

A REVIEW PAPER ON SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF LEADERSHIP REGARDS TO EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The leadership mostly roots in sociology and it looks the leadership through different sociological paradigms. This paper confined the sociological paradigm of leadership as a structural-functionalist (stable process), constructivist (is built), political conflict (power relationship) and critical humanistic perspective (dignity and worth) respectively. Hence, this study intends to lay out the sociological perspectives of leadership in association with education. For this purpose, this paper reviewed the literature associated with a sociological paradigm of educational leadership. Considering it, these paradigms focused on social integration and consensus process (structural functionalism), facilitates the learning process (constructivism), power disparities (politico-conflict), and social commits to organizational change (critical humanistic) in context of school education. Overall, the particular one perspective is not fully suitable for all situations so leaders must adopt these perspective accords to the particular state of affairs in the organization. That's why these all sociological perspective has its distinct implications in educational leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Structural functionalism, Constructivism, Politico-conflict, Critical humanistic

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the fundamental process of every organization and it also exists in the schools. The good leadership contributes to flourishing the school so leadership is a highly prioritized subject and many scholars sought it differently. Moreover, there is the presence of many world views, which tries to seek educational leadership from their perspective. Many of them, the educational leadership is also viewed via the sociological perspective which figures out the whole leadership process in a distinct way than other outlooks.

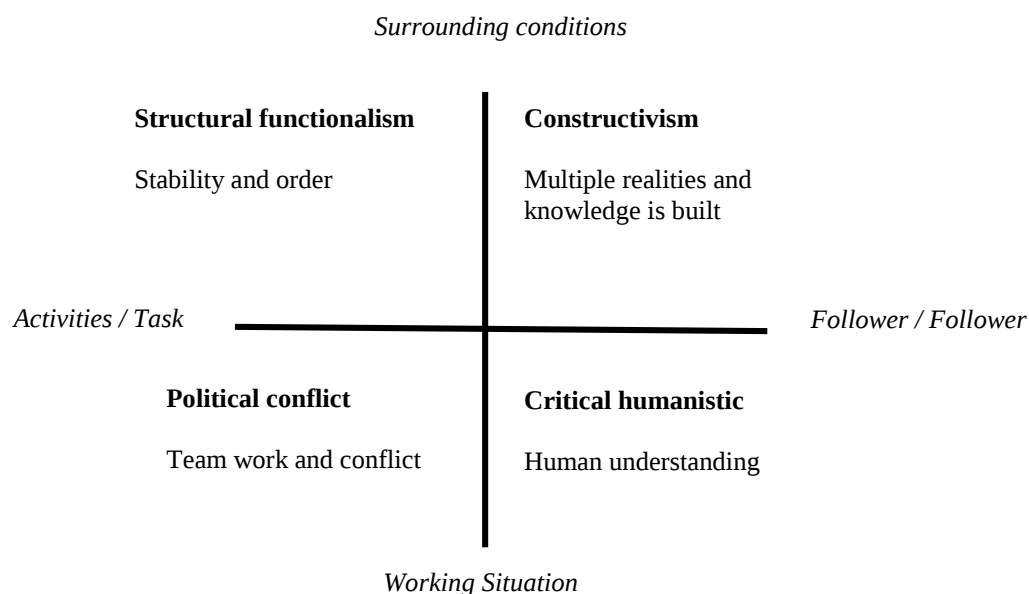
Leadership is itself a social relationship between leaders and followers and a social dyadic (Slater, 1995). This social relationship and dyadic is one of the themes of sociological perspectives on leadership. It is not only psychological but also deeply rooted in a sociological event. It did not limited leadership as only a cluster of abilities within a person. However, it also insight it as a behavioral role (Regehr, 1979). Furthermore, Regehr (1979) defined the behavioral role as the status regarding the engagement of several people in their assigned social setting. In other terms, the sociological viewpoint of leadership did not emphasize the person as a leader, but it gives priority to leadership behavior.

