaders empowering their followers, transformational leadership is an inspirational and motivational foundation for understanding leadership. Inherent in each of these theoretical leadership traditions is their automatic reliance on the need for successful communication skills including the ability to successfully establish relationships as a basic requirement for establishing effective communication. Ultimately leadership can be defined, described, and explained differently depending on the theoretical and disciplinary boundaries applied and examined. Communication studies with its focus on language and understanding communicative behavior is significant for understanding the language and behaviors of leaders thus establishing the discipline of Communication Studies as having an important role in leadership studies as an area of academic exploration.

With early influences from Psychology, Sociology, Linguistics, and English, the study of communication as a discipline has developed as a viable and applicable field when examining human relationships and language (Delia, 1987). In particular, communication research has emerged principally useful in examining the role communicative practices have within a society. Within the academic discipline of Communication Studies, there are multiple subgroups and subcategories that divide the discipline into separate divisions of study. Scholars in this discipline claim a particular branch and center their research accordingly. Scholars may overlap in their research; however, the study of communication in each separate division may require a different approach. The exploration of communication relies on the premise that human communication is an essential and “fundamental life process through which we sense, make sense of, and transact with our environment and the people in it” (Ruben & Budd, 1975, p. 1). By specifically referencing the concept of human communication,

we can begin to recognize how communication itself is a complicated process, especially when tied to the complexity of the human behavior. Ultimately “what people *think* communication is becomes considerably less important than how that understanding is reflected in their *behavior*. The strongest position for understanding the phenomenon is, of course, possessing a conceptual framework” (Ruben & Budd, 1975, p. 1) that is consistent with individual behavior. Within the academic discipline of communication studies, the examination of leadership as it relates to communication behavior and language is pertinent to how we communicate interpersonally, within groups, interculturally, and organizationally.

Communication scholars examine the act of sending and receiving messages, the creating of shared meaning, and look for ways to both understand and improve communicative interaction. Essentially, we as humans communicate utilizing socially constructed codes to convey meaning to each other. This adds to the complexity since meaning is not static or stagnant, but rather dynamic and constantly changing. Danziger (1976) describes how “even language in its purely representative function is a constantly changing system in which the stock of words and their meaning is not fixed and in which meaning depends as much on the relationship of words to other words as on their relationship to their referents” (p. xxi). As advanced by McCroskey (2003), McCroskey and McCroskey (2006), McCroskey, Richmond, and McCroskey (2006) how we communicate when we instruct is particularly relevant when examining how we teach leadership concepts, specifically the language surrounding how we teach leadership. This investigation into relevant literature within the academic discipline of Communication Studies leads to the research question guiding this investigation: In what ways does the discipline of communication define and frame leadership?

3. Methods

To answer the research question posed in the literature review, qualitative research methods were utilized, specifically interviews, to investigate how the discipline of Communication Studies is framing concepts pertaining to leadership. Interpretive and qualitative research methods provide a deep and rich understanding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of what those entrenched within their fields say. The study of leadership can be found in many academic disciplines. This research is part of a larger project that looked at not only Communication Studies, but Higher Education and Business. All three academic disciplines have elements and courses that are connected with leadership studies; however, there have not been any other studies examining the social construction of leadership within academia making this research unique. This research examines how Communication Studies as a discipline approaches “leadership” by examining how those in academia approach developing courses and trainings that include leadership concepts. Those who are developing curricula relevant for teaching and practicing leadership are indeed some of the most relevant voices when examining what we understand to be concepts taught pertaining to leadership training and development. Ultimately the voices of those involved in the practice and teaching of leadership concepts are those who understand best what resources are available, what techniques are tested, and what language is utilized when advancing the subject of leadership study.

