

The Psychology of Leadership in Rapidly Changing Conditions

A Structural Psychological Approach

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ABSTRACT. A structural psychological approach to understanding effective executive leadership is presented. It is argued that effective leadership requires the capacity to respond in an adaptive manner to emergent, dynamic, and complex situations. This capacity, in turn, depends on the readiness to acquire new skills and strategies for coping with complexity and change. Nevertheless, empirical research has largely overlooked the vital potentiality of self that seems necessary to engender and sustain effective leadership. Accordingly, a structural approach to leadership is proposed. In this approach, the whole (the personality organization, the self-system), in addition to being different from and greater than the sum of its parts, causally determines the fate of the parts, so that the emergent, holistic properties of the whole at all different levels become causally real in their own form. The psychological construct of active coping (Shanan, 1990) is used to demonstrate the conceptual link between personality structure and effective leadership. Propositions toward a general psychological model of leadership are outlined, and suggestions for investigating the model empirically are made.

In this article, we address the relationship between personality and effective leadership in business settings. In particular, we examine the psychological characteristics required to generate leadership and sustain it at the highest ranks of an organization. Previous empirical research on determinants of leadership effectiveness has focused on discrete personality traits or behaviors. This emphasis has had limited results because narrowly defined traits have frequently been found to be situation specific in their associations with leadership. Indeed, effective executive leadership depends on the ability to respond in an adaptive manner to emergent, dynamic, and complex situations (Carroll & Gillen, 1987; Kotter, 1990; Skinner & Sasser, 1977; Whitley, 1989). This ability, in turn, requires the readiness to continually develop new skills and knowledge for coping with complexity and change. Published research, however, has largely neglected the potential for leaders to grow and change over time. Consequently, we argue that it is not a single trait or set of traits that determines a leader's current and continuing effectiveness, but rather a structural psychological characteristic.

To examine this assertion, we have divided this article into four sections. We begin with a few definitions, to ensure a common understanding of terms. We then present a brief historical overview of the empirical literature on the relationship between personality and leadership. In the second section, we identify four areas of personality that this literature has neglected. We argue that those oversights may be connected by a structural approach. In the third section we delineate such an approach, using the psychological construct of active coping (Shanan, 1990), to demonstrate the conceptual link between personality structure and leadership. Integrating material discussed in the previous sections, in the fourth section we outline propositions toward a general psychological model of leadership. Finally, we make suggestions for investigating these propositions empirically.

PERSONALITY AND LEADERSHIP: DEFINITIONS AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Personality Defined

The term *personality* has two different meanings, and it is important to keep them separate. On the one hand, it refers to an individual's social reputation and to the manner in which he or she is perceived by others. This is personality from the observer's perspective, and it concerns the amount of esteem, regard, or status that the person has within his or her reference groups. Personality in this sense is public, relatively objective, and clearly linked to judgments of leadership. From this perspective, leadership judgments concern interpersonal performances, and these judgments are what is meant by personality from the observer's perspective. Furthermore, because reputations represent a person's past behavior and because many psychologists believe that past performance is the best predictor of future performance, perceptions of an individual's leadership may be useful in predicting trends in leadership. On the other hand, personality may refer to intrapersonal structures, dynamics, processes, and propensities that explain why a person behaves in a certain way.

Thus, there are at least two levels of meanings of personality. The first refers to a person's social reputation: It is public and verifiable. The second refers to the person's inner nature: It is private and inferable. Epistemologically, the status of these two meanings is quite different. The effectiveness of a leader depends on how he or she is perceived by others; that is, the reputation he or she achieves. This is the empirical phenomenon that we want to explain or predict. A theory of inner processes, their functions and interrelations, is needed to explain or predict that reputation or effectiveness.

Corresponding to these two meanings of personality are two senses of the word *trait*. On the one hand, trait refers to recurring regularities or trends in a person's behavior; to say that a person is masterful means that he or she tends to exert control over, influence, or direct other people or things in his or her environment. In this sense, the word trait is theoretically neutral and purely descriptive. It tells us what we may expect a person to do, but not why he or she would do it.

The term trait has also been used to denote psychological features that exist inside a person and that explain the recurring tendencies in that person's behavior. This second use of the term describes what we may expect a person to do and explains why we should expect the person to behave that way. In this article, the word trait is used to denote stylistic consistencies in an individual's social behavior; the causes or explanations for this consistency have yet to be illuminated by research and theory. The word trait will not be used in this article to denote structures or systems inside individuals.

Leadership Defined

The term *leadership* is usually used to refer to the process of influencing small-group activities toward setting goals and attaining them. Within this context, the leader functions to direct the activities of subordinates and motivate them to carry out their duties efficiently. The rules, regulations, and systems of the larger organization guide the leader in performing these functions. At times, the group may be confronted with tasks for which no clearly defined goals or procedures exist. The leader and the subordinates must then define the group's goals and develop procedures for attaining these objectives. Thus, the leader performs the crucial synthetic function of information processing, as well as those functions that direct, control, and energize group activities.

Historical Overview

Empirical approaches to leadership can be divided into three historical periods: the trait period, from the beginning of the 26th century to World War II; the behavioral period, from the onset of World War II to the 1960s; and the contingency period, from the late 1960s to the present.

The trait approach. The earliest work in this area grew out of the late Victorian fascination with the “Great Man.” Individuals who became leaders were understood to be different, somehow, from those who remained followers. The goal of research was to identify what unique features made an individual a leader. With the rise in the early part of the 20th century of the psychological assessment movement, personality measures were used to screen large populations for these traits. In more than 120 studies conducted over 40 years, leaders and their followers were compared on various measures of psychological traits believed to be associated with successful leadership. The measures ranged from dominance, ascendancy, and extraversion, to physical appearance and intelligence. Reviews of the trait studies identified no consistent or reliable pattern (Bird, 1940; Jenkins, 1947; Stogdill, 1948).

Behavioral approach. The perceived failure of the trait approach and the growing emphasis on behaviorism in psychology led researchers to direct their attention to the behavior of leaders. A classic study was done in the late 1930s by Kurt Lewin and his associates (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). These researchers identified three styles, or behavioral patterns, of leadership: democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire. The autocratic style was characterized by the leader’s tight control of the group’s activities and its decisions. The democratic style emphasized group participation and majority rule. The laissez-faire style involved very low levels of activity of any kind by the leader. Working in a controlled laboratory setting, the researchers trained their graduate students in the behaviors associated with each style of leadership in order to examine the different effects of each style on small group productivity and morale. The democratic style was found to have slightly more beneficial effects than the other two styles.

