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“What is that You're Reading?” An Analysis of Leadership Texts
Research Paper

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the types of texts currently being used and recommended within the field of leadership education. Data triangulation methods were used to identify academic and popular texts for a content analysis. Themes emerged relating to context, writing style, method, and content.

Biographical Sketch

Justin Harris is a graduate student at North Carolina State University in Agricultural Education. He plans to teach high school agriculture in the near future. Justin obtained his

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Jacklyn Bruce is an Assistant Professor at North Carolina State University in Extension Education. Her research interests include leadership skill acquisition and training environments and their effect on training transfer. Her teaching interests include youth development, leadership and management of volunteers, and collaborative leadership.

Dr. Jones grew up in California and attended California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in San Luis Obispo where he received his B.S. and M.S. degrees. After teaching high school for seven years Dr. Jones returned to Cal Poly to teach in the Agricultural Education and Communications department. Dr. Jones was encouraged to pursue his Ph.D. and attended the University of Florida in 2003 to begin his doctoral program. Dr. Jones graduated in May, 2006 from the University of Florida with his Ph.D. in Agricultural Education. Dr. Jones began working at NC State July 1, 2006. He teaches courses in leadership and leadership development.

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“WHAT IS THAT YOU'RE READING?” AN ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP TEXTS

Introduction

One important way people learn about leadership is through reading. The texts they learn from may be texts which they have been exposed to through a leadership education course or simply a book they have come across in a bookstore. Here, the potential for two diverse categories of leadership education books emerges. On one hand we have academic texts which leadership educators teach from and recommend and on the other we have “pop-culture” or popular press texts which readers, many of whom may have never taken a leadership course, purchase. In order to evaluate ourselves as leadership educators, it is important to understand what both of these types of text present and analyze them for similarities and differences.

Theoretical Framework

There is a need at all levels of society for greater leadership (Gardner, 1990; Rosenthal, Moore, Montoya, & Maruskin, 2009). As issues and problems become increasingly complex, the need for leaders will continue to grow. As leadership educators, we believe that leadership is an observable, learnable set of practices (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; 1988). Huber (2002) tells us that the purpose of leadership education is as varied as its contributing disciplines. Further, it is the purpose of the leadership educator to engage learners in understanding the role of the leader and the key facets of leadership. According to Edgar & Cox (2010) then, a diversity of disciplines, concepts and contexts is a strength within leadership education.

Colleges and universities around the country are attempting to fill the leadership void via curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities. Of particular interest in this case are the opportunities students find for leadership development within the classroom. Several researchers have discussed areas of significant consequence including: (a) students' comfort level with the concept of leadership, (b) identification of leadership elements, (c) acceptance of leadership as a process, (d) greater awareness of the practice of leadership, (e) establishment of leadership purpose, (f) development of a personal leadership approach, (g) enhancement of analytical skills, and (h) sharing new and emerging leadership theories (Lewis, 1995; Watt, 1995; Wren, 1994 as cited in Edgar, Boyd, Rutherford & Briers, 2009).

The need for this research is grounded in several previous studies. Ball and Knobloch (2005) describe how critical it is for practitioners to study their respective fields in order to engage professional practitioners in reflective practice to improve the discipline. Doerfert (2003), Tucker (2004), and Whiting (2002) called on researchers to examine their discipline, focus research, create cohesion, and develop goal-oriented visions (as cited in Edgar, Boyd, Rutherford & Briers, 2009). Baker, Shinn, and Briers (2007) show us that there is a need to study and understand the core objects and knowledge domains of a discipline in order for its practitioners to move the discipline forward. Knowing all this then, as the development of leadership courses become more and more popular across the country, curriculum and course content is an imperative consideration for educators. The root of that curriculum is often the text used. It has become obvious that leadership is important and that good leadership is needed now more than ever, but the question becomes, *What is the best way to teach leadership?*

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to understand the types of texts currently being used and recommended within the field of leadership education. To accomplish this purpose, several objectives were established:

1. Develop working definitions of “academic” and “popular culture” as they are related to leadership texts.
2. Compile a list of the texts currently being used and recommended within the field of leadership education.
3. Using qualitative techniques, develop an understanding of the content of the texts.

