CONCEPTUAL PAPER
Does education have a role in developing leadership skills?

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this article is to provide a pragmatic example of multi-stage leadership education model. Leadership education that is multidisciplinary, global, and ethics oriented is a remedy for many of the leadership challenges we are currently facing in the business world.

Design/methodology/approach – This article discusses whether we can teach leadership, and if so, what essential skills should be taught in business schools. It also examines the shortcomings of current leadership education curriculum and recommends some major changes that need to be made. This article provides a descriptive overview and historical examination of these issues and techniques.

Findings – A major finding can be drawn from this paper is that the present leadership education curriculum in business schools is not adequate in many regards and more work needs to be done.

Research limitations/implications – Business schools need to focus on revitalizing the leadership education curriculum to come up with a program that prepares students with practical and dynamic skills that enables them to be the future business leaders. A long-term approach to leadership education rather than a short-term effort is suggested.

Originality/value – By incorporating multidisciplinary, global-oriented and ethical leadership education, we believe that this article on leadership education can effectively address the major challenges of the new millennium.

Keywords Leadership development, Management effectiveness, Education, Change management

Paper type General review

Introduction

> If leaders are born not made – and if no one can teach anyone else to improve – let's start investigating leadership in the biology lab rather than in the business world (Steve Stumpf, Professor, 2002, quoted in Doh, 2003, p. 55).

Leadership has been widely discussed and studied in many areas and with a varying focus; but it still remains as an elusive and hazy concept (Doh, 2003; Rosenbach, 2003). It has been a major ingredient of business school curricula and a popular topic of many best selling books. It has been the focal point of many academic research projects as well as of more than a dozen journals in the market. Many academicians and researchers have made significant contributions in the theories and practice of leadership. After years of extensive research, the subject of leadership has emerged as a legitimate discipline. However, there is still little agreement about what leadership actually is.

Although many scholars and researchers agree that leadership is both a skill and a behavior that exhibits that skill, the argument on whether leadership can be effectively taught still remains as one of the most debatable leadership question in our times. A

key underlying assumption in most of scholars' work is that people can learn, grow and change and that this learning and personal growth does enhance individual effectiveness. We do not debate whether effective leaders are born or made. No doubt, leadership capacity has its roots partly in genetics, partly in early childhood development, and partly in adult experience (McCauley and Velsor, 2004). Most scholars suggest that due to continuous changes in the speed of the economy and technology, as well as the speed of change, managers and leaders who lead modern establishments need to be engaged in a constant learning and education processes.

Recent events in the business world have once again focused the spotlight on leadership. In particular, heightened scrutiny in the wake of corporate scandals resulting in a precipitous decline, such as Enron, Arthur Anderson, and WorldCom has caused many to question the role of education in developing and equipping business leaders. This paper examines the role of leadership education in developing and enhancing leadership skills. It addresses some critical issues in leadership such as:

- Can leadership be taught? If so, what should be its main components and in what ways?
- What are the most common leadership education challenges we are facing in developing leaders with the necessary ethics, values and character?
- What is wrong with leadership education particularly in America in the light of the recent corporate scandals?
- How can leadership education contribute in rectifying this problem?

In addition, this paper focuses on the leadership education effectiveness and, based on the case of American corporate leadership failures, the missing elements in the contemporary leadership education and it suggests some practical recommendations as to how to enhance its quality and effectiveness.

Essence of leadership

The concept of leadership has been defined by many people in various ways often based on a specific discipline and personal experiences (Rosenbach, 2003; Hartog *et al.*, 1997). One of such definitions is from the most authoritative source on leadership research and theory – The *Handbook of Leadership* (Bass, 1990). It defines leadership as:

> [...] an interaction between members of a group. Leaders are agents of change; persons whose acts affect other people's acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group (Gibson *et al.*, 2003).