Lewin’s research is important not so much for its findings as for its conception of leadership as a behavioral style. The distinction between autocratic styles and democratic-participative styles has influenced the focus of much subsequent research. A leader may either take responsibility for making decisions and directing group members or share, in varying degrees, decision making and coordinating functions with them. What behaviors constitute the most effective leadership style has been a major topic of inquiry, whether the research was conducted in an organization, a laboratory, or an assessment center.

In the 1950s, behavioral approaches came to the forefront as research moved away from questions of traits and preconceived styles to what leaders actually do. Rating scales, interviews, and observations were used to identify the specific behavior of leaders. Several researchers independently verified the existence of two clusters, or factors, of leader behavior. One factor related to interpersonal warmth, the use of participative, two-way communication, and concern for followers’ feelings. The other emphasized task-related feedback, directiveness, and goal facilitation. The two dimensions were variously labeled *socio-emotional* versus *task-oriented* leadership (Bales & Slater, 1945); *consideration behavior* versus *initiation of structure* (Stogdill & Coons, 1957); and *employee-oriented* versus *production-oriented* leadership (Kahn & Katz, 1953).

The identification of two reliable, behaviorally based dimensions of leader behavior was an important step forward. Nevertheless, attempts to consistently predict the effects of these behavioral styles on group and organizational outcomes were unsuccessful. Considerate leader behaviors, for example, did not appear to be reliably associated with satisfied subordinates, nor was the leader’s structuring behavior consistently related to group productivity (Korman, 1966).

Several theorists have surmised that the failure of the trait and behavioral approaches was attributable to a view of leadership as the effect of a single and unchanging set of behaviors (Bennis, 1961; Gerth & Mills, 1952; Gibb, 1954; Stogdill & Shartle, 1955). In fact, the trait and behavioral approaches failed because no one leadership style was universally successful across all situations and settings. Only with the emergence of modern contingency theories could researchers finally predict leadership with an impressive degree of consistent success (Bass, 1990a). Contingency notions propose that the leadership style that will be most successful depends on the nature of the task situation. Modern contingency models attempt to identify and categorize the most critical features of the leadership situation and relate them to the most important aspects of leadership style and behavior.

Contingency Theories

The introduction of the first contingency theory by Fred Fiedler (1967) brought leadership research into a third phase, where it has more or less remained. Fiedler argued that two factors—the situation and the leader’s orientation to the work group—determined leadership effectiveness. Specific situational parameters, such as the

degrees of control, certainty, and predictability the situation afforded the leader, were crucial in determining leadership effectiveness. Fiedler also identified two leadership styles: relationship motivated and task motivated, based on a measure of personality called the Esteem for the Least-Preferred Co-Worker Scale. A widely accepted interpretation of this measure is that a person who gives a negative rating to a poor co-worker is the kind of person for whom task success is important. Such a person is labeled "task motivated." A leader who gives a least-preferred co-worker a positive rating would appear to be more concerned with the interpersonal dimensions than with the task dimensions of the situation. Such a person is called "relationship motivated."

Task-motivated leaders were effective in two kinds of situations. First, in conditions of high control in which predictability was ensured by a cooperative group and a clear task, calm and relaxed leaders were able to provide a steady focus for successful task achievement. Their groups tended to be effective. Second, in conditions of crisis, in which there was low control, the situation called for a firm and directive style of leadership, supplied by a task-motivated leader. A crisis situation proved far too tumultuous to be managed effectively by a participative or considerate style of leadership.

However, in conditions of moderate control characterized by an uncooperative group or an ambiguous task, task-motivated leaders tended to become anxious, excessively concerned with a quick solution, and sometimes excessively critical and punitive. In these conditions, the considerate, participative, and open style of a relationship-motivated leader was more effective. These leaders dealt well with problems of low morale and created an environment conducive to successful group problem solving and decision making.

In addition to research that has incorporated contingency models, during the past 20 years a number of other approaches have been pursued. These include examinations of the time and process dimensions of leadership, including the nature of the complex interplay between the attributes of the leader, and the needs, values, perceptions, and judgments of followers (Bass, 1990b; Berlew, 1974; Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1988; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; House & Howell, 1992; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Willner, 1984).

The Cognitive Revolution

The cognitive revolution in psychology has profoundly shaped contemporary leadership studies. Cognitive theories emphasize the role of cognitive mediation in influencing the contingencies that regulate relations between leaders and followers. It is held that what individuals consciously experience and the ways in which they experience it are subject to the bias of tacit beliefs and assumptions about and perceptions of the world. A large body of research concerns the hypothesis that interpersonal actions and judgments are a function of the way in which events are construed in the minds of leaders and followers (Binning, Zaba, & Whattam, 1986; Lord, 1985).

Cognitive psychology has also played a major role in recent taxonomies of managerial skills and tasks (Carroll & Gillen, 1987; Cox & Cooper, 1988; Whitley, 1989). Terms such as *schemata*, *scripts*, and *knowledge structures* have been used to refer to underlying patterns of mentation that influence how managers interpret internal and external stimuli, and how this information is transformed into action. For example, Herbert Simon (1987) argued that constructive, reality-oriented habits of problem solving may be key components of an executive leader's effectiveness. More recently, Rabindra Kanungo and Sasi Misra (1992) conceptualized the underlying competencies of successful managers as rooted in the individual's "cognitive self-controlling adaptive responses." Such adaptive coping responses regulate, across many different spheres of individual functioning, cognitive beliefs and expectations, emotional reactions, and intentions that may impede managerial success.

The developing literature on the underlying cognitive competencies of leaders and managers emerged in the mid-1980s. This research is important because, for the first time since the early trait studies, scholars began to investigate the psychological characteristics that contribute to a leader's success across different situations and settings. Leadership studies entered a second trait era.

The Second Trait Era

Impetus for this trend was provided by meta-analyses of the early trait data (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986; McCann, 1992). The findings of these analyses indicated that, contrary to earlier

conclusions, certain individual characteristics, such as *ego strength*, *stress tolerance*, *affective regulation*, and *self-direction*, are linked to leadership effects across a wide variety of situations.

One individual characteristic that has been empirically related to effective leadership in stressful conditions is internal locus of control orientation (Rotter, 1966). Individuals with a strong internal locus of control ("internals") believe that events in their lives are determined more by their actions than by chance or fate. In contrast, individuals with a strong external locus of control ("externals") believe that events are determined mostly by uncontrollable forces and that there is little they can do to bring negative events to positive outcomes. A strong internal locus of control predicted managerial success in several field studies (Anderson, Hellriegel, & Slocum, 1977; Brockhaus, 1975; Goodstadt & Hjelle, 1973; Miller, Kets de Vries, & Toulouse, 1982; Miller & Toulouse, 1986).