Methods

The researchers desired to explore and understand the texts being used to learn about leadership. In order to develop this understanding, a mixed methods investigation was undertaken. The population of this study was a census of leadership educators who are currently teaching leadership courses at the university level. The Association of Leadership Educators’ current membership roster was the frame for this study. From the list, only those members listed as “regular” members (meaning faculty) were contacted. Eighty-four individuals were contacted; however 5 contact emails were bounced back as unusable, making the total target population 79 individuals. Participants were asked to respond to a single request: to send the researchers a list of the top five texts that they use or would recommend using in their leadership classrooms and a second list of their top five most used or recommended popular culture leadership texts. Both academic and popular press texts were included in the request because of the rising popularity of popular culture in the teaching of leadership. The researchers used Dillman’s (2000) strategy of five contacts to conduct this request. Thirty-three individuals responded to the request for a total response rate of 41.7%. Frazee, et.al (2002), found that there was a significant difference in response rates depending on the delivery of the survey requests. Further, they tell us that the average response rate of email surveys, such as the one in this study, is approximately 27%, so while the response rate is may seem moderate, the researchers felt confident that enough data had been collected, and with proper data triangulation (as described below), and could go forward. To deal with the issue of non-response error, the researchers used method one of Linder, Murphy, Briers (2001), comparing early to late responders. No significant difference was found.

Triangulation allows researchers to offer perspectives other than their own (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986 as quoted in Berg, 2001). Three data gathering techniques are generally used to investigate the same problem (Berg, 2001) and a means of mutual confirmation and validation of findings (Jick, 1983; Knafl & Breitmayer, 1989; Leedy, 1993; Mitchell, 1986; Sohler, 1988; Webb, et. al., 1981). In order to triangulate the findings of the study, two secondary sources were used to confirm text usage: first, three popular publishing houses that offer a leadership and management selection of texts were contacted requesting they share the most often requested texts. Second, researchers referenced the March (2009) Bloomberg *BusinessWeek* magazine’s (a popular leadership and management trade publication) list of best selling leadership and management texts. Where suggestions from the publisher and the trade publication were the same, a note was made, where the findings were different, the texts were added to the list for analysis.

Once the final list of texts was identified, the research team began the process of content analysis. Once texts were identified, the research team began the process of content analysis. “Content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 472). When assessing written documents, in this case written texts, it is imperative for researchers to first decide at what level they plan to sample and what units of analysis will be counted (Berg, 2001, p.244). In the case of this study, the research decided to sample at the chapter level of each text. Following unitizing, the data was coded.

The researchers analyzed the data using the constant comparative method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that employed unitizing and categorizing of the data. Categories of content analysis can be determined inductively, deductively, or by some combination of both (Strauss, 1987 as cited in Berg, 2001, p. 245). In the case of this study, the researchers used a combination of both. Two members of the research team coded the data collectively to ensure consistency of the coding. Researchers started with deductive categories formed based on common leadership theory, then immersed themselves in the texts in order to use inductive reasoning to triangulate the deductively formed categories or add new categories. The classification of the types of texts that were analyzed, served as the categories of data. The categories of data were then sorted into emergent themes and theme titles were developed to distinguish each theme from the others (Erlandson et al., 1993). Continual revision, modification, and amendment were used until all data were classified into an appropriate theme. Two professionals familiar with leadership development texts served as independent peer debriefers, reviewing the researchers’ themes and suggesting revisions. Final themes with appropriate codes, as part of the trustworthiness criteria of confirmability are reported in the results section.

Findings

Findings of this study will be reported by objective.

Objective One- Develop working definitions of “academic” and “popular culture” as they are related to leadership texts.

