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*Leadership Case Studies in Education* (2nd ed.) by Northouse and Lee (2019), the companion book to Northouse's (2019) *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) is framed around the understanding that as educators, we are all leaders. This perspective is clearly articulated in the introductory paragraph: "By the very nature of what educators choose to do –facilitate the teaching of others– they are leaders" (Northouse & Lee, 2019, p. 1). A variety of leadership approaches are presented in the book providing a comprehensive overview of current leadership trends. Models and frameworks relevant to different leadership approaches are presented with supporting research and referencing.

According to the authors, the purpose of the book is to "examine how leadership theories can be applied specifically to educational settings" (p. 2). Northouse and Lee (2019) aim to relate leadership theories to everyday leadership practice, thereby connecting the scholar and practitioner conceptualizations of educational leadership. A unique view of leadership is presented that highlights the significance of leaders' personal experiences, belief systems, and cultural backgrounds. Values associated with leadership practices, primarily centered around leadership influence and common goals, are also addressed.

The chapters are organized around three main themes: (1) the leader's personal traits and competencies; (2) relationship building, trust, empowering, and influencing followers, and (3) leadership practices pertaining to current trends regarding internal school tensions and contextual influences.

### **Insights into Main Arguments**

The main argument presented in the book is that there is limited attention given to *leadership theory* in educational leadership, in addition to a lack of focus on the practical implications of leadership theory in educational leadership research. The authors highlight the integral role that leadership theory plays in informing effective leadership practice, thus supporting their arguments for a more significant examination of leadership theory and its related practical implementations. While each leadership approach is examined in a separate chapter, there is a clear focus on highlighting the interconnectedness of these perspectives. The authors argue that understanding how the various leadership theories are put into practice in educational contexts will benefit the field of education. This realization will allow educational stakeholders to understand the positive outcomes of effective leadership by embracing the principles of the various leadership theories.

Chapter 1 serves to frame the context of the book by introducing the topic of leadership and outlining the four main constituents of leadership: "(a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals" (Northouse & Lee, 2019, p. 1). Northouse and Lee (2019) present the following definition of leadership, upon which their work is based: "**Leadership** is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common

goal” (p. 1).

Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, are dedicated to the *Trait Approach* and the *Skills Approach*. These approaches relate specifically to the leader’s knowledge, proficiencies, and abilities in addition to the leader’s traits, personality, and disposition. The focus on the leader in chapters 2 and 3 paves the way for the subsequent chapters, which move from the individual leader to the process of leadership.

The next part of the book, Chapters 4 to 12, concentrate on the process of leadership. The leadership theories selected by the authors in these chapters are heavily rooted in relational aspects of leadership and leaders’ behaviors.

In Chapter 4, the *Behavioral Approach* is defined by its focus on both task and relationship behaviors as central to effective leadership, noting that the employment of both types of behaviors simultaneously could be useful to exercise leadership influence.

In Chapter 5, the authors explicate how educators and/or school leaders can apply *Situational Leadership Theory* by adapting their leadership styles to match the situation and its needs. The authors propose that leaders who practice situational leadership should change the degree to which they are directive or supportive in meeting their followers’ needs depending on how competent and committed their followers are. A *directive approach* refers to leadership behavior which includes telling followers what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. A *supportive approach* refers to leadership behavior which includes listening to followers, encouraging them to do tasks themselves, and involving them in problem solving and decision making.

Although the authors argue that situational leadership “provides specific prescriptions for what leaders should do in various situations” (p. 43), they do not account for the challenge of ensuring the validity of the evaluated criteria these prescriptions are based upon. For example, whether the leader will adopt a directive or a supportive approach will largely depend on the leader’s evaluation of the competence and commitment of the follower. This would be important criteria informing the leader’s perception of the situation and choice of leadership approach. The challenge here is to ensure that the leader’s perception of the situation is accurate and hence, is likely to result in a correct evaluation of the criteria. Moreover, the authors do not refer to the level of judgment and authenticity required for a leader to effectively identify and diagnose the levels of competence and commitment in a given situation. Applying the situational leadership approach is not a straightforward process and is, in fact, a challenging approach due to its requirement for leadership style change with changing situations and criteria. The challenge essentially lies within the idea that the *supportive* and *directive* dimension(s) of situational leadership “has to be applied appropriately in a given situation” (p. 43).

In Chapter 6, the authors discuss the *Path-Goal Theory*. They outline the importance of the leaders’ motivation of teachers and students to meet set goals. At the heart of this theory lies the necessity of effectively scaffolding teachers in order to experience goal-oriented success. The authors focus on adapting leadership behaviors according to “follower and task characteristics” (p. 52). In Chapter 7, the authors discuss the *Leader-Member Exchange Theory*. The emphasis here is on the development of relationships between leaders and followers with a focus on the process of *leadership making*, which evolves through “a stranger phase, an acquaintance phase, and a mature partnership phase” (p. 65) resulting in effective partnerships between leaders and followers.