Self-confidence, another personality characteristic, has also been related to managerial leadership. In one study, self-confidence predicted promotion to more senior levels of management at AT&T (Howard & Bray, 1988). In a study differentiating outstanding from average senior managers in six different types of organizations, self-confidence—manifested in the tendency to be stimulated by crises and other problems, rather than being distressed or overwhelmed by them—was the main determinant of managerial competency, influencing the likelihood that one of the other competencies would be expressed (Klemp & McClelland, 1986). Successful managers were described as confident during crises in a study comparing successful and “derailed” managers. A study of “critical incidents” in the work experience of more than 250 managers also indicated that self-confidence distinguished effective from ineffective managers (Boyatzis, 1982).

Other individual characteristics that have been related to leadership and managerial effectiveness include practical intelligence (Atwater, 1992; Atwater & Yammarino, 1993); social intelligence (Zaccaro Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991); stress tolerance (Howard & Bray, 1988; McCall & Lombardo, 1983); response flexibility (Skinner & Sasser, 1977); and self-monitoring (the capacity to monitor and control expressive behaviors in oneself; Ellis, 1988; Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991).

Recently, some theorists have used the five-factor model to organize and explain what other researchers had discovered about leadership (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). The five-factor model relates to the structure of personality ratings (i.e., trait words), which may be expressed in terms of five broad dimensions or factors—conscientiousness, emotional stability, agreeableness, surgency and intellect. These factors are said to reflect the “bright side” of personality. Proponents of the model argue that leadership requires the presence of bright-side traits as well as the absence of “dark-side” characteristics, that is, tendencies that undermine a person’s ability to form a team and that may alienate subordinates.

It is important to note that the five-factor model refers to the structure of trait words, not to hypothesized inner psychological structures or systems. The model tells us about interpersonal behavior from the observer’s perspective. Because individuals are predisposed to think about others in terms of these factors (Norman & Goldberg, 1966), the factors are considered midlevel cognitive prototypes (Cantor & Mischel, 1977) or cognitive schemata (Fiske & Linville, 1980). Thus, although the five-factor model may tell us something about individual cognition, it is not a structural model of personality, as has been argued (Digman, 1990).

The cognitive revolution brought about a shift in the focus of leadership research from the level of public perception—the focus of behavioralism—to the level of private perception and the information-processing characteristics of leaders and followers. This shift allowed research on both observable (by others) behaviors and inferable psychological characteristics of leaders.

LIMITATIONS OF TRAIT, BEHAVIORAL, AND CURRENT APPROACHES

This overview of the empirical literature on leadership shows that significant progress has been made in identifying the traits, behaviors, and decision tendencies that contribute to effective managerial leadership. However, not all of the questions have been asked, and not all of the problems have been solved. Indeed, much remains to be learned about what makes a leader effective. Unfortunately, some of the most important issues in this question have escaped the attention of researchers.

A basic problem is that research is characterized by lack of integration of personality theory and empirical research. Proponents of personality theory and scholars involved in empirical research work in two different spheres. This situation is evident in the fact that empirical research on the person-situation interaction was, for a long time, planned and carried out without reference to the theorists who, for decades, had emphasized the role of situational factors in individual functioning. Research on the time and process dimensions of leadership has similarly been conducted without substantial reference to developmental theorists who emphasized maturational and environmental factors in personality (Bowlby, 1969a, 1969b; Erikson, 1963; Jacques, 1984; Jung, 1933; Mead, 1934; Sullivan, 1953; White, 1972). Much of the empirical research on leadership has thus been inadequately guided by theories based on careful analysis of personality.

Not surprisingly, in the empirical literature, four important areas for the explanation and prediction of leadership effectiveness have been neglected. These areas include (a) the interrelations among leadership traits, (b) life-span development, (c) cross-domain factors, and (d) irrational and unconscious processes.

Interrelations Among Leadership Traits

Trait-based theories and models attempt to explain and predict an individual's way of thinking, feeling, acting, and reacting in a certain situation, with its specific characteristics and psychological significance, by combining values from a set of traits. Accounts are framed in terms of one major quality of the person at a time, and only secondarily in terms of the relationships among these qualities. This approach characterized both the early trait studies and most of the current research on personality and leadership (Ellis, 1988; Katz & Epstein, 1991; Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Lord et al., 1986). Pure trait models do not treat psychological functioning as a dynamic process, even when the importance of interactions among personality characteristics is noted (Klemp & McClelland, 1986; Yukl, 1994). A pure trait approach also cannot account for the coincidence of cohesiveness and stability, on the one hand, and creativity and flexibility, on the other, seen in effective leaders. The five-factor model is a model of personality traits. It relates to the structure of trait words. At most, it tells us something about human social perception and information processing. To call it a "unified model of personality structure" (Digman, 1990) is misleading and incorrect.

The trait approach leaves several questions unanswered: (a) Are these traits indeed different tendencies, or do they reflect an underlying personality (organismic) structure? How do attributes such as self-esteem, self-confidence, sociability, and intelligence relate to other individual characteristics, such as need for achievement, moral responsibility, regulation of affects and impulses, and an overall sense of "identity"? (b) Do deficiencies in the latter undermine the degree to which the former can contribute to a leader's effectiveness?

To focus on traits or sets of knowledge, skills, and abilities without linking these to broader and more latent aspects of the individual's goal system is to divorce leadership style from issues of personality. People do not function as disjointed collections of parts but as more or less coordinated wholes. Conceptually and empirically, examining each characteristic individually does not capture the full and unique functioning of the whole.

Life-Span Development

Theoretically, in order to understand how and why an individual functions in a specific way at a given stage of development, we must distinguish between two complementary types of theory and model: those that discuss the issue from a developmental perspective and those that approach it from a current perspective. Developmental personality models analyze and explain current functioning in terms of an individual's life-span developmental history. Such models are concerned with the ontogeny of relevant aspects of the individual, the timing and environmental events in his or her past and present, and the ways these factors interact to produce current functioning. Development refers to any process of progressive change. Although time is not equivalent to development, there is always a time dimension in development.