Academic was defined by Merriam-Webster Online as “of, relating to, or associated with an academy or school especially of higher learning” (Academic, 2010). This definition was combined with the lists of leadership educators’ recommended academic texts to determine academic books for analysis. One definition of “popular” found on Merriam-Webster Online was “adapted to or indicative of the understanding and taste of the majority” (Popular, 2010). For the purpose of leadership texts, this definition, along with the evidence of the best-sellers list, was used to determine which books qualified as popular culture.

Objective Two- Compile a list of the texts currently being used and recommended within the field of leadership education.

As described above, the texts gathered were compiled into two lists, academic and popular press/culture. The tables below show the texts and the frequencies with which they were reported, by the leadership educators.

Table 1.

List of Academic Texts Identified by Leadership Educators (N=132)

Academic Texts	f	%
The Leadership Challenge – Kouzes & Posner	17	12.8
Leadership: Theory & Practice – Northouse	15	1.3
Leadership: Research Findings, Practice & Skills - DuBrin	6	4.5
The Bass Handbook of Leadership – Bass	4	3.0
Leadership in Organizations -- Yukl	4	3.0
Exploring Leadership – Komives, Lucas, & McMahon	3	2.3
Leadership – Burns	3	2.3
Leadership Theory, Application & Skill Development – Lussier & Achua	3	2.3
Now Discover Your Strengths – Buckingham	2	1.5
On Becoming a Leader – Bennis	2	1.5
Organizational Culture & Leadership—Schein	2	1.5
Transformational Leadership	1	0.8
Out of Women's Experience: Creating Relational Leadership -- Regan & Brooks	1	0.8
Women of Influence, Women of Vision – Astin	1	0.8
Leaders & the leadership process -- Pierce & Newstrom	1	0.8
The Art of Leadership -- Manning & Curtis	1	0.8
Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's Theory of Servant Leadership	1	0.8
Influenced Today's Top Management Thinkers – Spears	1	0.8
The Art of Followership -- Riggio, Chaleff, Lipman-Blumen	1	0.8
The Quest for a General Theory of Leadership -- Goethals & Sorensen	1	0.8
Leaders Who Make a Difference -- Nanus & Dobbs	1	0.8
Introduction to Leadership – Northouse	1	0.8
Transforming Leadership – Burns	1	0.8
The Prince – Machiavelli	1	0.8
Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations --Dym & Hutson	1	0.8
Ethics, The Heart of Leadership – Cuilla	1	0.8
Values Leadership – Fairholm	1	0.8
The Art & Science of Leadership – Nahavandi	1	0.8
Leadership in Place – Wergin	1	0.8
Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success -- Ricketts & Ricketts	1	0.8
Organizational Change – Burke	1	0.8
Leadership Without Easy Answers -Heifetz	1	0.8
The Leader's Companion – Wren	1	0.8
Organizational Behavior -- Robbins & Judge	1	0.8
A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Leadership --Jackson & Perry	1	0.8

Leadership Communication -- Barrett	1	0.8
Preparing for Leadership: A Young Adults' Guide to Leadership Skills in a Global Age –Woyach	1	0.8
The Future of Leadership – Bennis	1	0.8
The Leadership Experience -- Dart	1	0.8
Group Dynamics for Teams – Levi	1	0.8
Linkage Leadership Development -- Gibler & Goldsmith	1	0.8
Leadership: A Communication Perspective -- Hackman & Johnson	1	0.8
Leadership Development in Balance – Avolio	1	0.8
Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment -- Connerly & Pedersen	1	0.8
The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership & Management -- Herman	1	0.8
Influence in Organizations – Vecchio	1	0.8
Leadership: Understanding the Dynamic of Power and Influence in Organizations – Vecchio	1	0.8

Table 2.