These methods are designed to allow individuals who work and teach within their fields to describe, in their own words, through interview questions and answers. The objective of the interviews was to discover instructor and disciplinary paradigms concerning leadership, various approaches utilized when teaching leadership-relevant courses, and what texts and resources instructors utilize in their courses. Specifically following Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) concept of naturalistic inquiry, this study incorporated a sorting process where discourse was dissected and placed into “broad bins or pigeonholes” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 226), and “filled out as the inquiry progresses” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 226), guided by the research questions. In this case, the language used by educators in this discipline was evaluated and refined through constant comparison analysis.

4. Research process

4.1. Interviews

Interviews were the most appropriate tool to collect data due to the necessity to gather descriptions and discourse from participants who are active within their discipline. Interviews provide the opportunity to receive, through dialogue, the information necessary to understand each participant's perspective and framing when they approach concepts of leadership. However, there is a potential drawback to using interviews to collect data. What some might see as a disadvantage is the data is directly linked to each participant's perceptions of leadership and understanding of their discipline. It provides room for bias, disagreement, misunderstanding, or even contested opinions within each discipline. However, it is precisely these individualized perceptions and perspectives concerning leadership that this study is interested in discovering. The objective of the interviews was to discover instructor and disciplinary paradigms concerning leadership, various approaches utilized when teaching leadership-relevant courses, and what texts and resources instructors utilize in their courses. In the following sections I will describe the procedures, participants, and the method of analysis.

4.2. Procedures

After Institutional Review Board approval, university professors were selected based on background and experience in their related academic field. Initial participants were discovered by searching university and department websites locating professors who taught courses where leadership was either in the description of the course or they taught courses that included leadership-related concepts. Additionally, professors were also discovered by asking interview participants if they knew anyone else in their department or at their institution who also taught leadership courses or courses that included leadership concepts. As participants directed me to their acquaintances, this led to snowball sampling of participants in each discipline. Participants were contacted initially via email to request participation. Interviews took place within the participant's offices, and were recorded with a digital recorder, with the opportunity for different arrangements to be made as suggested by the interviewee. All interviews took place in participant's offices except for one interview where part was in the office and the rest was at a table in a cafeteria.

4.3. Participants

Interviews were conducted with professors in the academic discipline of communication who teach discipline-specific courses or courses involving leadership concepts. The larger study includes interviews of scholars and instructors who are educators at both a teaching-focused university and a research-oriented liberal arts college in the southern United States who teach courses in the respective academic fields of business, communication studies, and higher education. These individuals included seven tenured and seven tenure track or instructional faculty who are entrenched in their disciplines, and who are developing techniques beneficial for understanding the language of leadership. Those interviewed for this study taught a variety of classes from undergraduate general education courses to upper-level and graduate-level discipline-specific courses. Additionally, some professors interviewed taught courses specifically labeled and identified as leadership courses for either their department or for the whole university population. Half of those interviewed, specifically seven participants, perform research as a regular part of their educational position at their institution. The other seven are viewed primarily as instructors instead of researchers within their department and do not have a large research requirement as a part of their job responsibilities.

The range of courses taught by these individuals vary from introductory to advanced courses, including a range of levels and experiences. Those professors who did teach leadership-specific courses were determined to have relevant knowledge based on having academic training, education, and a graduate degree in the disciplines of business, higher education, or communication. Originally, at least two university professors in each of the academic disciplines of communication, higher education, and business were expected to be interviewed, providing a minimum of six total interviews. Ultimately, due to the result of snowball sampling, this study involved fourteen interview participants: three participants from business, five participants from higher education, and six

participants from communication. Specifically from the communication discipline, there were six participants, with interviews 28 to 65 min that provided 95 pages of transcriptions from this discipline. Due to the goal of gathering a better understanding of those embedded in their disciplines, emphasis was placed on finding diverse voices to contribute to this investigation. Participants were asked if they knew fellow colleagues who could provide valuable contributions to this study leading to a snowball sample of participants. Thus the sample of participants vary by level of teaching experience, courses taught, research or teaching orientation, and understanding of leadership related concepts or curricula. However, this method of recruiting participants could lead to participants recommending others with similar points of view, leading to similar voices. By listening to the voices it was possible to develop quality thick description including descriptive words, phrases, and quotes that represents those multiple and diverse perspectives.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of education, some of those participants interviewed had knowledge and experience in more than one discipline. In those cases, the participant's educational background and current academic department were factored in. Ultimately, these participants proved beneficial due to their ability to recognize their interdisciplinary position and were able to acknowledge and clarify which aspects of their interdisciplinary perspective came from a particular discipline. These participants were placed in the discipline that they identified the most with. Ultimately, their frames were shown to be consistent with the other voices from the discipline they were placed in.

