

The Criteria for Holistic Leaders

Associate Professor Dr. Mohammad Shatar Sabran

Center of Enterpreneursip Innovation and Student Development,

Universiti Putra Malaysia

Email: shatar@putra.upm.edu.my

Abstract

Everybody wants to be leaders but many of them don't prepare themselves with the right leadership criteria for so that they could be great leaders. Today, many of the people decided want to be leaders because of the position and the power and not because they want to help the people in their communities to experience success and prosperity. The purpose of this paper is to discuss what are the criteria needed by leaders to enable them to become holistic leaders. Without the present of holistic leaders, communities or societies may have difficulties to experience success and prosperity.

Introduction

Many people like to be leaders or appointed to be one either in the area of politics or management. People are willing to do almost everything to obtain the position as leaders. But, how many of them are prepared or trained to be one? Or if they are lucky enough to be selected as leaders, so that they could carry the responsibilities effectively as what have been expected. Do leaders have all the criteria needed to be leaders? These are some of the questions and issues that need to be addressed when we are talking about leadership. Thus, the objective of this paper is to discuss and illustrate what are the criteria needed by leaders so that they could equip themselves with all major criteria to become holistic leaders. Prior to the discuss what are the criteria needed for holistic leaders, it is necessary to understand the definition and the principles of leadership.

What is leadership?

Leadership is the behavioral process of influencing the activities of an individual or group to accomplish goals in a given situation. Leadership is a learned behavioral skills which includes the ability to help others achieve their potential as individuals and as team members (Robinson, Jr. 1994: 44).

Community Development Academy (CDA) has illustrated that leaders could be defined in three different ways: (1) positional, (2) functional, and (3) influence behind the scene. Positional leaders are those who have been appointed to hold certain positions in the organization, such as the head of the department, the head of the club, or the head of the association. This position may be appointed either by the people in the organization themselves or by the authority in the areas.

Functional leaders are those who are recognized as leaders based on what they are involved in. The economic leader and the social leader are two of the examples. This is because, there are some peoples who are good in certain activities and they tend to become a leader in that particular activity only. Once the activity is ended, they are no longer considered as a leader.

Leaders categorized as “influence behind the scene” are based on the assumption that the reputational approach recognizes the potential and likelihood of affecting issues, activities, or decisions as a measurement of leadership. It also assumed that leadership participants are aware of other participants and acknowledge them as leaders

(Campbell, 1999).

The Principles of leadership

Jerry and Robinson, Jr. (1994: 44) have outlined ten important principles of leadership in organization. These ten principles are based on the philosophy of organizational development, leadership development and community development. Most of the principles cannot stand alone, instead each should be understood and practiced in relation to the other nine and in relation to the members of the group and situation in the organization.

1. Everyone is a leader

Group members do not have equal knowledge and skills (Bennis, 1989), but each person can excel in some aspect of organizational leadership. Organizational leaders must know the people in the organization and volunteers well enough to discover the ability of most of the people in the organization, even if abilities and skills are limited.

2. Leadership behavior is a learned skills

Leaders are not born, they are developed or made. Leaders usually evolve. Leadership is learned by copying role models, by trial, error and experience, and by study. Regardless

who the leaders are, they can become a better leader by studying, practicing new behaviors and asking for constructive feedback from the groups.

3. Team work

Involving others in planning, program development, delivery and evaluation is the key to team work in organizations. Successful leaders are those who usually involved and continue to involve others.

4. Permit every team member to lead at some time

Leaders can not know all the answers to every problem in organization. One person does not have enough energy or time to solve all the problems faced in the organizations, especially those organizations working multi level departments, units or ministers. To succeed, people in the organization and leaders must depend on one another. When one individual or one group monopolizes power, resources and time, and takes all the credit, failure is imminent.

5. Everyone, in some capacity, is superior

Leaders may have to look closely to find something which someone can contribute to a specific efforts in the organization. Soon leaders will discover that many people have skills and abilities which leaders do not possess.

6. Democratic leadership is not permissive leadership

There is a common myth that team leadership is permissive, and autocratic persons are especially prone to believe this myth. While democratic leadership is more flexible, it is not unstructured. Many studies have shown that peer or work groups have more influence than the boss over the behavior of their fellows workers (Stogdill, 1974). Sometimes, democratic leadership is more difficult because more time, accommodation to divergent ideas and more people skills are required. Democratic leadership is developmental leadership because, through this system, it is easier to develop new leadership in an organization.