List of Popular Culture Texts Identified by Leadership Educators (N=110)

Popular Texts	f	%
Good to Great – Collins	5	4.5
Leadership Jazz – DePree	4	3.6
Servant Leadership – Greenleaf	4	3.6
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team – Lencioni	4	3.6
The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People -- Covey	4	3.6
Leading Change – Kotter	3	2.7
The 5 th Discipline -- Senge	3	2.7
Adaptive Leadership – Heifetz	2	1.8
Crucial conversations – Patterson, et. Al	2	1.8
Developing the Leader within You – Maxwell	2	1.8
Emotional Intelligence – Goleman	2	1.8
Ethical Dimensions of Leadership – Kanugo & Mendonca	2	1.8
Leadership: enhancing the Lessons of Experience	2	1.8
Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership	2	1.8
Reframing Organizations – Bolman & Deal	2	1.8
Social Intelligence – Goldman	2	1.8
The Leadership Moment – Useem	2	1.8
Courageous Follower – Chaleff	1	0.9
The Essential Drucker –Drucker	1	0.9
Stewardship – Block	1	0.9
What Got You Here Won't Get You There --Goldsmith & Reiter	1	0.9
Outliers: The Story of Success – Gladwell	1	0.9

Habitudes – Elmore	1	0.9
Art of Leadership – Bothwell	1	0.9
Letters From Leaders: Practical Advice for Tomorrow's Leaders From the World's Most Influential People – Doorman	1	0.9
Empowering Youth: How to Encourage Youth Leaders to do Great Things – Curtis	1	0.9
Leadership is an Art – DePree	1	0.9
Prime Rib or Potted Meat: Thoughts on Getting More out of Life – Loftin	1	0.9
Fish! Tales: Real life stories to help you transform your workplace and your life -- Lundin and Christensen	1	0.9
Leading Leaders – Salacuse	1	0.9
Contrarians Guide to Leadership – Sample	1	0.9
Soul of the Firm – Pollard	1	0.9
What Leaders Do—Kotter	1	0.9
The Servant as Leader – Greenleaf	1	0.9
Leaders -- Bennis & Nanus	1	0.9
The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell – Harari	1	0.9
The Secret Language of Leadership – Denning	1	0.9
You Don't Need a Title to be a Leader – Sanborn	1	0.9
It's Not About the Coffee: Leadership Principles from a Life at Starbucks – Behar	1	0.9
A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life – Palmer	1	0.9
Certain Trumpets – Willis	1	0.9
Developing the Leaders Within You – Maxwell	1	0.9
Shackleton's Way -- Morrell & Capparell	1	0.9

Below is a table showing the data triangulation—those texts listed as Business Week Best Sellers or recommended by publishers:

Table 3.

Lists of Texts Suggested by Publishing Houses and BusinessWeek

Title & Author	Suggested By:
Good to Great – Jim Collins	<i>BusinessWeek</i> & Publisher
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team – Patrick Lencioni	<i>BusinessWeek</i>
Who Moved My Cheese? – Spencer Johnson	<i>BusinessWeek</i> & Publisher
Our Iceberg is Melting – John Kotter, Holger Rathgeber	<i>BusinessWeek</i>
The Tipping Point – Malcom Gladwell	<i>BusinessWeek</i>
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – Stephen R. Covey	<i>BusinessWeek</i>
Getting to Yes – Robert T. Kiyosaki, Sharon L. Lechter	<i>BusinessWeek</i>
Leadership Theory & Practice – Northouse	Publisher

Objective 3- Using qualitative techniques, develop an understanding of the content of the texts.

When analyzing the content of the texts, several themes emerged. Similarities and differences between academic texts and popular texts are described as they relate to audience, writing style, method, and content.

Leadership Context

The popular texts appeal to the reader by explaining how to become better leaders on an individual basis, whereas the academic texts were written about organizational leadership and teamwork. In fact, personal leadership was focused on to the extent that often whole chapters, and sometimes the entire book, were devoted solely to individual growth as a leader. An example of this is found in Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, where chapter content includes *Personal Vision, Principles of Personal Leadership, and Principles of Personal Management*. This emphasis on personal leadership is echoed in Leadership Jazz by Max DePree, in which the importance of keeping promises and reflection are accentuated. Popular press leadership texts seemed to have the goal of creating a personal do-it-yourself guide to becoming a leader.