None of the faculty was currently doing research specifically focused on leadership. However, some did have experience developing and instructing leadership-focused curricula. Within the discipline of communication, one professor taught only leadership courses, not within a specific department, but for the educational institution as a whole. Three communication professors taught at least one course related specifically to group communication and leadership, but also mentioned incorporating leadership concepts within some of their other communication courses. Two communication professors do not teach leadership specific courses, but felt the courses they did teach are related to leadership concepts.

5. The communication approach to leadership

From an analysis of the data collected, four themes were found providing insight into the communication studies approach. These themes are that leadership is (a) positive influential behavior, (b) involves communicative ability, (c) values the personal more than profit, and (d) developed through self-reflection and analysis. In support of how the communication approach would define and frame leadership; supporting discourse follows for each emergent theme.

5.1. Leadership is positive influential behavior

This emergent theme is supported first by a professor who teaches leadership courses within a leadership program who has a background both academically and professionally within the discipline of communication studies. He said:

Influence is one of the things that we talk about leaders having ... Influence them to take particular actions that are going to move them towards a vision ... when I said the leader seeks the positive transformation, I guess that is leadership and influence.

This quote supports the notion that influence is an important characteristic related to leadership, with a goal in mind. However, what is notable is that this influence must be "positive." This theme is reinforced by a communication professor who has taught leadership courses who said,

... [leaders] move people towards a vision. Influence them to take particular actions that are going to move them towards a vision ... move in a positive direction for our collective good ... communicate their vision or negotiate their vision, potentially, but move people towards a vision.

Here we see reinforced support for leadership being connected to a “positivity” specifically related to the direction or vision that is established.

With this theme we see the concept of “influence” as one that is considered related to an individual’s behavior. A professor of communication who has experience facilitating leadership curriculum for a leadership development program in addition to teaching some leadership courses said,

Leadership and communication are both the process of influencing others, so there’s a lot of overlap there ... when you’re looking at communication as a process of conveying meaning and that can be done in a way that’s meant to influence others and leadership behavior as a way of moving individuals or a group or team toward its goals.

This quote shows the relationship between the communicative process of conveying meaning which could be considered “influence” and its association with leadership behavior. This notion of leadership as behavior is inherently a persuasive behavior with an objective of moving towards a vision or goal. Other professors support leadership as persuasive behavior by describing how the direction of “influence” plays a part in leadership. This professor goes on to say how “leadership is behaving in a way that moves individuals toward a goal ... it’s a behavior. It’s not a position.” Here this professor makes a clear distinction that leadership is much deeper than a title or position, but is connected to how we behave. One professor of communication who has special knowledge of intercultural communication considered persuasive behavior to be something that guides actions that move towards a vision. This was supported from another professor, with an academic background in communication research and teaching, who believes a leader should seek “positive transformation” with those they are leading. Concepts such as “influence” and “transformation” speak to this theme of leadership being a persuasive behavior. We see the prominence of “behavior” which is more of a characteristic than a skill; however, ultimately this implied definition of leadership as a behavior with common traits is more prevalent in the communication discourse. Multiple educators interviewed mentioned the persuasive traits of being inspiring, empowering, compassionate, charismatic, and having personal charm when listing important traits. All these traits, whether sincere or not, can be associated with persuasive behavior. Additionally there was a stated emphasis on communication skill and ability. This emphasis on the ability to communicate is more prominent within the communication studies discourse giving deeper insight to the perspective and the next theme that communication skill and ability is foundational to leadership.