Rosenbach (2003) defines leadership as:

> [...] a process of the leader and followers engaging in reciprocal influence to achieve a shared purpose. It is all about getting people to work together to make things happen that might not otherwise occur, or to prevent things from happening that would ordinarily take place.

Leaders are generally responsible for overall organizational effectiveness as measured by production, efficiency, quality, flexibility, satisfaction, competitiveness and organizational development (Gibson *et al.*, 2003). Avery and Baker (1990) on the other hand defined leadership as:

[…] a process of influence between a leader and his followers to attain group, organizational and societal goals.

Characteristics of effective leaders

In today's competitive and very dynamic business environment, the success and failure of an organization is often highly influenced by the presence of effective leaders with a broad business perspective. Many researchers and academicians in the past have attempted to exactly determine the very fundamental attributes and characters of an effective leader. Leaders are considered effective if they possess the ability to develop and articulate a vision, honesty, energy, commitment, integrity, internal locus of control and a passion for continuous improvement (Buhler, 1995).

The trait theory of leadership identifies three categories that are helpful in determining leadership success: motivation, personality and ability. Personality involves attributes like energy level, stress tolerance, self-confidence, emotional maturity and integrity. Motivation, on the other hand involves socialized power orientation, strong need for achievement, weak need for affiliation and persuasiveness. Ability of an effective leader includes cognitive skill, interpersonal skill, and technical skill (Yukl, 1994; Gibson *et al.*, 2003).

On the other hand, the transactional theory of leadership emphasizes an "equitable transaction or exchange between the leader and followers by focusing on their mutual self interests" (Rosenbach, 2003). Transactional leaders generally keep the organization running on a steady course without any major attempt to make radical changes. The transactional leader helps the follower identify what must be done to accomplish the desired results like better quality output, more sales/services and reduced cost of production (Gibson *et al.*, 2003).

Waldman *et al.* (2001) describe the transactional leader as one who functions within the existing framework or culture by "attempting to satisfy the current needs of followers by focusing on exchanges and contingent reward behavior and paying close attention to deviations, mistakes or irregularities and taking actions to make corrections". Such leaders, by virtue of their focus on shaping strategies, rewarding subordinates' efforts and commitment, and taking corrective measures, help to foster organizational performance (Bass, 1985; Waldman *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, according to this theory an effective leader must have cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, and technical skills, that are helpful in determining leadership success (Bass, 1990).

While the transactional leader motivates followers to exhibit expected performance, the transformational leader typically inspires followers to do more than originally expected performance. The transformational leaders motivate followers by providing a clear mental picture of the important vision and mission. These leaders tend to be role models in their daily actions. They also empower their followers to perform beyond expectations by sharing power and authority and monitoring how they use it (Hartog *et al.*, 1997; Rosenbach, 2003). Bass (1990) notes that:

> … the transformational leader articulates a realistic vision of the future that can be shared, stimulates subordinates intellectually, and pays attention to the differences among the subordinates intellectually, and pays attention to the differences of subordinates.

The transformational leader generally motivates followers to work for transcendental goals instead of short-tem self-interest and for achievement and self-actualization

instead of security (Bass, 1985; Gibson *et al.*, 2003). These cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills are essential factors that are helpful in determining leadership success according to the transformational theory (Doh, 2003).

In recent years, multinational companies are striving to survive and grow in an increasingly competitive global market place. Despite the ever-increasing complexity of doing business on a global level, there is a strong demand for globally literate leaders (Rosenbach, 2003). The results of a survey of *Fortune* 500 firms found that 85 percent of the respondents indicated that their firms do not have enough global leaders (Gregersen *et al.*, 1998; Rosen, 2000). According to Gibson *et al.* (2003), the essential characteristics of global leaders include inquisitiveness, emotional connection with employees and stakeholders in general, integrity, capacity of managing uncertainty and business and organizational skills. An effective leader is also known for embracing, instead of pushing aside, organizational change as an opportunity for growth and advancement (Kacena, 2002).