It became clear that academic texts discuss leadership on a broader level whereas pop-culture texts are primarily concerned with the personal development piece of the puzzle. This can be seen as academic texts were more concerned with leadership as it applied to organizations and teams. Evidence of this can be found in Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership (Bass, 1990) where a section of the text is devoted to "Leadership, Environment, and Organization." This theme is proved again by Yukl (2009) through his discussion of "Leadership in Teams and Self-Managed Groups" and "Leading Change in Organizations." Clearly, academic texts explained leadership on a wider spectrum when compared to the self-improvement popular press leadership books.

Writing Style

Popular texts seemed more interesting and engaging through use of a more relaxed writing style, where the academic texts used a more formal writing style to make known the research and theoretical foundations of leadership development. Pop-culture texts were much more conversational in style of writing than were academic texts. This made popular books "easier-reads" in comparison to the academic books. In other words, the pop-culture texts didn't require the reader to have an extensive vocabulary or background knowledge in the subject in order to find the texts interesting, engaging, and informative. This was achieved through informal language such as, "Confront the Brutal Facts" (Collins, 2001), "Put First Things First" (Covey, 2004), and "Lighting the Fire" (Lencioni, 2002), all content areas of various pop-culture leadership texts which were analyzed. DePree's Leadership Jazz provides another example by titling a chapter "Ropes or Bathrooms," in which he relates a story about choosing a hotel room with a bathroom or one with a fire escape to making choices in life. This relaxed writing style was common in popular texts.

Academic texts made use of field-specific language while terminology which is more commonly used in everyday language was found more often in pop-culture texts. The technical terminology found in academic texts includes contingency theory, situational leadership theory, transformational leadership, and so on. To contrast the language used in academic text with the aforementioned pop-culture content areas, content areas in academic texts were titled “Dyadic Role-Making Theories and Followership” (Yukl, 2009) and “Leader-Member Exchange Theory” (Northouse, 2007). Another example of this language is seen in Northouse’s Leadership: Theory and Practice which speaks of subordinate characteristics, supportive leadership, institutional collectivism, and gender egalitarianism, for example. These all serve as evidence that academic texts were prone to use a technical writing style, with terminology and jargon specific to the leadership education field.

Method

Several popular texts relied heavily on story-telling to demonstrate tenants of leadership. DePree (2008) relies heavily on recollections of personal stories and events to drive his points home. Covey (2004, p.102) too utilized personal experience as a means to convey his thoughts about leadership:

At the final session of a year-long executive development program in Seattle, the president of an oil company came up to me and said “Stephen, when you pointed out the difference between leadership and management in the second month, I looked at my role as the president of this company and realized that I had never been into leadership. I was deep into management, buried by pressing challenges and details of day-to-day logistics. So I decided to withdraw from management. I could get other people to do that. I wanted to really lead my organization...

Examples of this can also be found throughout Lencioni’s (2002) The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, where he even goes as far as to dialogue conversations to tell the stories. In fact, this text is presented as “A Leadership Fable.” Pop-culture texts’ use of stories differed from the use of those found in academic texts in that the stories served as the primary means for transferring information to the reader. Academic texts, on the other hand, used the stories to reinforce the theory and data presented in the chapters.

In the case of academic texts, stories served as a support mechanism rather than a primary means of conveying information. In doing so, academic texts tended to state the theories and research in the chapter first, and then make use of case studies to provide examples, if they made use of stories at all. Northouse (2007) especially used several case studies at the end of each chapter to strengthen the connection between research/theory and practice. However, Northouse (2007) was more prone to use situational and hypothetical stories such as “Can this virtual team work?,” “Andy’s Recipe,” and “A Shift for Lieutenant Colonel Adams” to fortify his content than using stories about famous leaders. Each of these stories was at the end of a chapter and described in great detail background information to create a situation in which the reader could see the theory, which was previously discussed, in action in a real-world context. Stories were a supplementary item in academic texts rather than being critical to the conveyance of ideas.