The sociological perspective of leadership classifies leadership behavior in a different paradigm because the single perspective is not able to represent the whole continuum. More specifically, the entire paradigm of leadership answers the question of a sociological perspective in different ways based on their distinct value system. Similarly, the theoretical logic of every sociological paradigm influences distinctly how we can see leadership. Considering it, leadership is mostly rooted in sociology and it looks the leadership through different sociological paradigms (Slater, 1995).

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Some literature mentions the five paradigms of a sociological perspective on educational leadership (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012; Bolman & Deal, 2005; Yukl, 2013). These five sociological perspectives of leadership are declared as structural, symbolic, political, human and self-awareness (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). However, Collins (1985), Burrell and Morgan (1988), and Slater (1995) mentioned that there are four views point of the sociological perspective and it is most common in the literature related to leadership. These four paradigms of sociological perspective of leadership were termed as; structural-functionalist, constructivist, political conflict and critical humanistic perspective (Dereli, 2003) and projected respectively in figure 1.

Figure 1. Sociological perspective of leadership



(Modified from Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012)

Thus, this paper aims to analyze these four sociological paradigms of leadership concerning education. Likewise, this paper also assesses the assumptions and educational leadership regards

to structural functionalism, constructivism, political conflict and critical humanistic perspectives of educational leadership.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher gathered in-depth information via reviewing several works of literature associated with the sociological perspective of leadership. Then, this study generates four themes (structural functionalism, constructivism, political conflict and critical humanistic) based on reviewing the literature. After this, all literature was thematically analyzed and drew the results.

Structural Functionalism Perspective of Leadership

A structural functionalist stance the leadership as the stable process and holds a single reality as its philosophical premises which are related to positivism. This perspective considered leadership as the complete set of measurable behavior and skills (Slater, 1995; Dereli, 2003). Also, this perspective claims that leadership is guided through the social structures so it did not go beyond the societal norms and values. It sees society as a stable, organized and integrated system and beliefs that every part of the society contributes to acting as a whole. Furthermore, this paradigm viewed society as the complex structure made up of several social structures that were relatively stable and it functions smoothly (Durk, 2007). These social structures are termed as the groups or institutions which share common norms, cohesive and have a particular culture. It refers to the leadership as the societal output and exists in its mutual harmony. So, it sees the society as a system of interrelated parts where it acts mutually interconnected with each other and supports the status quo.

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This paradigm of leadership is particularly related to compromise, social integration, status quo, social edict, unity, need satisfaction, and certainty (Dereli, 2003). Similarly, Burrell and Morgan (1988) add this structural and functionalist perspective which is always concerned with maintaining social order and equilibrium, effective regulation and controlling social affairs in the entire organization. Considering it, this perspective fundamentally portrays the leadership in the political settings, which proclaims the conflict is inbuilt in the institution and its major concern is to assemble the compromise and built partnerships to keep up the static state of affairs (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Thus, this paradigm of leadership is more static and concrete. It asserts that the organization is organized naturally and efficiently due to its well-defined structures.

Assumptions

The structural and functionalist perspective of leadership is based on several varieties of core assumptions. According to Dereli (2003) there were five assumptions, which are; i) the survival of the institution is basically for achieving the established goals through designing its structure which can perform in its particular circumstances, ii) these organizations can work effectively and efficiently when individual preferences and organizational choices are constrained by certain rational norms and values, iii) the provision of specializations brings the expertise and high job performance among individual, iv) coordination and control among substructures of organization is the prime concern for organizational effectiveness, and v) every problem comes out from the pitiable structures so it can be managed via remodeling the new system in the organization. Thus the structural and functionalist leaders always focused on value analysis, set clear guidelines, hold every individual, accountable for the outcome and give efforts to work out the organizational problems with the newly restructured policies, plans, and strategies (Bolman & Deal, 1994).

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Educational Implication

The structural functionalism is the dominant perspective in educational leadership and it conceptualized that it tends school as a stable organization. It particularly focused on leaders on social integration and consensus process to make a stable school. This perspective guides the entire education system based on social structure. In the field of educational arena this perspective concentrates the teachers as leaders to evaluate, design, integrate and help students in the learning process (Bridges, 1967). In the line of these perspectives, Augustsson and Bostrom (2012) advocate that the teachers solely design the whole learning process based on the relationship between policy, curriculum, and activities.