Models that emphasize the current perspective (such as cognitive models) analyze and explain why individuals function as they do in terms of their current psychological and biological dispositions. In this approach, accounts of human behavior are framed in terms of a single instance. The focus on a single event permits fine-grained analyses of the complex cognitive-perceptual processes that contribute to effective decisions and plans, for example. The two

models are complementary, and both are necessary for a comprehensive account of human nature. Yet developmental models have so far had little impact on empirical research on leadership.

From a life-span perspective, a leadership style is fundamentally the outcome of a developmental process. Most empirical theories, however, attempt to analyze and explain the individual's behavior in isolation from any developmental processes that may have led to the individual's present state. As a result, leadership traits or behaviors seem to emerge *de novo* in the individual. How a trait or behavior comes into being, whether it is likely to remain stable or change in subsequent years, and what factors are likely to affect its emergence and development are rarely discussed.

Corresponding to the current-state model of human behavior is a short-term model of leadership. Typically, leadership is defined as a series of separate, delimited situations, each one beginning with the leader's recognition of a new task encounter and ending with the successful completion of the group task. Moreover, much of the research has centered on scientifically controlled experimental situations and has seldom extended to real-life settings, which are far more variable and intricate.

The short-term approach cannot be used to predict future behavior. This is a serious limitation in the use of psychological knowledge in organizations. An important question in selecting for leadership is whether the person has the capacity to grow into the job. There is generally no valid way of knowing whether a candidate who, at the time of initial selection, exhibits the qualities required for a specific job will manifest the same characteristics in subsequent years, not to mention additional capabilities that the job may require. In the case of executive leadership, the future demands of the job are equally difficult to predict. For selection, this means that the individual's capacity to develop new skills and competencies over the course of many years needs to be assessed.

In sum, most empirical research has focused on task-defined situations, thus favoring current-state theories. This approach has serious shortcomings in explaining and predicting executive leadership. It does not consider the possibility that individuals may continue to grow and adapt. Consequently, it cannot account for the protean quality of effective leaders, their psychological resiliency and capacity to cope creatively with change.

Cross-Domain Issues

Most empirical theories treat leaders and followers as individuals who exist only in the public domain. The private activities, personal needs, and values of the person outside work are seen as off limits. Although leaders' private lives per se are their own, individuals bring their personal lives into their work in ways that are not always rational or easy to control. It is unrealistic to imagine that events and experiences outside the professional sphere do not affect a leader's formal decisions and programs. When knowledge of the person's capacity to deal with all of life's stressors, as a family member, citizen, or neighbor, is lacking, the ability to predict leadership effectiveness is severely curtailed. Indeed, the capacity to integrate disparate pieces of personal identity and experience across situations has been considered the sine qua non of highly effective leadership and other creative phenomena (Cassirer, 1944, 1957; Kohut, 1977; Lacan, 1977; Langer, 1942; Lapham, 1992; Rosenau, 1992).

Irrational and Unconscious Processes

Achieving a psychologically coherent understanding of a leadership style requires knowledge of irrational meanings and causes—that is, psychological experiences and behaviors that do not, on the surface, follow logical tenets. These factors reflect needs or drives at the motivational core of the mind. Often called the dynamic unconscious, this area of mental activity is postulated to comprise wishful and defensive motives in conflictual but active configuration. The impulsive and defensive aims of such a configuration influence conscious experience and motoric action. Yet, important elements in this configuration remain beyond the conscious recognition of the individual. These deeply unconscious processes involve more than the nonconscious processing of perceptual and other information.

Unconscious dynamic factors lead to conflict and, sometimes, psychopathology. From a structural perspective for example, lack of self-confidence is merely a symptom of deeply rooted conflict centered on an individual's repressed infantile wishes, fears, and motives. Executives who are unable to master career disappointments may subsequently fail because they founder on unresolved conflicts at the center of their experience with disappointment

(Zalesnik, 1984). Unconscious dynamic factors often underlie the difficulty many executives have in dealing with their own and others' anger (Kets de Vries, 1984). Efforts to appease feelings of guilt and the denial of anger may lead to irrational decisions. These irrational interactions can have ruinous consequences for a business or work group, such as excessive dependency of superiors and subordinates on each other (Levinson, 1984).

Most empirical approaches to leadership, however, do not account for irrational and unconscious motivational factors. Conscious thought is often seen as simple and obvious activity, resulting from a state of full self-awareness and full self-control. Less rational, frequently pathological and antisocial sides of behavior, such as neurosis, narcissism, exploitation of others, and sexuality, are minimized or ignored.

A STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

A structural view conceptualizes personality as a complex structure with characteristic and relatively stable functional dimensions that interact and respond to changing internal and external circumstances. This view assumes an internal organization of psychological processes that cannot be directly observed but which underlie the cohesiveness and directedness of personality at a single time and over longer periods of development. It also assumes that individuals have the capacity to develop functional parts and new ways of organizing these parts. The term *structural* refers to the relations among different levels or functions of personality. A structural model thus offers a developmental framework into which different facets of personality may be integrated and understood in their relation to each other.

From the perspective of this framework, individuals are not necessarily bound by fixed behavioral repertoires or repetitive response tendencies directed by unchangeable traits. Instead, organizing dimensions of the individual's personality structure determine the degree of changeability, consistency, durability, resiliency, and creativity of the personality's responses across situations and time. Therefore, there are personality structures that exhibit relatively fixed and narrow responses to diverse circumstances, just as there are those that demonstrate a wide variety of responses to an ever-changing situation. Indeed, differences between structures ("interindividual variability") and within structures ("intra-individual variability") determine how a specific individual behaves in a specific situation.

We propose that effective business leaders possess personality structures capable of actively responding and adapting to static and changing circumstances in resourceful ways. Such personality structures do not evince one, or a limited set of, behaviors or traits; rather, they are complex in organization and alter (and, if need be, develop) novel behaviors or traits to accommodate, moderate, master, or transcend the intricate constellations and stressors that surround them.

The ability to lead a corporation through demanding, changing, and unprecedented conditions requires, almost paradoxically, a personality structure that is both relatively stable and open to change. Stability, at least in part, refers to the ability to withstand external pressure long enough to assess the situation and consider appropriate actions. Openness to change assumes the ability to adopt new behaviors or strategies when old ones are no longer viable.