In Chapter 8, the authors highlight the critical role of transformational leadership in attending to the “needs and motives of followers” and helping them “reach their fullest potential” (p. 74). Through their emphasis on transformational leadership, the authors present a unique view of education by emphasizing that transformation is the essence of education. The authors further highlight that idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (as components of transformational leadership) are instrumental to the work of school leaders in reaching the fruition of their transformational endeavors. The case studies chosen for this chapter highlight the critical role and relevance of transformational leadership in educational settings. The cases seek to affirm previous research findings which show that motivating and empowering teachers positively influence school climate and increase motivation and commitment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Marks & Printy, 2003; McCarley, Peters & Decman, 2016; Sergiovanni, 2007). The authors highlight transformational leaders’ traits of empowering and trusting followers, attending to their needs, and encouraging and motivating them—all important relational dimensions of leadership.

In Chapter 9, the relational aspects of leadership—including compassion, connectedness, trusting rela-

tionships, and sensitivity and empathy towards others—are chosen to frame the essence of *Authentic Leadership*. The authors draw attention to authentic leadership as the light which compensates for the darkness caused by incidents like school shootings, which shake confidence, safety, and social security. While the authors present authentic leadership as a distinct form of leadership, research literature has raised concerns about its overlapping conceptions with other leadership theories. Critics have questioned whether transformational, servant, and charismatic leadership theories, among others, fall under the umbrella of authentic leadership (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2014; Banks, McCauley, Gardner & Guler, 2016). Nonetheless, research literature has accentuated the positive outcomes of authentic leadership in educational settings and linked its adoption to greater teacher trust and engagement levels (Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray, 2010).

Chapter 10 focuses on the characteristics and behaviors of *Servant Leadership*, which is later modelled in two case studies. The authors affirm that servant leadership behaviors embody essential characteristics, such as demonstrating strong moral behavior towards others, empowering, listening, and serving the growth of followers and link those characteristics to positive outcomes on the follower, organizational and societal levels. The respective case studies effectively model servant leadership and highlights the emphasis of servant leaders on service-centered relationships with their followers in educational settings.

In Chapter 11, the authors present an argument about the importance of *Adaptive Leadership* in education settings and suggest that schools, and their constituents, experience stability, a holding, supporting, and enabling environment through the work of adaptive leaders who promote *follower adaptation*. Follower adaptation refers to adapting to complex situations including engaging in problem solving, “tackling tough challenges,” and “remaining viable” in dynamic school contexts (Northouse & Lee, 2019, p. 105). Adaptive leaders focus on encouraging and facilitating follower adaptation, offering support and addressing challenges in the process of helping followers change and adjust to new situations.

In Chapter 12, the authors highlight the relational interdependence between leaders and followers. There is a focus in this chapter on both “role-based” and “relational-based” approaches to *followership*, involving both follower and leader behaviors (p. 115). Northouse and Lee (2019) describe the “relation-based” approach as being “based on social constructivism, a sociological theory that argues that people create meaning about their reality as they interact with each other” (p. 115).

The last part of the book, Chapters 13 to 16, is dedicated to leadership practices with a focus on leadership ethics, team leadership, gender and leadership, and culture and leadership.

In Chapter 13, *Leadership Ethics*, the authors address the importance of ethical responsibilities on leadership practice and the implications of leaders’ values and beliefs on their followers. Northouse and Lee (2019) reference *Ethical Theory* as a guide to inform leadership practice, in relation to “conduct” and “character” (p. 126). Additionally, the authors present the five ethical leadership principles of “Respect,” “Service,” “Justice,” “Honesty,” and “Community” (Northouse & Lee, 2019, p. 127).

In Chapter 14, the authors discuss the *Team-Based Leadership* approach, which is centered around leadership that capitalizes on the collective effectiveness of team-based endeavors. This approach is rooted in Team Leadership Theory which emphasizes the critical role that team leaders play in the success of a team. The characteristics of this approach encompass group member interdependence, mutual objectives, and coordinated efforts (Northouse & Lee, 2019).

Chapters 15 and 16 are about gender and leadership, and culture and leadership. These chapters are not associated with any given leadership theory, unlike the other chapters in the book that were dedicated to specific leadership approaches. While the case studies for these chapters reference the leadership implications for each context, the authors have not identified a leadership approach that can be specifically applied to gender or culture. Leadership for social justice and inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006) are not addressed by the authors although they are both respectively relevant to current trends in the field, and commonly associated with practices pertaining to leadership ethics, gender and leadership, and culture and leadership.