5.2. Leadership involves communicative ability

Not surprising is that within this data from the communication field, communicative traits and skills are referenced first or placed at the top of the list of traits. This should not be viewed as uncommon as educators from this discipline have “communication” on their mind. The discipline of communication studies also has some distinguishable characteristics specifically when considering the field’s interest in sending and receiving messages. Multiple professors referenced specific communicative skills and abilities when describing important leadership traits. Specifically such skills as running effective meetings, possessing good conflict management skills, interviewing skills, and listening were skills repeatedly referenced. This theme is supported by a communication professor, involved with teaching public speaking skills, who said,

Leadership, I think, is the ability to articulate a mission and a vision and goals; to be able to communicate effectively with the people that are working with you to accomplish that mission, vision, and goals; and to empower people that work with you to feel that they’re leaders themselves.

We see here a value in communication ability specifically in relation to effectiveness and accomplishing set goals. Communication as a skill, as an ability to convey meaning with others, is seen as the process through which a unified understanding is established. Specifically referred to as a mission or vision, and additionally, this ability to convey meaning also provides an opportunity to empower those being led. This professor expounds on this importance of communication ability while explaining,

The idea of being a participative leader, empowering your group, leading effectively, which means first understanding what your mission and vision are as the leader. Then that extends to what is the mission and vision of this business or organization or of the group. And constantly having open communication practices with the team that you're holding that mission and vision in front of them and they're accountable.

This quote is important due to the specific reference to "open communication practices" involving constant referral to the group's mission and vision. This supports the theme that communicative ability is a valuable skill to possess in order to be an effective leader. Specifically with this statement, we see a certain level of transparency with communication is valued. A communication professor with experience facilitating leadership development curriculum and team building activities goes more specifically into this type of ability. Where previously we see the importance of "open" communication, this professor identifies what specific types of communicative behavior "leaders" should be developing by saying,

Critical thinking and sort of practical guidance with regard to verbal behavior and nonverbal behavior, showing up prepared because that's going to enhance your credibility with the team.

This quote identifies specifically "verbal" and "nonverbal" behavior as relevant for leadership development and also includes, not just establishes how these behaviors can enhance a leader's credibility. Overall, these communication professors are in agreement that communicative ability plays an important role in leadership and would frame and advocate for communicative ability to be considered with leadership development or training. The first category specifically addresses positive influential behavior, where this emergent theme covers specifically the importance of communication skill and practice as related to leadership.

5.3. Leadership should value the personal more than profit

The communication faculty members described an appreciation for more relational approaches rather than profit driven approaches of leadership. This is explained and supported in more detail by a communication professor who also referenced having consulting experience who explained the complexity of measuring effective leadership by saying,

So how do we evaluate a successful leader? There are a lot of things that we can measure, but there are also a lot of things that are hard to measure. In some ways, it's easier to look at the net increase in profit when we know that sometimes really bad leaders or unethical leaders or destructive leaders can cause an increase in profit.

This quote uniquely identifies how profit, although an easy way to assess the effectiveness of leadership, may not assess other relevant attributes such as ethics. We see this supported by a communication professor who had experience taking courses within the business discipline who said, "I think the business school looks at leadership and productivity in more of a net outcome, what's the bottom-line figure. I think we [communication studies] look at leadership in more of that personal dynamic." Here specifically the discipline of business is referenced as having this profit-driven approach where communication is viewed as having more of an appreciation for the relational approach, specifically referred to as the "personal dynamic" important for leadership. Specifically stated is that the business approach to leadership is more practical, applied, and results-driven than other approaches, and those interviewed from the communication field admit they take a little different approach. For example, a professor who teaches a leadership course within her department said, "It [our communication approach] is very different from a results-based approach. Even when we look at a corporate leader, we're not saying, what are the things that lead to the greatest increase in net profits?" This comment reinforces how those from this discipline are not specifically framing profit as the goal of leadership even when examining a business or corporate leader. However, some professors from communication also share that having an understanding of the business approach is still valuable; a communication professor who had experience taking business courses as a part of a

graduate program said, “you’ve got to have some logical business sense approach to things.” And this is reinforced by a communication professor with some coursework in the higher education field, who said,

I think business can contribute a lot with regard to looking at practical aspects of application ... all the examples come from politics and business. I think business can contribute a lot of practical examples ... the business context gives us a lot of good guidance with regard to practical application of leadership.