A central issue is how one conceptualizes the structural psychological dimensions that produce that flexible balance between stability and change, a balance necessary to engender and sustain effective leadership. An answer lies in the theory of active coping developed by Joel Shanan (1967, 1985, 1990). In general, this theory derives from the ideas of David Rapaport (1957), Carl Rogers (1961), and other "ego" and "self" psychologists. The ego—or the equivalent in these theories to the central organizing agency of the personality—must fulfill the following functions:

1. Deal with (suppress or express, directly or indirectly) the biological and basic drives and needs of the person, such as sexuality and aggression;
2. Deal with (cultivate, change, tolerate, or defend against) external environmental challenges and threats;
3. Deal with the individualized desires, skills, and needs of the self—those aspects of motivation that extend beyond biological gratification and physical survival;
4. Coordinate the means of achieving the first three functions in a manner that creates a relatively stable identity with an adequate sense of esteem and accomplishment.

Conceptually, active coping is a characteristic of a psychologically healthy personality structure. Such a structure has the capacity to tolerate the tension inherent in openly perceiving internal and external events that may be threatening, challenging, or conflict arousing. Moreover, this healthy structure maintains the ability to formulate and carry out strategies to meet, overcome, or resolve the threats, challenges, and conflicts it encounters. These strategies, whether conscious or unconscious, are designed to optimize the adaptive balance between environmental demands, regulations, and constraints, on the one hand, and a person's psychological aspirations, needs, and morals, on the other hand.

Active coping is manifested in the individual's propensity to strive to achieve personal aims and overcome difficulties, rather than passively retreat or be overwhelmed by frustration, whether the problem originates in the self or the external environment.

In formal terms, active coping is defined (Shanan, 1990) as the individual's readiness (tendency or willingness), not necessarily revealed in overt behavior, to (a) orient attention in a way that enables him or her to identify in his personal field complexity, that is, goals and sources of conflict or danger, whether emotional, social, or cognitive, and (b) articulate his or her field by coping effectively, cognitively, and/or by action in a way that (c) safeguards optimal self-esteem and adjustment to changing environmental demands, that is, maximizes the potential for further integral psychological and physical development and well-being. (pp. 83-84)

Active Coping Versus Other Conceptions of Coping

As a structural characteristic, active coping relates to a relatively stable, albeit complex, psychological orientation across time and circumstance. It is not meant to predict situation-specific, consciously decided-upon strategies of handling problems (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Nor is it viewed as a trait in the narrower sense of the word (Hogan et al., 1994). Those latter approaches focus on situation-specific and temporal dimensions of individual functioning. Within that current-state framework, human behavior is essentially fragmented and reactive to either fixed, methodical, and, in many respects, mechanical inner thoughts or dispositions, or to externally imposed pressures and reinforcements. In effect, the person has no choice but to respond in a predetermined, circumscribed manner.

From the structural perspective of active coping, the circumscribed mode of response of cognitive, behavioral, and trait models is characteristic of passive coping, an inclination to submit automatically to internal or external demands. Active coping, by contrast, implies the potential to transcend these scripts and to select (consciously and unconsciously), from among an array of possible responses, the one that seems most constructive in maintaining the sought-after balance between self (including one's values and beliefs) and environmental demands. In many cases, the response selected is a novel one, created for the unique situation that is encountered.

Active coping contributes to healthy personality growth and adaptation by optimizing adaptation to a specific problem and by fostering continuing psychological complexity, differentiation, self-confidence, and resourcefulness. Success (and even failure, if integrated into the personality) creates an expanded experiential knowledge base that makes possible later coping activities. Active copers "feed" on experience; they not only store their experiences and their reactions to them; they also synthesize these experiences into their psychological organizations. This integrative activity contributes to the structural complexity of the psychological system, which, in turn, becomes more competent in its capacities to tolerate tension and devise new strategies for adaptation and growth.

In theory, healthy adaptation and growth depend on the availability of free energy for use by the ego for well-adapted inner- and outer-directed action for active, autonomous coping. Excessive restraint of the drives through defensive mechanisms depletes the energy available to the ego and makes it reliant on external factors to direct it. A relative lack of successful restraint of the drives, however, leads to dependency on the drives and usually excessive independence from the environment. In either case, the person passively yields to external or internal demands. By contrast, the active copier is able to maintain control of inner drives without excessive expenditure of energy available to the ego and can thereby interact with the environment in an involved, realistic, and self-directed manner.

Effective executive leaders demonstrate three tendencies that reflect active coping: (a) a relative autonomy from group values and attitudes, (b) the openness to synthesize complexity, and (c) the readiness to overcome obstacles in striving for long-term goals. These have been conceptually and empirically related to effective leadership

(Pratch, 1995; Pratch & Jacobowitz, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c). They reflect the structural psychological conditions for the many specific, sometimes seemingly contradictory, qualities that give rise to outstanding leadership. Thus, leadership is nourished not only by energy, persistence, and tough-mindedness, but also by the capacity to work effectively on a team and by the ability to go beyond the norms of the group to create something new.

Relative autonomy from group values and attitudes. A core component of active coping is the readiness to maintain relative autonomy from internal and external demands on the ego (Rapaport, 1951, 1953). Such autonomy allows simultaneous awareness of values, motives, and internal conflicts, on the one hand, and of pressures and circumstances in the external environment, on the other hand, without allowing either source of motivation to govern entirely one's inner reactions and outer behaviors. These reactions and behaviors, instead, can be determined by a careful appraisal of the total constellation of self and environment, and by the selection of reasonable responses to it.

Whereas other members of the organization or work group may have relatively more invested in preserving the status quo, a leader has the internal autonomy to be critical of normative beliefs and established practices (Janis, 1989). The capacity to diverge from specific values and attitudes of the organization or group while remaining basically in harmony with the general purposes and value patterns allows the leader to articulate potentials implicit in the wider culture on behalf of the group (Zaleznik, 1990). Indeed, in the most traditional sense, the vision of the leader reflects the integration of personal aims and constructive group goals. This integration requires an openness to synthesizing complexity.

Openness to synthesizing complexity. This dimension of active coping relates to the capacity to integrate internal and external sources of cognitive and affective information. An effective leader is able to identify a set of goals that he or she is interested in, as well as the goals and interests of key individuals and groups who may help or hinder planned projects and programs. Failure to perceive and absorb the complex matrix of incoming information would limit greatly any leader's facility to anticipate, consider, and respond to changing circumstances or new stressors. The wider the sweep of the leader's grasp of the situation, the greater the likelihood of finding successful solutions. Major corporate leaders in particular must continually search for a means to draw into a pattern the myriad events that constitute the day-to-day life of a company.

Managers who display the capacity to perceive, tolerate, and comprehend intricate patterns of stimulation are more likely than those who do not to find workable solutions to conflicts arising from discrepancies between their personal goals and those of the groups they lead. This openness must be accompanied by a readiness to synthesize information from many different sources, so that group and personal goals can be integrated. The process of absorption and synthesis is a requisite condition for developing the novel behaviors and creative solutions that allow a manager to become a leader.