While there are myths about what makes a leader, there are also myths about the characteristics of leaders and leadership. In his article "Are you a good leader or a bad leader?" Smith (2000) outlines some myths about leadership:

- *Leadership is a unique ability only given to a few*. This is not true. While some may think that leaders are born, most are said to be made through the skills and abilities they learn throughout life. And like any other skills, leadership skills take time, training, and tremendous dedication.

- *Effective leadership is based on control, coercion and manipulation*. False. Leaders gain their followers through the use of respect and the ability to inspire people to work towards a common goal. As Joel Barker stated, "A leader is someone you would follow to a place you wouldn't go by yourself" (Smith, 2000).

- *Good leaders are highly educated*. Not necessarily. While education may enhance some aspect of a leader's skills, it cannot make a leader on its own. This is evidenced by the success of scores of not well educated leaders in business, politics and society in general.

Leadership education

There is long established thinking that leadership skills and abilities are something a person is born with. This line of thinking argues that the only source of leadership skills and abilities is natural endowment. While the above argument has some truth in it, a number of researchers in this area indicate that effective leaders are a result of both inherent traits and carefully developed skills (Connaughton *et al.*, 2003; Rosenbach, 2003).

Can leadership be taught?

Despite the existing agreement among most management educators that leadership is both a skill and a behavior, such dual definition has created a continuous debate on whether leadership can be taught (Doh, 2003; Connaughton *et al.*, 2003). Many scholars in this field agree that although there are some natural talents beneficial in leadership effectiveness, other significant aspects of knowledge, skills and abilities that make up an effective leader can be taught (Rosenbach, 2003; Doh, 2003; Connaughton *et al.*, 2003). In contrast, other researchers do not agree with the notion that leadership can be taught (Gunn, 2000). According to Rosenbach (2003), individuals should strive to focus

on improving their skills as "speakers, debaters, negotiators, problem clarifiers and advocates". However, there is still a debate on what can be taught.

Jay Conger, a professor in the London Business School describes leadership as comprising mainly three elements: skills, perspectives and dispositions. According to him, leadership education can possibly help teach important leadership skills and perhaps perspectives like effective oral and written communication. Steve Stumpf of Villanova University strongly argues that leadership can be taught and suggests that:

> . . . if leaders are born not made – and if no one can teach anyone else to improve – let's start investigating leadership in the biology lab rather than in the business world (cited in Doh, 2003, p. 55).

Current focus on leadership education

Extensive research is being carried out in academia to test the validity of the claim that leadership can be taught and leaders can be developed. This interest has even stimulated more and more business schools to design and prepare special leadership training and education programs. Crawford *et al.* (2002) reviewed over 40 graduate degree programs that offered a specialization in leadership programs. This emerging demand for leadership education is also spurred by the interest of non-traditional students (i.e. executives and practitioners) (Crawford *et al.*, 2002). Academic units like Harvard Business School Executive Education Program, which focuses on enhancing leadership capacities of executives, and University of Michigan's Michigan Leadership Program (MLP) are known for developing leadership skills of students with a special emphasis on critical leadership issues.

Although most management educators have similar perspective on the idea that leadership can be taught, they differ significantly on the issue that leadership education is the comprehensive solution for developing a well-rounded leader. In fact, several of them argue that some aspects of leadership are part of innate qualities and hence cannott be effectively acquired through formal teaching (Doh, 2003). For instance, there are some tacit dimensions of leadership that involve different processes required to gain commitment to a strategy and vision. There are also other components of empowering employees like building relationships and demonstrating confidence with humility that can never be effectively addressed by formal classroom training. Such components of leadership education can be acquired only through practical experiences like case studies and on the job learning such as internships (Doh, 2003; Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004).