According to the structural and functionalist perspectives, teachers and students strictly operate and perform those activities which are already decided as the rule and procedures of the school. More specifically, Leaders (Teachers) provide a resource, articulate the vision, set the expectations, create the boundaries, ensure to follow the social rules and give clear instruction to the students as a teaching-learning process (Andrews & Sonder, 1987). In addition, it focused particularly on social order and working environment regards to students and their ongoing learning activities. Thus, the core features of the structural-functionalist paradigm reveal that there is more influential and vigorous responsibility upon teachers in their classroom than the students.

Constructivism Perspective of Leadership

In another word, constructivism has also termed interpretivism which advocates the multiple realities of leadership. Constructivist perspective refers to that perspective of knowledge that is constructed in the human mind through experiences so it encompasses the epistemological

stance. This paradigm believes that knowledge is built not by acquired. This knowledge was constructed like a structure as a substitute of just being taken.

Augustsson and Bostrom (2012) mentioned constructivism as that theory which is continuously constructed by the active participation of individuals based on realities regarding their values and understanding. Similarly, these realities were developed according to their world where they exist and organizations where they work (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). In the line of constructivism, we all individuals had different personalities, experiences, and culture which ultimately makes us different from each other. These differences make the world more diversified. Thus, this paradigm highlights the knowledge as that term, which ensures it works or not rather than it is factually or wrong.

The social constructivist holds knowledge about the social realm via subjectivity and discrete consciousness (Dereli, 2003). Furthermore, Dereli (2003) argued the consciousness as the existence of societal reality among individual. This reality was constructed by the network, which provides common assumptions, shared meaning, and inter-subjectivity. Thus, this perspective sees the leader and leadership are not gaining from the acquired or born process it is developed through the experience. Similarly, leadership is not the complete set of behaviors but it developed through the learning process.

Assumptions

Constructivism is based on some set of assumptions. Firstly, it believes in the multiple and subjective realities which are mainly constructed, so this leadership perspective refers to the holistic perspective (Bolman et al., 1994) as a remedy to address the issues. Secondly, it termed leader behavior as a nonsense behavior because leadership behavior can be any behavior that can meet certain criteria to convey the meaning (Slater, 1995). Thirdly the constructivism focuses on [A Review Paper on Sociological Perspectives of Leadership regards to Education](#) by [Milan Shrestha](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

that circumstance that explored the lived experience of that state of affairs which is related to the real world actor. Fourthly, the constructivist leadership approaches assume that all organizational members were dynamic and act actively who interact with space and time through significant negotiation. And lastly, this perspective of leadership carries the follower centered approaches which can be termed also as the attributions of leadership.

In this context of the constructivist perspective, the leaders are bound to their societal history, politics, culture, and protocol (Dereli, 2003). In addition, they are not assigned to perform ample work for solving problems. However, the leader only needs to explain why these happen or not. So, Dereli (2003) claimed this perspective as the anti-leadership theory.

Educational Implication

The constructivist perspective is seen as the modernistic approach to educational leadership which talks leaders as a teacher and followers as students. It always facilitates the learning process rather than directing and believes that the individual was the prime source of knowledge. So, it gives emphasize that teachers facilitate the learning process by posing questions and stimulate students to construct their knowledge through interaction with others.

This perspective not only recognizes the uniqueness and difficulty of students but actually, it encourages, rewards and utilizes it as an essential ingredient of the learning process. These all phenomena are associated with the culture of the school, which is consciously or unconsciously built by leaders (Slater, 1995). As well as, Schein (2004) also stated that leaders must do their work consciously by acting role models to the followers, which makes pay attention to them for using criteria to allocate rewards and status, criteria using for recruiting, selecting and promoting group members. Furthermore, the teachers encourage, utilize and reward the students as a fundamental part of the learning process. Likewise, the leader took learning as a lifelong process

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so it emphasizes that knowledge will continuously build through experiences of students. Thus, this constructivist approach refers to the student-centered approach as the teaching-learning process and defines leaders or teachers as the classroom facilitator.