This professor specifically mentioned that the business discipline is a field that provides practical examples and guidance with the “practical application” of leadership, something that can be considered important when looking for how one could apply leadership knowledge to practice. A communication professor who teaches organizational and health communication courses said “in business school they’re even more hands-on. They’re even more practical.” We see through these comments a perception of business being “practical” and as a discipline, a location where examples can be drawn from. Thus in communication it is considered beneficial to borrow from the business approach and merge those concepts into their own approach to leadership. This quote provides support for how communication frames business and also how communication understands and appreciates the profit-driven practical approach but still maintains distance preferring more relational approaches. Here we see those from the communication perspective would frame business as profit-driven, promoting that the discipline of business advocates for profit as a measure of leadership. Clearly these professors within communication do not agree with profit as a viable assessment of leadership and choose instead to focus more on the personal dynamic and relational approaches of leadership.

5.4. Leadership is developed through self-reflection and analysis of experiences

With the understanding that education and training ultimately seek development of some kind it is important to find out where leadership comes from and how it is “developed.” The communication discipline provides some insight for the belief that leadership is developed through self-reflection and through an analysis of experiences. We first see support from a communication professor with knowledge and experience in both consulting and training explain an approach to providing leadership development within an educational setting when stating, “the first thing I would do is have them [students] examine their own ideas of what leadership means ... the next step would be a lot of self-awareness... understanding kind of their own leadership styles and what that means for them.” We see leadership considered as a process with multiple steps involving reflection on leadership and who we are personally. A communication professor who has knowledge and some academic experience within the higher education field specifically said, “We do a lot of self-inventory” when describing an approach to leadership development. Another professor who has taught leadership courses within a communication department said,

I give them a chance to reflect on their own experiences, both themselves as leaders and people they know as leaders ... [students] analyze the members of their group and they analyze themselves throughout the class ... [students are] part of a group where they can then reflect on their own experience, learn from that, apply that learning, reflect on it and make that connection.

Here we can specifically see how the reflection process may include both personal experiences and the experiences of others around them or those who are recognized as leaders. Specifically, what is important to note, is the emphasis on an ability to apply that reflection so students make a connection and ultimately learn. Additionally, a professor who has knowledge of leadership development curricula both inside and outside the university arena said, “When you know your values, then you reflect on are you acting with integrity? Are your actions consistent with your values?” This provides insight into what specifically an individual could reflect on when doing this self-reflection and analysis. Overall, we see that this concept of personal reflection can actually be extended to include reflection of experiences, and these experiences can be both intrapersonal or of others. The discourse also shows us that this reflection process is an ongoing process and should not be just a one-time

experience. Next, the explanations from communication participants provides deeper insight into what is intended when mentioning “personal experiences” as something someone should be reflecting on. Here a professor with experience teaching a leadership class discusses an in-class approach to providing these experiences:

You come in and you do experiential activities. A lot of them have to do with leadership and motivation, and there are cultural issues and so on ... I also do a number of experiential activities in class ... I’m really fond of experiential learning and the connection between having an experience and making sense of it and connecting that to a theory.