Limitations of the traditional leadership education in business schools

The increasing gap between the demand for qualified leaders and their availability has become a major concern for many organizations. Many of these businesses are forced to look for external consultants since they unable to find internal leadership capabilities (Nirenberg, 2003). Despite the fact that every year 120,000 MBAs join the workforce, a survey of 5,000 human resource personnel by Development Dimensions reveals that "82 per cent of organizations have difficulty finding qualified leaders" (Nirenberg, 2003). We argue that the existing leadership education system has major limitations. The current leadership curriculum focuses more on theoretical and conceptual training. It also emphasizes fragmented functional based training instead of comprehensive and integrated approach. The major drawbacks are the following.

Lack of holistic educational approach. Traditional business education is primarily focused on theoretical preparation of students that often entails rigorous conceptual and analytical training. In fact, most business schools have centered their curriculum on specific knowledge development than its practical applications (Nirenberg, 2003). Researchers from Ohio University argue that the traditional business curricula in business schools emphasized more on equipping students with functional knowledge like accounting, finance, marketing, human resource etc. instead of providing an integrated and cross-functional approach. They also note that behavioral and communication skills are critically absent in the traditional education system. The practice of addressing the need for such skills by incorporating one or two communication courses instead of presenting these skills "[. . .] in the context in which they may be used" in the market place is often ineffective (Milter and Stinson, 1995). Most academicians and management educators agree that leadership education in business schools is generally fragmented and compartmentalized, learning mostly teacher centered and the research strictly conventional.

Inadequate ethics training. The proliferation of corporate scandals in recent years is not just the case of few "rotten apples" but rather widespread and deep rooted problem in the severe lack of proper ethical education in business schools (Adler, 2002; Crane, 2004). In fact, a recent study by Aspen Institute covering major business schools in the country revealed that the education system in business schools not only "fails to improve moral character of students but actually weakens it" (Crane, 2004). Several studies suggest that although the ethical behavior of graduate business students is reasonable at the beginning of the program, it is surprisingly found lower during the end of their study, providing evidence of the shortcomings of the traditional business education (Crane, 2004; Adler, 2002; Mclean and Elkind, 2003). According to the Aspen Institute mentioned earlier:

> [. . .] students enter Business Schools with idealistic ambitions, such as to create quality products and deliver customer satisfaction, but that only 2 years later these goals take a backseat to the boosting of share prices (Crane, 2004).

Indeed, the necessity of thorough ethics education has never been greater in corporate America. The recent corporate scandals are the results of unethical leadership and irresponsible decision making (Clinton, 1999; Crane, 2004). We believe that leaders have to display their commitment for ethical behavior and present themselves as role models for their followers. According to Crane (2004), business leaders have not only the responsibility to operate ethically, but also have to lead by higher moral and ethical standards. He also argues that the best way to lead an organization is not by just exercising a functional power but rather by a referent power that displays a mature, responsible, considerate and trustworthy decision making. Professor Kim Cameron of University of Michigan believes that:

> [. . .] effective leaders in the 21st century must have a well developed sense of moral values and possess personal virtues that allow effective change to occur (cited in Doh, 2003).

Even though such kind of virtue is a product of rich experience and personal integrity, we strongly believe that education plays a significant role in shaping the future leaders at the grass root level. That is why we argue that effective leadership education can and should develop ethical perspectives in every aspect of a leader's decision-making process. In this regard, educators have to rethink the traditional leadership education

that focus on "bottom-line" curriculum to a more comprehensive view that addresses ethical ways of value creation.

However, unless there is a systematic overhaul of ethics education in business schools, the existing method of barely incorporating one or two ethics courses and discussions could not bear much fruit and tackle the mounting ethics problem.

The need for systematic change in leadership education

The environment of business is increasingly dynamic. Organizations that tend to rely on goods as a primary output are already looking to information as an invaluable input and a strategic resource. The perspective of viewing the global market as an opportunity is no longer an academic assumption but rather a stark reality. Organizations have moved gradually from a traditional bureaucratic structure into a complex and yet flexible networks. In all these, the role of business leaders has tremendously changed from supervising and directing to being an enablers and energizers (Milter and Stinson, 1995).