Readiness to overcome internal and external obstacles to long-term goals. This dimension of active coping relates to the goal structure of personality. The ability to overcome the difficulties inherent in leading an organization requires the capacity to delay gratification while continuing to strive for psychologically distant goals. This process implies a personality structure that is sufficiently complex to tolerate tension when confronted by internal conflicts or external obstacles and find new strategies for reaching the sought-after goals.

Passive coping may serve the manager who is satisfied with maintaining an image or playing a role. This mode of response, however, is the antithesis of leadership. Leadership requires going beyond conventional wisdom and established practices to forge new social processes. For this, the psychological autonomy, resourcefulness, and tenacity made possible by active coping are needed.

As a structural characteristic, active coping transcends specific leadership behaviors, styles, and traits. The potential validity of a structural approach lies in its power to explain and predict phenomena that are hard to account for in other ways. Chief among these is the prediction of leadership over time and across widely varying conditions. Propositions toward such a model are presented in the following section.

PROPOSITIONS TOWARD A STRUCTURAL MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

The model we outline is based on the construct of active coping. Active coping pools different sets of skills, competencies, and motives by making possible their integration and application to successive parts of the environment. Although the utility of a specific competency will depend on the situation, a global factor permitting the integration of multiple aspects of experience and self is necessary for effective leadership across different situations. Moreover, this integrative capacity increases the possibility of creative leadership acts. The greater the capacity, the greater the likelihood that the individual will exhibit the specific competencies that support effective leadership. In this sense, active coping can be seen as the “prime mover” of specific leadership competencies.

A structural model may be summarized in the following five propositions:

1. *Active coping is a necessary determinant of leadership effectiveness.* Active coping represents a general underlying factor that contributes to individual adaptation and growth in many areas besides leadership. Numerous studies have revealed correlations between active coping and adaptation in a wide range of settings, such as medical school, adjustment to a new culture, and maintaining mental health under taxing conditions (see review in Shanan, 1990). Active coping may thus represent an individual, generic, adaptive competency involving stress tolerance, affective regulation, and self-direction.
2. *Active coping is not a sufficient determinant of leadership.* Active coping does not, on its own, predict effective leadership; other variables are also important. We are not stating that active coping will predict leadership. We are saying that effective leaders will tend to be active copers. This is a probability statement. In a pool of 100 managers equally motivated to attain top leadership jobs, individuals who are active copers are more likely to be effective in those jobs than their passive coping counterparts are. This brings us to the third proposition.
3. *Motivational orientation is a crucial determinant of a leadership style.* Active copers who are not motivated to lead are unlikely to become leaders. Positive correlations between power and achievement motivations and successful organizational leadership have been reported for many years in a wide variety of settings (McClelland, 1992; Winter, 1987).
4. *Successful leadership requires specific skills, abilities, and high-level competencies that operate in a cumulative and substitutable way.* Examples include goal setting, sensitivity and empathy, the ability to persuade others to drop their opposition and help, the ability to anticipate problems and invent ways of surmounting them, the ability to overcome bureaucratic resistance to change, and the ability to effect compromise among warring factions.
5. *The situation determines the extent to which a specific style or ability may be useful or necessary.* This is the realm of contingency models. For example, a person may be an active copers yet may lack the motivation or knowledge needed to lead effectively in a given situation.

Combining active coping with specific motives and abilities provides a heuristic to explain the development of a leadership style. For example, if we assume a base level of high intelligence, we can expect that active copers with high needs for power, affiliation, and nurturance will learn to relate to others with empathy, tact, and persuasiveness. The resulting leadership styles may resemble the more democratic and participative styles. Conversely, active copers with high needs for achievement and autonomy may develop more authoritarian styles, which may correspond to more task-oriented and autocratic styles.

As it stands, the model is heuristic and suggests aspects of leadership need further exploration. We have developed operational strategies to assess the validity of the propositions and have begun to examine them empirically. For example, in earlier studies, measures of active coping predicted peer and faculty evaluations of leadership in a nine-month leadership development program for University of Chicago MBA students (Pratch, 1995; Pratch & Jacobowitz, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c). The benefit of the model lies in its power to enhance the abilities of organizations to identify and groom top leadership. Accordingly, implication for assessment and selection are considered in the following section.

THE ASSESSMENT OF COPING STYLE

Empirical research on the coping tendencies of leaders and managers has relied on structured psychological assessment methods, such as behavioral rating scales, interpersonal check lists, structured interviews, questionnaires, and self-report inventories (cf. Anderson et al., 1977; Atwater, 1992; Brockhaus, 1975; Ellis, 1988; Katz & Epstein, 1991; Miller & Toulouse, 1986; Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991). These techniques tap consciously controlled, retrospectively reconstructed thoughts, perceptions, and actions. Consequently, they are, on their own, inadequate for identifying factors that differentiate effective from ineffective leaders in high-functioning populations.

It is misleading and incomplete to use aspects of perception or action at the level of phenomenal experience as the sole measure of how one copes with life's demands. It is possible to "fake good" on self-report inventories, because the purpose of such measures are transparent. One study showed that deliberate manipulation of personality inventories was positively correlated with psychological sophistication and technical knowledge (Dicken, 1960). The ability to elevate one's scores on self-report measures has also been positively related to the individual's actual life adjustment (Canter, 1963; Grayson & Olinger, 1958). The information obtained from self-report measures is limited, even putting aside the question of deliberate faking. An individual may be completely forthright in describing his or her behavior, but he or she may, nevertheless, omit important information. Frequently, this process occurs because the individual lacks awareness of the conflicts and motives that shape his or her behavior. Especially in conditions of high emotion and conflict, an individual may wish to avoid unpleasant or out-of-control states of mind. To prevent the anticipated displeasure or threat, ideas and emotions are unconsciously barred from a conscious representation that would otherwise occur. Thus, what managers say about how they respond to stressful events does not necessarily reveal how they actually cope in such situations.

Selection for executive leadership requires finding a way to know how disturbed a candidate's thinking becomes when he or she is under severe emotional stress. Even if it were possible to subject the individual to such stress, we would not want to do so, for ethical reasons. Instead, we may pose such situations through confronting the candidate with vague or effectively laden stimuli. From these miniature stresses, we try to infer or predict an individual's responses to more severe stimuli.