Content

Academic texts were much more comprehensive, or all-inclusive, than were popular books, as nearly every theme which emerged in the popular texts was also found in the academic texts. The opposite was not true.

The main emerging theme in academic texts was leadership theories, specifically transformational, contingency, situational, strategic, and charismatic. Popular texts rarely made reference to leadership theory, but when they did, it was strategic or charismatic theory. Interestingly, these two theories are the least of the aforementioned theories referenced in the academic texts. Evidence of the inclusion of leadership theories was also found in the academic text, Leadership: Theory and Practice, as Northouse almost exclusively uses leadership theories as chapter titles, such as “Psychodynamic Approach,” “Transformational Leadership,” and “Path-Goal Theory.” Similarly, DuBrin (2009) uses chapter titles such as “Charismatic and Transformational Leadership,” “Contingency and Situational Leadership.”

Ethics is a valued tenant within the academic texts, as each academic text analyzed contained specific content areas specifically addressing ethics. “Ethical Leadership” (Northouse, 2007) and “Leadership Ethics and Social Responsibility” (DuBrin, 2003) served as examples of the emphasis placed on ethics as it applied to leadership in the academic texts. Meanwhile, ethics was not focused on in pop-culture texts in the same manner as it was in the academic books.

Though pop-culture books were more focused on personal development and issues relating to morality were cited throughout the text, there was not the same level of direct emphasis. An excerpt from Leadership Jazz (DePree, 2008, p. 220) illustrates this point:

Integrity is the linchpin of leadership. Where integrity is at stake, the leader works publicly. Behavior is the only score that’s kept. Lose integrity, and a leader will suddenly find herself in a directionless organization going nowhere.

Here the author addresses some of the same issues found in the ethics sections of academic texts, but these homilies were spread throughout the text rather than focused on as their own sections or chapters.

Academic texts also placed emphasis on diversity, a rare theme in pop-culture books. Other academic texts had portions of their books devoted to culture and diversity as well, such as: “Diverse Groups” (Bass, 1990), “International and Culturally Diverse Aspects of Leadership” (DuBrin, 2009), and “Culture and Leadership” and “Women and Leadership” (Northouse, 2007). It was evident that academic texts placed a high value on diversity and multi-culturalism by devoting portions of these texts to these topics. Conversely, popular press texts did not include the same level of emphasis on diversity.

Both genres called attention to communication and teamwork, which definitely emerged as themes for leadership texts of both academic and popular domains. Topics ranged from the definition and types of communication, to “Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood” (Covey, 2007), to “Admitting Weaknesses and Mistakes” (Lencioni, 2002). An example of this

in the pop-culture realm was seen in The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Lencioni as he depicts the importance of communication through showing solutions to avoiding the first two dysfunctions of a team, “Absence of Trust” and “Fear of Conflict.” Here we see attributes of a trusting team and a team that engages in conflict, which include things like: “Ask for help,” “Accept questions and input,” “Offer and accept apologies without hesitation,” “Extract and exploit the ideas of all team members,” and “Put critical topics on the table for discussion” (Lencioni, 2002, p. 197, p. 204). All of these things relate to communication as well as teamwork. A parallel example in an academic text was seen in DuBrin’s Leadership: Research Findings, Practice, and Skills, with a content area labeled “Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills.” Further evidence of the emphasis of teams in academic texts was found as Northouse (2007) included a chapter written by Susan E. Kogler Hill entitled “Team Leadership” in his book. Communication and teamwork were important facets of leadership for both realms of leadership texts.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of the analysis provided some interesting conclusions. Using the best-sellers lists, it was assumed that the pop-culture texts are popular because more copies of those texts have sold, and therefore more of these types of books are being read than academic texts. Because more readers have purchased and read these popular books, we can draw conclusions about the preferences of the reader. From the results we can see that more readers are interested in improving their own leadership skills, readers prefer conversational terminology to field-specific jargon, readers enjoy real examples and stories to reinforce their understanding and application of leadership theory, and readers of pop-culture texts may not be getting the full spectrum of leadership. From these conclusions, implications can be made that may impact the field of leadership education.