The ever-changing global business platform has made it difficult to precisely determine what knowledge, skills and other attributes leaders need to effectively address the emerging challenges and opportunities of the market place. The recent focus is on the need to overhaul the existing leadership education (Connaughton *et al.*, 2003). Nirenberg (2003), for example, stressed on the flaws of the existing leadership format and proposed a new leadership education model that "integrates and acknowledges the multidisciplinary nature of leadership knowledge". The following critical aspects should be taken into consideration in revitalizing leadership education.

Leadership education should be multi-disciplinary

Holistic education is the major missing element in many leadership education curricula. If business schools have to be effective in preparing qualified leaders, the emphasis should be on multi-disciplinary and holistic education rather than education that narrowly focus on traditional business functions. In other words, instead of teaching students accounting, marketing, finance and production, teach them how to run a business (Milter and Stinson, 1995; Nirenberg, 2003). Leadership education will enhance the conceptual as well as the problem solving skills of students if it embraces the integration of functional business areas in the entire curriculum instead of leaving it for a single capstone course. For instance, most business schools offer a capstone course (i.e. business policy and strategy) that is supposed to provide students with a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of business strategy based on numerous disciplines, which is inadequate to provide leadership education.

Leadership education has to embrace a global perspective

As a result of growing globalization and liberalization of markets, businesses have embraced the opportunity of utilizing global resources and market potential. Consequently, the demand of leaders with global perspectives and mindset has become crucial. The success of companies in exploiting emerging opportunities and tackling their accompanying challenges relies heavily on how deeply they understand the dynamics of their operating environment (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2002). This can only be achieved if leaders are trained to develop a global perspectives and agenda (Milter and Stinson, 1995, Connaughton *et al.*, 2003). Hence, leadership education needs

to incorporate the important aspects of conducting global business across cultural diversity and different socio-economic conditions. In other words, the requirement is now to think global and act local. Leadership education should, therefore, focus on preparing leaders for the global business environment rather than merely concentrating on the domestic market.

Leadership education should integrate strong ethics education
The necessity of ethics education in business schools curriculum has been emphasized by many academic and professional associations (Clinton, 1999). The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has supported the teaching of ethics in business schools as early as 1980s (Curren and Harich, 1996; Crane, 2004). Since then, many business schools included some ethics courses in their curricula in order to just satisfy the minimum requirements of AACSB (Gioia, 2002). Such a meagre effort by business schools was also accompanied by the gradual replacement of ethics education (which is considered as "soft" topic) with hard business topics like financial analysis and corporate strategy.

Many researchers argue that the significant display of unethical behavior by corporate executives at the top management positions can influence the direction of the entire organization and also be directly related to the inadequate ethical training in business schools (Clinton, 1999; Crane, 2004). It is believed that business ethics education should not only be part of the curriculum as a separate course, but also has to be integrated in every functional areas of business like finance, marketing, accounting and other courses. Such training must necessarily incorporate practical ethical problem-solving skills in students. According to Crane (2004), academia plays a significant role in developing an ethical perspective in strategic decision making that affects the entire organization and its stakeholders. He also argues that leaders should set themselves as role model within the organization in terms of their commitment and focus on ethical behavior. If they have to earn the trust of their employees, customers, creditors and most importantly share holders, it is indeed imperative for business leaders to embrace ethical decision making. A number of scholars agree that ethical and responsible leadership is the result of an effective leadership education that emphasizes on carefully cultivated ethical behavior and perspectives (Clinton, 1999; Adler, 2002; Crane, 2004).

Leadership education and development model
We argue that the existing leadership education system has major limitations. The current leadership curriculum focuses more on theoretical and conceptual training rather than practical and holistic approach (Nirenberg, 2003). This presents a significant challenge for both the academia and the market place as they strive to prepare and develop leaders for the twenty-first century. Responding to this challenge, our paper proposes a multi stage leadership education model that incorporates the variety of skill sets necessary for developing and enhancing leadership skills. We argue that an effective leadership education model should embrace a multidisciplinary approach, possess global perspectives and incorporate thorough ethical training.