7. Democratic or team-centered leadership is not always best

When crisis arises, such as flood or fire, there is no time to call a committee meeting. Someone must make decisions and do something quickly. Democratic groups should develop policies as a group, then, the leader can be made responsible for implementing the policy. The leader cannot accommodate everyone or do everything in a group. For example, sometimes leaders encounter irresponsible people who must be told what to do, when and how (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993).

8. Autocratic leadership is not always bad

Some situations require the leader to take charge decisively, to exhibit and use authority and power. This is especially effective when the leaders are initiating an activity with people who are immature, irresponsible, disloyal or incorrigible. It is unfortunate, but some people only understand and respond to power. Some individuals have never been exposed to democratic team work, and they do not know how to follow a developmental team-center leader (Bass, 1985). In other situation, people in the community may be in dispute among themselves over work assignments. In such situations, the leaders should use authority to bring the group together.

9. The leader's knowledge and behavior in a particular situation and the expectations and experience of others determine leadership

Many people conform to the expectations of others to the power of the group. If a group expects authority in a crisis, the leader will frequently respond as a power actor.

However, if a group is talented, loyal and expects to be involved in solving the problem in a crisis, a skilled team leader should quickly respond by involving members of the group in creative planning and teamwork.

10. Leaders must be flexible

Leaders must adjust their behaviors to meet the levels of experience, knowledge, skills, and the expectations of group members in every situation which faces the community development organizations. Leaders of a community must be many things to many people. One style of leadership will not be adequate in every situation.