*Culturally responsive leadership* (Merchant, Garza & Ramalho, 2013; Johnson, 2014), from which culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016) has derived, encompasses leadership practices that foster inclusive environments for students of different cultures and ethnicities. This perspective would have been a suitable leadership approach adopted for the culture and leadership chapter, as it offers insight(s) into how the dimensions of culture outlined in the chapter could be embraced by the school’s practices, policies, and pedagogies. Culturally responsive leadership is a

fundamental requirement in multicultural education settings and an essential leadership approach. Culturally responsive leadership is especially crucial in the era of globalization which has fostered multicultural diversity in schools. In the globalization era, it is inevitable that leaders will work with peers who have diverse cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, globalization has added a responsibility for leaders to adjust their leadership styles to fit cultural norms and develop cultural sensitivity as well as multinational flexibility (Anand, 2014), making culturally responsive leadership more important than ever before. Culturally responsive leadership's incorporation within the taxonomies on leadership approaches, and its pragmatic application in educational contexts, is relevant and would serve the book's purpose.

## Implications

The implications of this work are far reaching. Considering the lack of research focus on the application of leadership theories in education, the authors give prominence to the relevance of a wide range of educational leadership theories. The book highlights the importance of the dynamics and interplay of leadership theories and practices in the operation of educational institutions. The work calls upon, and invites, practitioners to engage in comprehending how leadership theory is put into practice and tacitly challenges school leaders and administrators to embrace leadership theories and conceptualizations, thus placing the onus on them to develop the leadership abilities of their teachers.

The work also has implications on leader and teacher-leader preparation programs. The practical and straightforward approach adopted in the book facilitates the work of certification granting institutions and offers them a prototype for linking theory to practice. Furthermore, the authors made a strong case regarding the crucial role of the different leadership theories in educational settings. The competitive world of globalization has heightened the expectations of the education sector where educators and/or leaders are forced to cope with the increasing demands of the field. One of these expectations is to match their leadership practices with those recognized by research as effective and instrumental in attaining organizational success.

If educational institutions were to embrace and adopt the practices that this book is promoting then this will have implications for professional development, as well as teacher and leader recruitment and evaluation. Relatedly, this work has implications for the work of leaders in the formal systems and structures of educational institutions. There must be procedures in place to assess and evaluate the extent of the adoption of a leadership approach. Teacher and principal evaluation criteria must be adjusted to reflect leadership behaviors and characteristics. Professional development programs must incorporate goals that aim at building the capacity of educators and principals to apply various leadership theories and to complement their practices with the characteristics and behaviors that these leadership theories promote.

## General Value for Scholars, Students and/or Practitioners

The authors provide two contextual case studies in each chapter, one from K-12 and one from higher education, to illustrate each of the leadership theories addressed in the book and to highlight the relevance of leadership for the work of educators. Each case study is accompanied by critical questions aimed at furthering the understanding of leadership theory with a particular focus on the contextual practice of educators. Although the authors do not provide a reflective analysis for each of the case study questions, the case studies offer sufficient detail on specific issues and situations so they can stimulate the reader's reflective analysis. Furthermore, the cases illustrate the connections between real-life scenarios and the leadership theories and/or approaches outlined in the respective chapters.

***For Scholars:*** In its attempt to highlight the relevance of leadership theories in education, the authors' work serves as a starting point for research on the application of specific leadership theories within educational contexts by drawing upon real-life school incidents and situations. The simple and practical approach presented in the book offers a new track for scholarly work that is most relevant and useful to education.

***For Students:*** The book is a useful resource for students who pursue teacher and leadership certification programs. It is valuable in providing an overview of essential leadership theories and in offering a discussion of the dynamics of the application of these theories by teachers and principals. This book could be beneficial if incorporated in teacher leader and principal preparation programs, as it would serve the aim of connecting theory to practice.

***For Practitioners:*** The book is a valuable resource that encapsulates important leadership theories. The case studies presented serve as stimulating "food for thought," allowing opportunities for analysis and reflection on leadership practices and their application within educational settings. The book can be seen as a rich and illuminating resource for professional learning communities (PLCs) within schools; it promotes critical thinking skills through discussions and reflections around the issues presented in the case studies and offers leadership insight for the purposes of professional development.

### Concluding Comments

Northouse and Lee (2019), in combination with Northouse (2019), are essential additions to the professional libraries of scholars, students, practitioners, and scholar-practitioners. As to how the authors can add more value to this work, it is suggested that the case study questions could be supplemented with an analysis of these questions. This addition would potentially provoke reflection on how the situations and/or problems within the case studies could have been best navigated considering the leadership theories presented. Akin to how the case studies in the book are written by a number of practitioners, the cases would offer a greater value to readers if supplemented with the voice of experienced practitioners, who, through reflective analysis, would offer insight(s) and shrewd perspective(s) to the guiding questions.

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