We see here what specific experiences are valued; however, the key contribution of this professor is that there is an expectation that reflection takes place on the experience so a student can “make sense of it” and understand better both the experience and the relevant theory. Another professor with research and teaching experience in specifically organizational communication, a subset of the communication field where leadership concepts are sometimes covered, provides support to this mention of “experiences” as valuable and said, concerning students,

For them to learn how to become an effective leader by doing it instead of just looking at the concept in the book ... I would say theory is probably not as useful as the other things that you’ve mentioned like skills, like experiences ... skills and experiences are going to be much, much more important ... do a service learning project. A student can lead one, or they can participate in one. Again, you see the point is to get immersed in a real life scenario instead of just memorizing the theoretical concepts ... they will learn a lot of the leadership skills through life experiences.

These educators specifically reference experiences that guide one to connect to theoretical concepts or experiences that are real life thus providing a learning opportunity. The discourse goes on to outline some specific types of experiences that might be included in a reflection or analysis. A professor with knowledge in intercultural communication said, “When I was describing my experiences in leadership, I was in a position, I was head of a committee or something like that – but many of them had to do with having influence over my peers.” This quote not only provides support for this theme by providing examples of leadership experiences, but also references “influence” as a valuable experience. Another professor from the same university references how her father developed as a leader within his profession by saying that, “through a process of kind of evolution and trial and error and things blowing up, did he realize that his [leadership] style was going to have to change.” Here the professor includes that leadership positions with legitimate leadership authority, in addition to going through a trial and error process while in those positions, as being quality developmental experiences. We see a variety of experiences referenced, from being in position on a committee, having influence, trial and error, cultural issues, and service learning all as experiences that when reflected on can develop an individual’s leadership.

6. Implications

The data supports leadership as positive influential behavior; it involves communicative ability, values the personal more than profit, and is developed through self-reflection and analysis. The purpose of this study is to examine how leadership is socially-constructed within the discipline of Communication Studies and how that influences pedagogical approaches for developing leadership curricula. These results yield valuable theoretical and pedagogical implications.

First, it is important to understand the social constructionist theoretical framework of this study. Specifically, this discussion uses the continua on which the social construction of leadership was outlined by Fairhurst and Grant (2010). The frame advanced from this discipline in this study can be placed on this map in order to better understand how leadership as a social reality is cognitively constructed. As established in the literature review, with Fairhurst and Grant’s (2010) sailing guide, that includes the social reality-social construction of reality dimension with the other three

dimensions of theory-praxis, critical/emancipatory-pragmatic/interventionist, and multimodal-monomodal these dyads can provide further insight into the frame discovered in this study. From the discipline of Communication Studies, there emerged four major themes. Leadership as positive influential behavior, involves communicative ability, values the personal more than profit, and is developed through self-reflection and analysis. When applying Fairhurst and Grant's (2010) dimensions the first emerging theme of leadership as positive influential behavior is supported by the theory of Transformational Leadership (Downton, 1973) which incorporates concepts such as visionary and charismatic leadership into a method of influence often associated with positive leadership (Bass, 1998). The concept of influence coming from the communication discipline can also be supported by group and organizational communication research. Specifically, from the communication literature there is seen an appreciation of individuals feeling a sense of belonging to a group, and understanding that those in the group "exert influence on one another" (Beebe & Masterson, 2009, p. 3). Additionally, theoretical approaches involving influence within communication studies (Hirokawa & Poole, 1996) mention a functional element of group communication as persuasion, social influence, leadership, and visioning. The fact that these concepts are prevalent in communication literature, and also discovered as a common frame from the communication discipline would suggest communication theories involving influence are not abstract but actually in use. The conclusion of this discovery would suggest the communication discipline falls on the praxis side of the theory-praxis continuum.

To assess the communication discipline's place on the critical/emancipatory-pragmatic/interventionist dimension (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010), in relation to leadership, an examination of the discipline's concern for power and dominance shows, where the discipline falls on the continuum, depends on those in this field critiquing, criticizing, or exposing power dynamics within the study and instruction of leadership. Based on the common frames that emerged from this discipline there is no clear critique or exposure of power dynamics, rather a more inward focus on personal development. For further insight, we can examine the result of leadership as reliant on communication ability and developed through self-reflection and analysis. The language that emerges highlights how those from communication value the personal more than profit and criticizes a profit-driven approach. Rather, there is an evident choice for the communication perspective to blend more into the background while intervening less directly. This suggests the communication discipline falls more towards the pragmatic intervention side of the dyad. In relation to the multimodal versus monomodal approach to leadership, it appears the communication discipline is more aligned with the monomodal approach by choosing to focus predominantly on language versus other ways of generating meaning. The stronger connection to a monomodal approach could be expected from a discipline whose emphasis on language is a keystone of their disciplinary paradigm.