The model shown in Figure 1 embraces the critical skills needed for effective leadership education at each stage. Developing on the traditional basic academic training, advanced conceptual as well as interpersonal skills development, the model
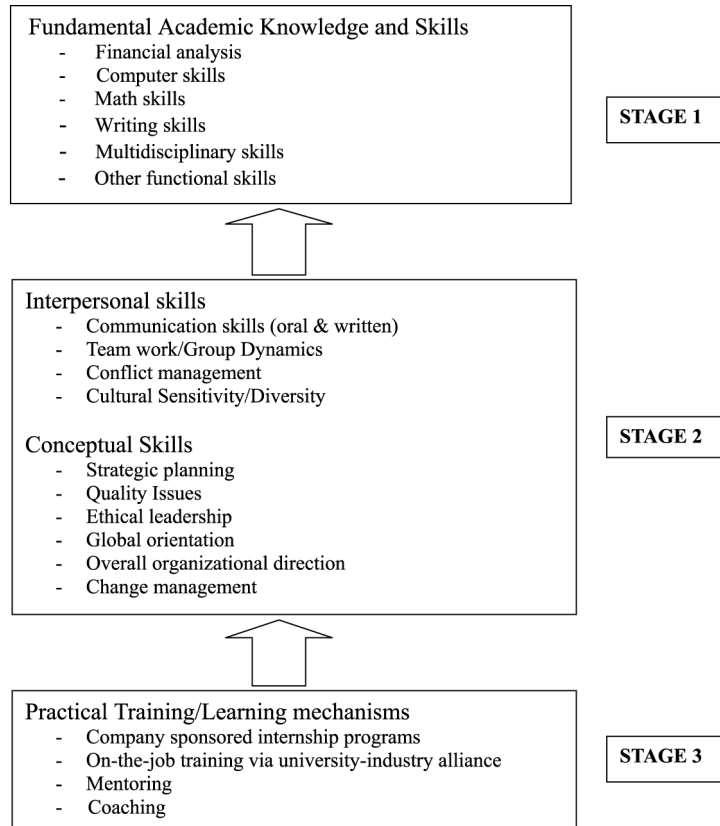
Fundamental Academic Knowledge and Skills
- Financial analysis
- Computer skills
- Math skills
- Writing skills
- Multidisciplinary skills
- Other functional skills

STAGE 1

Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills (oral & written)
- Team work/Group Dynamics
- Conflict management
- Cultural Sensitivity/Diversity

Conceptual Skills
- Strategic planning
- Quality Issues
- Ethical leadership
- Global orientation
- Overall organizational direction
- Change management

STAGE 2

Practical Training/Learning mechanisms
- Company sponsored internship programs
- On-the-job training via university-industry alliance
- Mentoring
- Coaching

STAGE 3

Figure 1.
Multi stage leadership
education model

specifically stresses the importance of practical training as part of an effective leadership education model. By incorporating multidisciplinary, global-oriented and ethical leadership education components, we believe that leadership education can effectively addresses the major challenges of the new millennium.

Components of leadership education
Most management educators have similar perspectives on what they think are major ingredients of an effective leadership education. They suggest particular skills that can be well taught in order to prepare future leaders. A program that is highly practical and uses techniques such as coaching, training and mentoring is likely to be effective leadership education (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004). Others believe that skills such as analytical, communication (both oral and written), and problem solving can be successfully developed in a formal leadership training. Connaughton *et al.* (2003), for instance, argue that leadership skills do not develop overnight as a consequence of having particular cognitive abilities or expertise. As the leadership education model in Figure 1 indicates, the following stages are critical for effective leadership education.