Selection for executive leadership requires more than exposure to stressful stimuli. To predict how an individual will cope with the demands of the leadership job over time, we should assess how unconscious phenomena relate to more conscious, experiential, and observable psychological phenomena (such as behaviors, values, thoughts, and feelings). This process calls for a variety of tests to tap both surface and underlying aspects of personality. Traditionally, such a battery consists of an array of assessment techniques along two separate but related dimensions, ranging from structured to unstructured, and from objective to projective.

To relate the objective-projective dimension to the structured-unstructured dimension, we can view objective and projective test stimuli that present differing degrees of situational constraint on behavior. According to Walter Mischel's (1977) distinction between strong and weak situations, strong situations (e.g., objective stimuli) leave little room for the expression of individual differences, because everyone sees the situation in the same way, understands the expectations, and knows the sanctions for failing to comply with these demands. Such situations tend to suppress individual differences. Conversely, ambiguous situations, which contain few cues to action or information about behavioral sanctions (e.g., projective stimuli), allow for greater expression of individual differences (Price & Bouffard, 1974; Schutte, Kendrick, & Sadalla, 1985). One study showed that by manipulating the situational strength, one can systematically vary validity coefficients from low (.13), to moderate (.32), to substantial (.42; Monson, Hasley, & Chernik, 1981). Monson concluded that individual differences in personality will have their strongest impact on behavior in relatively unstructured, psychologically weak situations. This conclusion has practical relevance for selection for leadership roles, where one is trying to find individual differences in a relatively homogeneous pool.

In psychological assessment, there is a frame of reference of tests that are highly structured, semistructured, and unstructured. This dimension refers to the degree to which a test does or does not have a high degree of specificity in the tasks involved. Structured tests tend to be close to the concept of questions with right and wrong answers. The

more the test permits the individual to use his or her own ideas and imagination in responding to the task, the less structured the situation is. Thus, for the most structured tests, the tasks are specific with little opportunity for the respondent to make an individual interpretation of the task. For unstructured tests, the tasks are vague and unfamiliar, and they require that the respondent contribute much to the interpretation of the task itself. The tests within a battery are chosen so that the three levels of structure are represented.

Structured tests are typically represented in the usual self-report measures. Tasks are so highly defined that the respondent is fully aware of what is expected of him or her and has minimum choice as to the correct answer. He or she is expected to find the standard answer, rather than the one reflecting personal choice, thereby eliminating the requirement to turn to his or her own personal resources in order to cope with the task. Because the task requires that the individual respond with a prescribed answer, his or her responses provide little information about the individual's uniqueness as a person. Indeed, the more unique the respondent's answers are, the stronger is the inference that an internal psychological process has become so dominant that it has pervaded the situation from which the individual should be able to exclude it. When this situation occurs, straightforward, objective situations do not bring forth straightforward, objective answers. Instead, such answers are so colored by the invading personalized material that they spoil the appropriateness of the response and reflect a diminished capacity for coping with everyday situations. In contrast, the respondent has minimal information regarding the demands of the task in unstructured tests. Therefore, one must turn to oneself and formulate what the task involves and how to cope with it.

The review of a person's responses to structured, semistructured, and unstructured tests thus permits comparative inferences on all three levels of personality, to assess whether the person has the capacity to cope effectively with all three types of demands. If the respondent is not successful on all three, then it should be noted whether there is difficulty only in the more personal, unstructured situation, whether the difficulty is more pervasive and includes difficulty at the semistructured level, or whether the difficulties permeate all aspects of functioning.

This continuum of structured, to unstructured, situations may be mapped onto life situations and help us understand the degree to which an individual is dependent on external guidance and direction for effective coping. Our definition of the effective and emotionally healthy person is based on the concept of the capacity to cope with most of life's situations, ranging from those that permit little initiative to those that require a great deal of initiative. A battery of tests, of the type just described, provides a basis for judging the individual's ability to match that definition. From this description, one might expect that more effective coping on unstructured psychological tests would differentiate effective from ineffective leaders.

Closely related to the structured-unstructured continuum in psychological assessment is the objective-projective dimension. Objective assessment techniques represent clear, unambiguous stimuli that permit a high degree of conscious control over what is revealed about the self. Consequently, such techniques assess more peripheral, that is, observable, aspects of personality functioning. Individuals who are successful by normative standards find it easy to fall back on the structure of the test to produce what they understand to be the desired image. In particular, candidates for top leadership positions are already quite good at behaving appropriately, and they are skilled at monitoring their responses. Objective techniques are therefore poor predictors of leadership among managers in line for top leadership roles.

Projective techniques, in contrast to objective assessment techniques, present relatively vague and ambiguous stimuli for eliciting underlying personality characteristics. One technique asks the respondent to make up stories that describe a series of pictures. Another asks him or her to complete several incomplete sentences (e.g., "He was happiest when ____"). The key to projective techniques is that, like the unstructured tests, the stimuli provide little structure to guide the response. They thereby reveal aspects of individual functioning related to underlying structural dimensions inaccessible with objective tests. Projective techniques are especially well suited to assess active coping, because the demand of partial ambiguity in the situation requires the mobilization of energy and orientation of attention in active coping.

Operational Strategies to Assess the Validity of a Structural Approach

In 1957, Timothy Leary developed a model to predict individual behavior that may be used to assess the validity of a structural approach. Leary's work was based on the ideas of psychodynamic theorists who proposed that

personality dynamics, and hence development, could be understood in terms of the relations among different levels of personality. Leary identified five levels of personality, characterized in terms of the degree of consciousness of personality strivings and functioning. The levels ranged from overt, consciously controlled behavior, to covert, ever-decreasing levels of conscious control. To define the levels in terms of operational behaviors, Leary drew from interpersonal theory, treating responses to psychological assessment instruments as statements that the person wanted to make about himself or herself. Accordingly, Leary proposed that a battery of assessment instruments that ranged from objective to projective be used to assess respondents' "interpersonal dynamisms" on each of these levels of communication about the self.¹

Leary related consistency and variability of behavior to the degree of congruence among different levels of personality. Intralevel incongruence or discrepancies between levels denote a state of intrapsychic conflict or personality disequilibrium that is inherently unstable. Leary assumed that, other things being equal, a personality system in conflict will strive to reduce conflict or achieve balance by changing peripheral behaviors in the direction of inner strivings. In this way, unconscious strivings beyond the range of conscious control could influence conscious feelings, cognitions, and actions, depending on internal and external constraints. With knowledge of these constraints, we can use his model to make statements concerning a leader's expected development and long-term effectiveness, based on personality strivings beyond the range of conscious control.