The first discovery of importance is that all this discipline associate's leadership with a form of influence. This attention to influence emerges as common frame and provides a foundation for what steps might be taken to improve or advance leadership ability. Essentially, leadership development would involve implementing strategies to improve or advance personal influence. Theories also involving motivation, contagion, rhetoric, and persuasion would become relevant for understanding influence better. The practical implication with leadership as influence and persuasive behavior involves learning related skills for effective influence and could be relevant for anyone interested in developing their ability as a leader. This would also carry over pedagogically. Those seeking to construct leadership development curriculum would need to consider leadership as influence and include experiential processes for students to learn both the ethical implications and boundaries that comes with influence.

An applicable list of skills, including common traits was developed from this study. What also stands out within this list is what the discipline of Communication Studies offers. These skills are considered relevant and important to leadership ability and advocates that leadership is dependent on communication skill and ability. This pedagogically provides value to communication skill and ability as a significant contributor to leadership ability, and something to be included in leadership

development curriculum. Additionally, these skills and abilities can be developed further through personal reflection and personal experience. This emphasis on personal reflection would include personal assessments, inventories, and measures guiding individuals through a self-discovery process as a way of gaining deeper understanding into their individual strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement. Pedagogically, this would include taking inventories and assessments to find out what traits and skills are possessed and what skills need to be acquired. There would also be a focus on getting experiences and going through relevant experiential activities as a part of the educational and growth process.

Another contribution of this study is it provides some valuable insight into where specifically some disciplines retrieve material for developing leadership curriculum. We see those from communication define and frame leadership as positive behavior that influences through verbal or nonverbal methods, is developed through skill development and experiences, and motivates others to achieve a commonly shared vision. Here is an emphasis on the channels influence is sent. Specifically mentioned are the channels of verbal and nonverbal communication, leading this to be one of the commonly referred to skills to be developed in order to develop leadership. Additionally, the teaching methods from those participating were found to be in line with their socially-constructed frame, providing articles, discussions, and experiences within their courses that help students develop in the areas recognized as valuable.

The results of this study are particularly relevant for those who are interested in developing leadership curriculum or who view themselves as a part of leadership studies. As demonstrated by this study, Fairhurst and Grant's (2010) dimensions can be utilized as a method for examining leadership curricula and discourse. A method that can be utilized in examining other academic disciplines in an effort to develop an understanding of other disciplinary frames. This research was part of a larger study examining the language of leadership within Communication Studies, Business, and Higher Education. However, the research can and should continue into many different fields and disciplines. The common frames that emerged through this study provide a stronger foundation and case for what should be included when seeking to develop a leadership course, training, or any kind of leadership curricula. Bringing us closer to having a framework or measuring stick that considers relevant academic disciplines by which to gauge the legitimacy of leadership approaches to books, curriculum, and training.

Funding

The author received no direct funding for this research.

Author details

Timothy E. Martin Jr.¹
E-mail: temartinjr@gmail.com

¹ University of Alabama, Chicago, IL, USA.

Citation information

Cite this article as: Framing leadership: The social construction of leadership within the academic field of communication studies, Timothy E. Martin Jr., *Cogent Social Sciences* (2017), 3: 1328794.