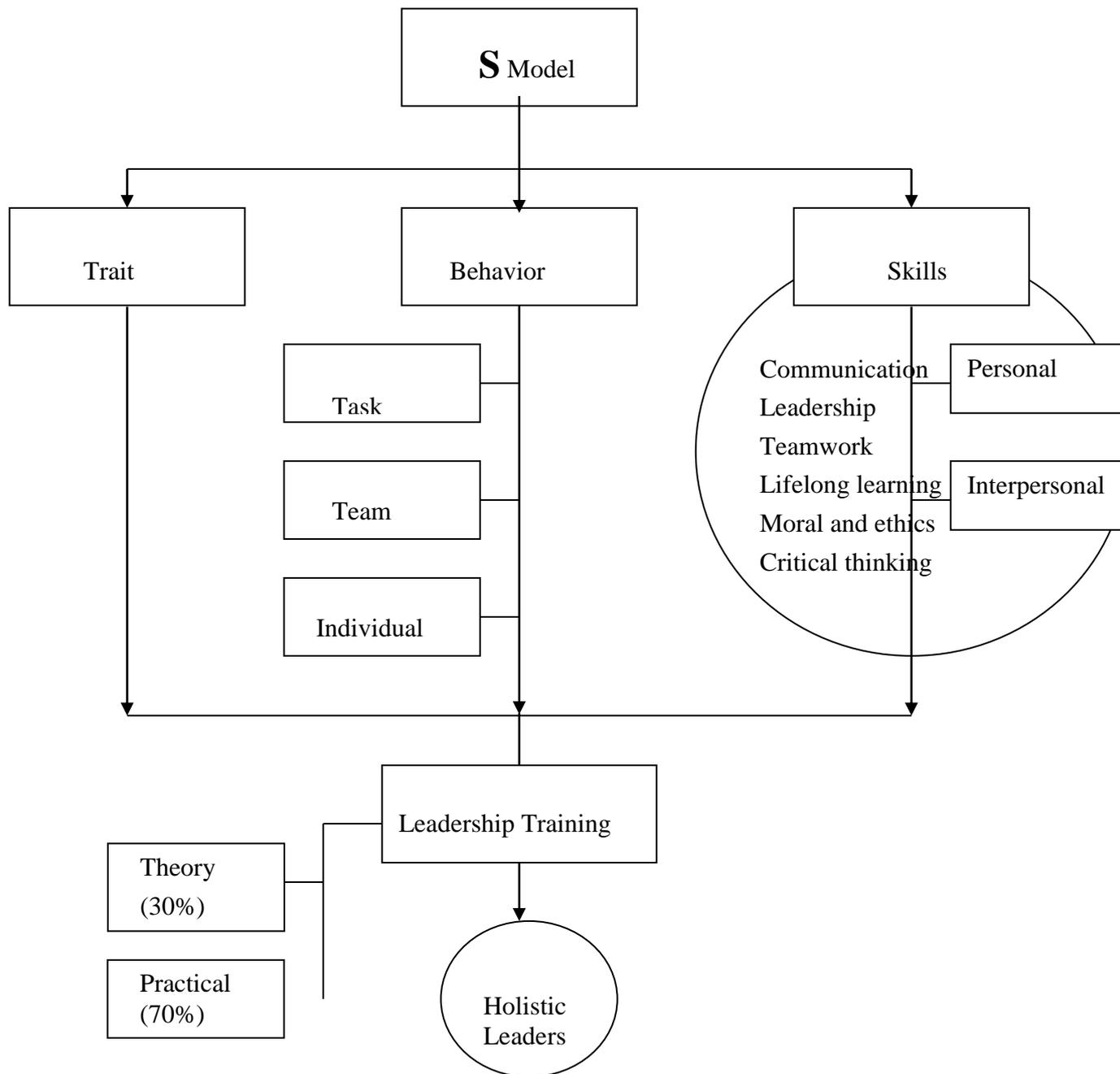
Holistic Leaders

Holistic leaders are leaders who have all the three major components as discussed by the leadership model illustrated by Mohammad Shatar Sabran (2009). The three major components are the trait, behavior and skills. The detail of the component is shown in Figure 1 below.

Regina defines holistic leaders as leaders who are able to translate all the leadership theories and concepts into action (Regina, 2007). Holistic leaders are expected to have the following criteria, as there are believed to be required and needed by the future leaders. The criteria are the following:

- They are able to lead from their mind, the heart, and the soul
- They are able to apply a methodology that encompasses a developmental systematic approach in order to impact oneself as leader, other as followers, and the environment.
- They are able to reflect a journey that leads toward transformation at the individual, team, and organizational or community level.

Figure 1: The S Model for Tomorrow Leaders



According to this model, the first process is ensuring the candidates acquire three basic criteria, which are the trait, behavior and skills. These three basic criteria could be obtained naturally (born with it) or acquire by learning and training. However, regardless whether the candidates have the criteria naturally or by learning process, the S Model would require all the candidates to go through the process of obtaining the three basic criteria by undergoing leadership classes or leadership workshops organized by the organization itself or by other parties. Having these three basic criteria are very important as they are the foundation for holistic and outstanding leaders.

The Traits of Leaders

There are several leadership traits that have been identified based on various leadership researches and studies. One of the pioneer studies on leadership trait was conducted by Stodgill in 1945. In his book, *Leadership*, he has managed to gather more than 15 traits for effective and holistic leaders. This list has been added up to 20 traits by Mohammad Shatar (1999, 2003) in his study on leadership in two communities in Malaysia. The summary of leadership traits for effective and holistic leaders based on both studies is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Leadership Traits

Leadership Traits For Holistic Leaders	
Self confident	Self determination
Hard working	Educated
Willing to sacrifice	Creative
Friendly	Fluent in speaking
Religious	Open minded
Working together	High motivation
Respect	Caring and responsible
Adaptable to situation	Diplomatic and tactful
Persistent	Persuasive
Tolerant of stress	Energetic
Alert to social environment	Independent

Source: Stodgill (1945), Mohammad Shatar (1999, 2003)

The Behavior of Leaders

The behavior of leaders is based on the relationship and the interaction between leaders and other leaders and between leaders and followers. Gary Yulk in his book, *Leadership in Organization*, has identified three different means how leaders could carry relationship and interactions between leaders and followers which are based on task, team and individual. The detail description of how leaders use the element of task, team and individual as a mean for interaction and relationship is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Means of Relationship and Interactions used by Leaders

Means	Description
Task	Leaders perform their duties and responsibilities based on the task that has been assigned to them. Leaders who are using this mean are also known as result or outputs oriented leaders.
Team	Leaders who are using this mean, will encourage and give a special attention to togetherness. The leaders believe that working together could produce better and more effective outputs or results. The leaders who perform his duties based on this approach is also known as the social emotion leaders.
	Leaders who are using this mean, will

Individual	carry out their duties and responsibilities as leaders based on their own personal judgment. The skills, experiences together with their expertise would help them to perform their duties as leaders.
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Source: Stodgill (1945), Mohamamd Shatar (1999, 2003)

The Skills for Leaders

According to Ken Kay, a Phoenix-based consultant who serves as an officer for the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, defines the skills for leaders are few basic leadership skills mainly the critical thinking, interpersonal communication and innovation skills that are needed before they could become leaders. In fact, according to him, these basic skills are more important than technical skills and expertise. The studies have also found that, success in the workplace stems from having these abilities, regardless of what kind of work a person does.

The S Model however, has expanded the scope of skills needed by leaders. Using the idea of soft skills concept, the S Model has incorporated all the seven soft skills in the model. All of these skills are believed to be essential for holistic leaders.

What is soft skills? At present, there is no consensus on a precise definition of "soft skills," but in general the term is used to describe on-the-job abilities that go beyond any job and responsibility description. For example, an architect's ability to create and read blueprints would generally be described as a hard skill, whereas his or her ability to work effectively with co-workers, communicate with clients and manage projects would be lumped together under the soft skills banner. In the context of leadership, soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, abilities with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark leaders to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job as leaders.