Politico-conflict Perspective of Leadership

The politico-conflict viewpoint took the leadership as an exercise of power between the leaders and groups of followers in the organization (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). This paradigm views leadership as the political grounds that contain a multifaceted range of individual as well as group interests. These interests are based on achieving and exercise the power regarding resources in an organization.

The politico-conflict of leadership emphasized the need for a participatory process, democratic capacity building and mitigated the conflicts regards to maintaining the stability in the organization (Warfield & Sentongo, 2011). It kept the power, consensus, conflict, distribution of scare capital and resources, the innermost issues within the institute. Likewise, the politico-conflict viewpoint sees the existing power relationship which ultimately influences the organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Furthermore, this leadership paradigm advocates the stance for the emancipation for those groups who are in suppression.

Assumptions

According to Dereli (2003) the politico-conflict perspectives of leadership are based on a certain group of assumptions which are: firstly, organizations which are composed of different alliances of several persons and interest groups. Secondly, there are extremely embedded differences among persons and groups regard to their information, perceptions, values, beliefs, and preferences of truth. Thirdly, it decides to allocate the scarce resources in an organization.

Fourthly, power is the vital resource that always invites the conflict, while there are scarce

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resources and its distributions are not equitable among individuals. Finally, the position, decision and goals of the organization are determined through the negotiation, bargaining and competition among the individual and groups of different coalitions.

Politico-conflict paradigm assumes that conflict is referred to as the rule of leadership and also took consensus as the best approaches but it is always temporary and unstable. These assumptions emphasize that conflict is a crucial part of the organization and it mostly appears due to rising different interest groups when the resources were scared (Dereli, 2003). Likewise, Bates (1980) mentioned that leadership holds the relationship between ideology (knowledge) and social control. The social control refers to the ownership and production among them ownership is more powerful than the workers (Slater, 1995). Thus, mostly the politico-conflict perspective assumes that the leadership arises from the coalitions and the power struggle process which gives them power and ownership of the resources.

Educational Implication

The Politico-conflict perspective based leadership highly influences the entire educational system of the country. It also shapes the appointment process and the entire structure of the organization. Moreover, Bolman and Deal (2005), emphasized that the politico-conflict perspective helps the teacher to discover the loyalties and disagreements of individuals within a group of leading a negotiation, competition and haggling (as cited in Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). This perspective contributes the teacher to think about a variety of interests of students, scarce resources in the schools, power disparities between students about the current task or activity. It emphasizes to solve those conflicts which occur in particular circumstances by working together with the entire group members in sort to act together as a unit (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). Overall, this perspective contributes to determining the medium of instruction, [A Review Paper on Sociological Perspectives of Leadership regards to Education](#) by [Milan Shrestha](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

curriculum development, declaring the educational policies and programs, ensuring social equity in the schools.

The politico-conflict perspective in the didactic room contributes to insight into the social processes among individuals and groups. It helps students to be familiar with different views on diverse subject matters. In addition, it also contributes students to select the activity or tasks which match the groups in the learning process (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). In spite of this, the politico-conflict perspective implied, to an understanding of the preferences of individual students as well as groups and knowledge about diverse subjects.

Critical Humanistic Perspective of Leadership

The critical humanistic perspective of leadership is based on the philosophy which is familiar with the dignity and worth of every individual (Hancock, n.d.). This perspective gives efforts to treat every individual with respect and sympathy. It focused on morality, ethics and responsibilities. Furthermore, Hancock (n.d.) argued that critical humanistic leadership mostly takes the finest decisions and implement it with full dedication. In this process, they also consider high ethics, think critically, uses logic, and reasoning rationally. Considering it, the humanistic approaches make school teachers take the best decision as much as possible while facilitating students.

Slater (1995) asserted that critical humanistic leadership is laden with symbolical value and it helps leaders while they are making decisions in the organization. The critical humanistic perspective intends to elaborate and understand the leadership on the fundamental issues of sense and belief that construct the symbols which are very powerful in the entire aspect of the personal understanding including organization (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). Furthermore, Augustsson and Bostrom (2012) revealed the necessity of symbols as articulating and choosing the values in [A Review Paper on Sociological Perspectives of Leadership regards to Education](#) by [Milan Shrestha](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

the most convenient ways among most people. This articulation of values laden among people is associated with the leadership viewed from critical humanism. However, the critical humanistic perspective believes that reality is socially constructed mainly based on the beliefs and values regards to human understanding.