References

- Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, 53, 1125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700539002>
- Antonakis, J., Cianciolo, A. T., & Sternberg, R. J. (2004). *The nature of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18, 19–31. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(90\)90061-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(90)90061-5)
- Bass, B. M. (1998). *Transformational leadership: Industry, military, and educational impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bateson, G. (1955). A theory of play and fantasy. *Psychiatric Research Reports*, 2, 39–51.
- Beebe, S. A., & Masterson, J. T. (2009). *Communication in small groups: Principles and practices*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Bennis, W. G., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann. (1966/1969). *The social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. NY: Doubleday.
- Blanchard, K. H., Zigarmi, P., Zigarmi, D., & Blanchard, K. (1985). *Leadership and the one minute manager: Increasing effectiveness through situational leadership*. New York, NY: Morrow.
- Blank, W., Green, S. G., & Weitzel, J. R. (1990). A test of the situational leadership theory. *Personnel Psychology*, 43, 579–597. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.1990.43.issue-3>
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

- Dansereau, Jr., F., Graen, G., & Haga, W. J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations: A longitudinal investigation of the role making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 13, 46–78.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073\(75\)90005-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(75)90005-7)
- Danziger, K. (1976). *Interpersonal communication*. New York, NY: Pergamon Press.
- Delia, J. G. (1987). Communication research: A history. In C. R. Berger, & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of communication science* (pp. 20–98). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Downton, J. V. (1973). *Rebel leadership: Commitment and charisma in the revolutionary process*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Fairhurst, G., & Sarr, R. (1996). *The art of framing: Managing the language of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fairhurst, G. T. (2010). *The power of framing: Creating the language of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fairhurst, G. T. (2011). Leadership and the power of framing. *Leader to Leader*, 2011, 43–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ltlv.2011.61>
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Grant, D. (2010). The social construction of leadership: A sailing guide. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24, 171–210.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318909359697>
- Foucault, M. (1973). *The order of things: An archaeology of the social sciences*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline & punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (2010). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies*. London: Falmer Press.
- Goffman, E. (1986). *Frame analysis. An essay on the organization of experience*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ for character, health and lifelong achievement*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Graeff, C. L. (1997). Evolution of situational leadership theory: A critical review. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 8, 153–170.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(97\)90014-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(97)90014-X)
- Graen, G. (1976). Role-making processes within complex organizations. *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6, 219–247.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843\(95\)90036-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5)
- Graen, G., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1991). The transformation of professionals into self-managing and partially self-designing contributors: Toward a theory of leadership-making. *Journal of Management Systems*, 3, 33–48.
- Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1969). Life cycle theory of leadership. *Training & Development Journal*, 23, 26–34.
- Hirokawa, R. Y., & Poole, M. S. (Eds.). (1996). *Communication and group decision making* (Vol. 77). Newbury park, CA: Sage.
- Howell, J. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 891–902.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481308091912>
- Jian, G., Schmisseur, A. M., & Fairhurst, G. T. (2008). Organizational discourse and communication: The progeny of proteus. *Discourse & Communication*, 2, 299–320.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481308091912>
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2006). *The leadership challenge* (Vol. 3). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (2006). Instructional communication: The historical perspective. In T. P. Mottet, V. P. Richmond, & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives* (pp. 33–47). Boston: Pearson.
- McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, L. L. (2006). The role of communication in instruction: The first three decades. *Classroom Communication and Instructional Processes: Advances through Meta-Analysis*, 15–28.
- McCroskey, L. L. (2003). Relationships of instructional communication styles of domestic and foreign instructors with instructional outcomes. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 32, 75–96.
- Northouse, P. G. (2009). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Pearce, W. B. (1995). A sailing guide for social constructionists. *Social Approaches to Communication*, 88–113.
- Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412983921>
- Rost, J. C. (1993). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Ruben, B. D., & Budd, R. W. (1975). *Human communication handbook: Simulations and games*. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *The Journal of Psychology*, 25, 35–71.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1948.9917362>
- Stogdill, R. M. (1974). *Handbook of leadership: A survey of the literature*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Vecchio, R. P. (1987). Situational leadership theory: An examination of a prescriptive theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 72, 444–451.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.72.3.444>



© 2017 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