The detail of the seven soft skills suggested by MOHE that has been incorporated by S Model is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The Seven Soft Skills

Soft Skills	Description
Communication	Ability to express ideas clearly, effective, full confident both in writing and speaking, verbal and non-verbal.
Leadership	Ability to understand the basic theories of leadership and the ability to lead others.
Teamwork	Ability to establish good relationship and interaction with other people to achieve the goals. Ability to understand other people needs and expectations among members in group.
Lifelong learning	Ability to find and manage the relevant information from various resources. Ability to accept new ideas and keen for new knowledge.
Moral and ethics	Ability to perform duties and responsibilities professionally and the ability to analyze the impact, economically, socially, and morally from any

	decisions made.
Critical thinking and problem solving	Ability to identify, analyze, justify and evaluate the problems in various situation and discussion. Ability to initiate and to expand the thinking process and creativity in problem solving.
Entrepreneurship	Ability to identify opportunities in business and the ability to plan, explore, and evaluate opportunities.

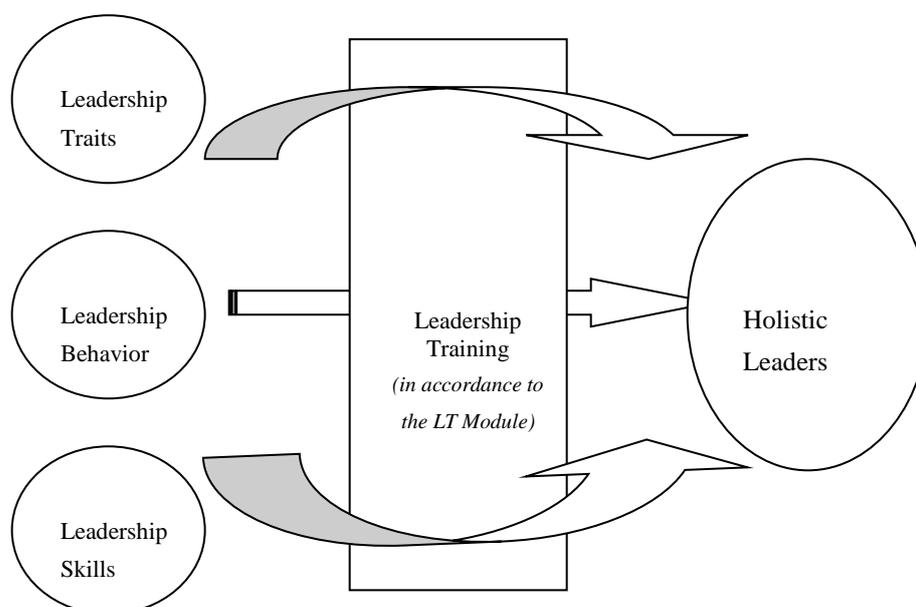
Source: MOHE, 2006

Leadership Training

In this process, all the identified and selected leaders who have gone through all the previous processes and have met all the criteria needed are required to attend the Leadership Training (LT) session. In this session, leaders are trained and taught how they could apply all the leadership criteria as leaders. This session will help all the leaders to bind and incorporate all the leadership skills and traits and train them how to apply all the skills and traits in their leadership practices. In order to accomplish the objective, this LT session must be conducted in accordance to the Module that has been designed for LT. The illustration how the LT session is used to bind all the leadership traits and skills to produce holistic leaders is shown in Figure 2 below.

LT is conducted based on the 70-30 approach, which is 70 percent practical and 30 percent theory. Thus, leaders attending this training are required to practice all the leadership skills and traits through the activities and games that have been designed in the module. Leaders are to make aware about all the leadership skills and traits during the debrief session. LT believes that, by conducting the training using the 70-30 approach it will help the leaders to learn and realized the most the significant of having, using, and combining all those skills and traits before holistic leaders are produced. The approach used by LT Module is also known as the concept of **Learn By Doing** (CDA, 1999). **Learn by Doing** approach or concept is a new approach in many training program and it has been proven effective to accomplish the objective of the session (CDA, 1999).

Figure 2: Leadership Training and Holistic Leaders



Conclusion

Leaders are very important for the success of any community or society. Choosing or having leaders with good quality need to be the main concern of the people in any community or society. This is because if the chosen leaders are not having the expected criteria, the communities may have difficulties to prosperous or develop. Thus, it is very important for a community to elect leaders with the holistic package so that they could help bringing success and prosperity to the community.

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