Fundamental knowledge and skills – Stage 1. This stage, as the title suggests, is introductory and fundamental in its nature. It can be considered as the base on which other more relevant leadership skills can be developed. In essence, it includes basic mathematics, financial, computer and similar "hard" skills that often are given in almost all business and other disciplines. It also incorporates other basic multi-disciplinary knowledge. It should be noted that this stage does not necessarily represent leadership skills but rather serves as a stepping stone for further leadership skills development.

Conceptual and interpersonal skills – Stage 2. The second stage in the model highlights the important conceptual and interpersonal skills that need to be developed for effective leadership education. This stage can often be referred as the principal element of leadership education. It focuses on developing the major conceptual skills such as strategic planning, quality issues and change management across the organization. It also stresses on global orientation in leadership. The twenty-first century poses a great challenge and unprecedented opportunity for many businesses both in the USA and elsewhere. Due to the rapid economic globalization and very advanced telecommunication infrastructure, multinational companies now operate on a global scale and in an increasingly diverse environment. This global expansion demands globally literate managers and leaders (Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Elmuti, 2004). If leaders have to be effective nowadays, they have to be thoroughly trained in the areas of cross-cultural analysis and language requirement, global economic landscape and political/legal environments of different markets. Academicians need to focus on and integrate international management training and leadership development topics in their curricula in order to fully equip their students to be a globally literate leader (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004). Effective leaders often exhibit such attributes as inquisitiveness, emotional connection with employees and stakeholders, integrity, capacity for managing uncertainty, business and organization savvy.

The second stage of the model also discusses ethical leadership. Leaders with unwavering beliefs and strong ethical and moral convictions will always have a positive influence on any organization. A strong leadership education must help instill in students the practice of authenticity, honesty and an absolute dedication to be the best possible leader. Such an ethical behavior often results in higher organizational reputation, increased customer loyalty, strong business relationship with other stakeholders and long term effectiveness (Panico, 2003). With the evidence of many of the corporate worst scandals being revealed in American businesses in recent years, developing a thorough ethical training in general leadership education is increasingly crucial. Ethical leadership principles are usually essential to long-term survival and even can be measured by putting in place some clear character elements in performance review process of employees (Kochan, 2002; Panico, 2003). Professor Kim Cameron of University of Michigan believes that:

> […] effective leaders in the 21st century must have a well developed sense of moral values and possess personal virtues that allow effective change to occur (cited in Doh, 2003).

Along with the conceptual skills discussed above, tomorrow's leaders need to develop strong interpersonal skills. Such skills range from written and oral communication and team work to conflict management and cultural sensitivity. The leader's ability to communicate the vision and overall strategies of the organization to followers is of

paramount importance. Moreover, the rapidly changing nature of global business creates the necessity of working effectively in cross cultural teams. Similarly, successful conflict management skills are emerging as important leadership qualities (Rosen, 2000).

Practical business skills – Stage 3. The last and perhaps the most important stage of the above model deals with developing practical skills. As outlined in the preceding discussion, this stage determines the effectiveness of leaders in the market place since it indicates the level of integration of conceptual and theoretical knowledge with real world application. Leadership programs need to embrace, according to many management educators, practical aspects of learning that tend to involve practical training and coaching from industry practitioners. Such a leadership curriculum enables the subjects to practice what they have already learned in the real world environment with the necessary and constructive feedback (Doh, 2003). Often, students in business schools, both undergraduate and graduate, are exposed to the foundational theoretical work in formal lectures and books fairly well. However, many training programs fall short of realistic experiential exercises like case studies and action learning that develops conceptual, technical, interpersonal and strategic thinking. Gosling and Mintzberg (2004) have similar positions. They strongly criticize the idea of leadership education that is solely confined to the classroom setting. In fact, their major argument is that managers cannot simply be created in a class room. The authors emphasize that "... providing education in the context of deep-rooted practical experience ... turns the class room into a rich arena of learning" (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004). Such a need for practical education can be addressed through extensive internship programs for at least one or more semesters in the regular curriculum. This can take place in different corporate facilities with close supervision. The other important tool is mentoring which can be done through partnership with a nearby profit or non-profit organizations. A mentor from these organizations would meet with students regularly on a one-to-one or group basis and to explore and advocate practical issues and positions. Last but not least, on-the-job training can provide invaluable practical experience for students in business schools. This can be materialized through university-industry alliances that focus on research programs in exchange for options on the results of the research that might solve their practical business problems.