This perspective is always committed to social changes in the organization. Slater (1995) writes "The critical humanists' desire to transcend the limitations of existing social arrangements informs their interest in leadership and democracy" (p. 466). Overall, critical humanism carries the transformative qualities of leadership and applied it to the human endeavor and it improves dramatically the work qualities.

Assumptions

The critical humanistic theory is based on the following group of assumptions which contributes to understanding the basic nature and its features concerning educational leadership. Firstly, every event has its meaning and these meanings are differ according to peoples due to the presence of their various schema and unique ways of expression (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). Secondly, the humanistic leader must perform the normative viewpoint which assists leadership to perceive and understand the existing context. Thirdly, the ethical and symbolic viewpoints form the critical humanistic paradigm regards to educational leadership.

Fourthly, effective leaders are synonymous with the symbolic and ethical leadership which are particularly related to fairness, commitment, obligation, equity and responsibility (Bolman & Deal, 1994). Fifthly, this paradigm prepares the foundation for symbolic leadership which admits the position of the symbols acquired through human experiences. Lastly, these symbols are created by the individual to forecast events, conquer confusion, and showing ways to grip the ambiguity and uncertainty. These ambiguities and uncertainties can only solve by taking the

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rational tactic. This rational approach is taken as the output of the critical humanistic perspective of leadership.

Educational Implication

The critical-humanistic perspective advocates a certain kind of social control which is essential (Slater, 1995) for committing changes in the school as an organization. According to the critical humanistic approach, education aims to give respect and priority to every individual (students) in the learning process. Similarly, Augustsson and Bostrom (2012) divulged the humanistic viewpoint which contributes teachers to recognize the needs of students. They understand and perceive student's needs by analyzing the collected evidence from individuals or a group of students. This perspective mainly focuses on the need for individual student and their groups for suitable treatment and stimuli. Basically, leaders provide main concerns for the personal sentiment and experiences of followers regard to leading the process.

According to Augustsson and Bostrom (2012) the critical humanistic perspective in the didactic room was arranged in three aspects which are as follows: firstly, it insight teachers to understand individual students and their groups, as well as teachers, own particular improvement in a constructive atmosphere. Secondly, this perspective explores the facts about the bond between the student and their groups, as well as their dissimilar preconceptions in particular subjects (Augustsson & Bostrom, 2012). As well as it also focused on the individual content regarding the subject matter. Thirdly, this perspective gives emphasis to recognize a distinct form of subject knowledge among students and their special needs. Thus, this critical humanistic perspective is beneficial in the learning process where it respects the thoughts and beliefs of every individual student.

CONCLUSION

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There are numerous sociological standpoints on leadership and these all perspectives differed from each other due to their distinct nature and value system towards educational leadership. These perspectives are not always applicable in terms of context and period in educational leadership. In some contexts, one particular perspective is suitable, but in another situation or period, the other one is seen well. Thus, the educational leader needs to adopt these sociological perspectives of leadership based on the contextual situation of the organization. Moreover, the structural-functionalist paradigm discloses that teachers have a more prevailing role in the classroom than the students but constructivist approaches delimited teachers as only classroom facilitators. Similarly, in the politico-conflict perspective, the teachers help their students in developing their diverse thoughts while viewing subject matters and in a critical humanistic perspective, teachers admire entire individual students' thoughts and beliefs. That's why, individually, these perspectives might not be sufficient to address the problem of the organization. So, the leaders must adopt two or more perspectives in the collaborative form that would help to address the issue related to educational leadership. This study analyzed the sociological paradigms of leadership in connection to the education. However, there are still several facts of sociological perspectives of leadership which are unknown in the arena of education. So, it needs to bring on the surface by employing qualitative or quantitative approaches. Thus, this paper is informative for the forthcoming scholar in identifying the philosophical stances of teachers.

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