First of all, as personal leadership development was a very common topic in popular press texts, it was concluded that readers are concerned with becoming better leaders. Further, readers may not be as interested in learning about theory and leadership as it relates to organizations as they are in learning how to grow as a leader. This is concluded from the fact that the pop-culture texts analyzed emphasized personal leadership development, while the academic texts placed emphasis on leadership theory, ethics, and diversity. An implication of this presents us with two sides. On one hand, we have the readers whom are buying and reading the personal development based pop-culture texts. On the other, experts in the field of leadership education are teaching from the academic books, which are primarily concerned with theory, diversity, ethics, and other topics not commonly found in the pop-culture books. Are the readers really getting what they need from these popular press texts? Are leadership educators teaching to the needs and desires of their pupils?

A second conclusion stems from the pop-culture texts’ use of conversational terminology to convey thoughts about leadership. This conclusion is that readers prefer this relaxed style of writing in comparison to learning the technical terms used in the field of leadership. Readers want the authors to reach them using a language they are used to, rather than the reader having to do some work to understand new terms in order to learn about leadership. An implication of this is that academic texts are failing to reach many readers simply because their writing style does

not match the preference of the majority of consumers who buy the books. Therefore, academic texts are limiting their audience and the ideas they wish to communicate, no matter how good they may be, never make it to many readers' eyes.

As both types of leadership books tended to include stories and examples, it can be concluded that readers benefit from these stories. Both authors and readers see the value of including examples and stories in their books. This could mean that readers like to learn from examples. Therefore, readers may view these examples and stories as a way to visualize how to apply the theories and skills in the real world. This could have an implication for the way leadership educators teach. If readers benefit from the stories found in leadership texts, students surely would value the use of stories to facilitate learning in the classroom.

A final conclusion from the results of this study is that readers of pop-culture texts may not be getting the complete gamut of leadership from these texts. The results showed that academic texts covered a wider range of topics than did the popular press texts. Specific things that were emphasized in academic texts, but were rare in popular press texts were leadership theories, ethics and diversity. Because these things were found in nearly all of the academic texts analyzed and since the books analyzed were chosen based on the opinions of leadership educators, we can assume that leadership education experts see them as important. However, readers of popular press texts may not be seeing these things as significant because they are not emphasized in the same manner as academic texts. These readers may be "missing out" so to speak because topics like theory, ethics, and diversity are not included in the same intensity in the books that large numbers of consumers are reading.

Recommendations

From these conclusions and implications, we are able to make some recommendations for practice and for further research. First, leadership educators should choose texts which offer a synthesis of the personal development found in popular books and the broader view approach to leadership found in the academic texts. A text which describes theory, discusses topics that pertain to leadership as a whole (such as ethics and diversity), and provides insight to personal application and development would have the "best of both worlds." A good example of this is The Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Though analyzed as an academic text, this book shared properties of both academic and popular texts.

Secondly, it is suggested that leadership educators choose texts which use a relaxed writing style. Because many readers buy books which use informal language, students, like readers, are more likely to enjoy and learn from texts which employ the same writing style as found in pop-culture books. Another recommendation for practice is that leadership educators continue to use stories, both in the texts they choose to teach from and in their classroom instruction. As discussed previously, readers value these stories and therefore students are likely to benefit from them as well. A final recommendation for practice is that leadership educators continue to teach from texts which emphasize theory, ethics, and diversity which were common themes for the academic texts analyzed, but rare for the popular press texts.

One recommendation for future research would be to analyze leadership texts used in leadership courses taught in colleges of agriculture versus those used in other colleges (business, management, liberal arts, etc). It is important for leadership educators to stay informed about each other's teachings. In doing so, a broader view of leadership texts, and education in general, might be gained. Along the same lines, leadership texts used in the teaching of undergraduate courses should be compared against those used in graduate courses to see if any themes emerge.

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