Challenges of leadership education

Despite the widespread discussion about the ineffectiveness of the existing leadership education, many business schools have not completely remodeled their curriculum to design a better leadership education model similar to what we have suggested earlier. There are many possible explanations: first, the very setting of educational institutions seems to hamper change rather than promote it. There are a number of limitations like existence of unions, tenure system and budgetary constraints that often drag new initiatives. Moreover, inter and intra departmental problems in coordination (i.e. focus on departmental jurisdiction) could be another reason (Beaver, 1994; Greising, 1994).

As we have suggested in the model, effective leadership education has to incorporate thorough practical training. This can be achieved mainly by university-industry alliances. However, due to many structural and systematic differences between the two, alliances are most of the time difficult to establish and

maintain (Elmuti *et al.*, 1996). One other challenge for implementing a better leadership education model is the resistance to change within the academic circle. The fact that academic institutions are bureaucratic and less flexible presents a serious challenge to effectively implement a change in leadership education (Elmuti *et al.*, 1996). Also, the scarcity of resources in academic institutions brings a tough challenge. Faculty members and administrators may focus on other more "tangible" projects than undertakings that require long term commitment and patience. Last but not least, since leadership has not been established very well as a self-sustaining discipline, it is going to take a lot of effort, time, and resources to develop and implement a specific leadership education curriculum.

Conclusion

As presented in this paper, many researchers and management educators agree that, although there are some useful innate attributes that are easily identified with leaders, significant part of leadership qualities can be successfully taught (Milter and Stinson, 1995; Rosenbach, 2003; Doh, 2003; Connaughton *et al.*, 2003). However, the strategies and models for leadership education have been framed differently by various researchers. The focus on research is increasing due to a greater consensus that the traditional leadership curriculum failed to produce leaders for the dynamic business environment. Our multi-stage model builds on the fundamental knowledge and skills to develop more relevant leadership skills such as conceptual, interpersonal and practical skills. Here, the importance of on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring as tools for exposing students to experiential learning is emphasized. Such a strategy involves a practical application of the knowledge that students acquire in the class room in an organization using university-industry alliances (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2004; Doh, 2003).

Furthermore, our proposed model emphasizes a successful leadership education that not only includes practical business skills, but also involves in-depth training on inter-personal and conceptual skills. Students need to be extensively prepared to be transformational leaders that can effectively communicate the vision and mission to their followers in an organization (Stone *et al.*, 2004). In addition, leadership education should particularly integrate ethical education in every facet of the training process. The necessity of ethical training has never been greater due to the deteriorating moral standards of leaders in corporate America. Last but not least, there should be a global perspective in leadership education.

A practical implication that can be drawn from this paper is the present leadership education curriculum in business schools is not adequate in many regards and more work needs to be done as discussed above. Business schools need to focus on revitalizing the leadership education curriculum to come up with a program that prepares students with practical and dynamic skills that enables them to be the future business leaders. We should note that, in designing the proposed change in curriculum, the numbers of credit hours are mainly dependent on the students' previous levels of experience and needs. For example, designing a remodeled leadership education in an MBA program would almost entirely rest on the candidates' range of experience in a corporate setting, international exposure and travel outside of their region. If this demand fails to be adequately satisfied by institutions of higher learning, businesses

would be forced to turn their attention towards developing in-house training programs to meet the leadership challenge of the twenty-first century.

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