Specific operational strategies come from this model, with two modifications. The first is that personality should be assessed in terms of active coping rather than in terms of the "interpersonal dynamisms" that Leary discussed. Other personality characteristics, such as motivation and abilities, can then be organized based on the individual's coping style. The second modification is to reduce Leary's model from five levels to three. The revised model would include Leary's second and third levels and an intermediate level. Leary's second level, the "level of conscious communication," refers to how a person views his or her own behavior. Such behavior is assessed by interview statements and self-report measures. The third level, the "level of private perception," refers to the way the person wants to be or imagines himself or herself to be. It is closer to the person's drives than the more peripheral levels and is assessed with the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT, Murray, 1938). This level may be characterized as the "level of unconscious communication" because, in responding to projective techniques, one communicates something about oneself, although one does not know the exact nature of the meaning of that statement.² Finally, an intermediate level of communication about the self, a level of semiconsciously controlled communication, may be assessed by using a semiprojective technique, such as a sentence-completion test.

Self-report, semiprojective, and projective techniques thus provide measures of active coping across peripheral and more central aspects of personality. Personality structure can then be characterized in terms of discrepancies in manifestations of active coping. Differences in the patterning of discrepancies reflect differences in personality structure. Individuals are generally characterized by discrepancies in manifestations of active coping, within or among levels.

For example, some individuals demonstrate active coping at the level of consciously controlled communication about the self (i.e., on self-report measures), but they reveal passive coping tendencies at the semiconscious and unconscious levels (i.e., on semi-projective and projective measures). This pattern is labeled A-P-P. Managers with this pattern are prone to view themselves as active copers, while repressing awareness of passive coping tendencies. Grandiose individuals who are afraid to admit their vulnerabilities (to themselves and to others) may exhibit this pattern. Some individuals exhibit passive coping tendencies at the conscious level and active coping at the preconscious and unconscious levels (P-A-A). They may expend a great deal of energy defending against their underlying active coping tendencies. Individuals of both types (A-P-P and P-A-A) are not aware that a discrepancy exists between conscious reporting and unconscious striving. The ideal active copers displays active coping tendencies across all three levels of psychological functioning (A-A-A).

¹ See the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 66(2), for a recent commentary on "Timothy Leary's Legacy: The Interpersonal Theory and the Interpersonal Circumplex."

² To measure active coping at this level, one looks at formal aspects of thought related to articulation of the perceptual field, such as extent of differentiation (e.g., complexity) and integration (e.g., logical control), rather than at the content of fantasy.

The more similar the active coping tendencies on each level, the more balanced the personality in terms of active coping and the more stable the personality over time. The greater the discrepancy among levels, the less stable the personality and the more likely it is that change will occur in the direction of unconscious tendencies. With regard to the prediction of leadership, we present two hypotheses.

1. Individuals who show active-coping tendencies across all levels of personality will have a greater likelihood of being effective leaders on a single occasion and over time. Individuals who are active copers at the more peripheral levels, but are passive in their coping tendencies on the semiconscious and unconscious levels, will be less effective as leaders over time.
2. Individuals who exhibit fewer active coping tendencies at the conscious and semiconscious levels, but are more active copers unconsciously, will be more likely to emerge as leaders than those who are unconsciously passive copers at the outset.

Directions for New Research

The perfectly stable and consistent active-coping personality structure is an idealized type. Most people, however, are not perfect. Thus, the structural approach we propose suggests several new areas of inquiry. Three in particular are important.

(1) Longitudinal research: Information on the psychological characteristics of successful leaders has been growing steadily over the last two decades, but knowledge based on longitudinal studies is still limited. Research on the analysis of stability and change in personality structure is equally rare. Longitudinal research, however, is best suited to uncover the personality characteristics that enable durable and effective leadership. Such research has important implications for corporations that need to select and develop managers who possess the stability and resourcefulness to lead.

(2) Person-organization fit: In principle, small task groups and organizations may be characterized in terms of their active-coping tendencies. Therefore, we may refer to the organization's coping style and examine the congruence between the coping style of the individual and that of the organization. Active-coping organizations are characterized by the willingness to identify problems openly and clearly and by the readiness to accept responsibility for solving these problems. In passive-coping organizations, by contrast, scapegoating is a deeply entrenched mode of coping. Active copers may not be effective leaders in-passive-coping systems. Indeed, active copers may choose to leave organizations with passive coping tendencies, because they recognize the intractability of the passive-coping style. Conversely, active-coping organizations may attract and select for active coping managers.

Do active-coping leaders attract active-coping followers and do such leaders lead active-coping organizations? Are teams that include active copers more effective than teams that include a combination of active and passive copers? To be effective, what proportion of passive-to-active copers may a team tolerate? Do other factors compensate for a passive-coping leader? If a passive-coping leader possesses a particularly valued competency, peers and subordinates may try to compensate for the leader's functional deficits. When passive copers attain formal authority, does their leadership frustrate and drive away active copers?

(3) Cross-situational relevance: What are the implications of active coping in different kinds of organizations? The issue is whether active coping predicts leadership across different settings and structures. Is it differentially correlated with leadership in hierarchical versus flat organizations? Does it predict leadership in the church and the military? Is it as necessary for the effectiveness of small task-group leadership as it may be for leadership at the top tiers of organizations?

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have presented the conceptual basis for our research on the personality determinants of effective leadership in conditions of rapid change. The methods and findings of that research are presented elsewhere

(Pratch, 1995; Pratch & Jacobowitz, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c). Continuation of this work is particularly pressing, given the dramatic instability and reshaping characterizing the contemporary business world.

The trend in academic psychology, as in most corporate settings, has been to focus on fragmented behaviors, traits, and decision styles. In this article, we illustrate the promise inherent in reversing this trend. The model we have outlined offers a more effective, more integrative framework for conceptualizing the leader as a complex, conflicted, and real individual. As evidence that supports the validity of this model accumulates, organizations may be able to ensure that the leaders in the most demanding positions are equipped with the psychological stability and resourcefulness required to perform effectively.

Organizations need leaders who can change with the unpredictable flow of events and who can also change the direction of that flow, to promote the growth and welfare of their organizations and of the economy as a whole. We look forward to a major breakthrough in the scope and effectiveness of leadership assessment when organizations will move beyond short-term, situational models to adopt a dynamic, developmental approach. We believe that the returns on the investment required to reap the benefits of selecting leaders with the capacity to grow and add value to their organizations will become evident when the expenditures necessary for the process of careful selection are compared with the costs of severance and rehiring or with the costs associated with the need to provide support for managers who are unable to perform at the expected levels.

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