

## Multidimensional Perceptual Leadership Model (Muldimperlead)

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**Abstract:** This study discusses a new leadership type, namely multidimensional perceptual leadership model. In this model, leadership is explained based on five major assumptions. These assumptions are as follows: 1. Everyone is a potential leader, 2. The basis of leadership is made up of perception, 3. The status of leadership is determined by the perception of the leaders and his/her followers. Thus, perception may be analyzed at two different levels, namely individual and group levels. 4. Evaluation of leadership can be carried out for a specific time point 0.5. The status of leadership that results from the perceptions of leader and those about leader cannot show us whether or not a person is an efficient and successful leader.

**Key words:** Perceptual leadership • potential leadership • implicit leadership • reluctant leadership • ideal leadership

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership has a long past as much as human beings. Humans are social beings and have interactions with others. Humans have recognized that they may achieve those targets that they cannot achieve themselves with the help of other people. Such an interpersonal interaction led to the leadership.

The dimensions and forms of leadership have been changing as a result of advances in knowledge flow. Research on leadership has been also increased and the attempts to define leadership have become significant.

There are many different definitions of leadership but they contain some common points. For instance, Katz ve Kahn argue that all the definitions of leadership share the following points: a) organizational authority, b) a person with certain characteristics, c) a certain way of acting. George ve Jones, on the other hand, provide the following common points in the definitions of leadership: a) influencing the members of an organization or a group and b) assisting the members of an organization or a group to achieve their objectives [1, 2].

Chance suggests another points as common points of leadership definitions: a) achieving the goals, b) interpersonal interactions, c) certain personal characteristics [3].

The reason for having distinct definitions of leadership seems to be differential cultural and individual

peculiarities. However, it can be argued that the definitions of leadership seem to include the following common points: a) achieving the goals b) multi-dimensional interactions c) leadership characteristics [4].

Beginning from the 1940s the number of research on leadership has been increased and the models were developed. This research led to the development of the approaches on the characteristics of leaders. Stogdill (1948) reviewed, classified and analysed about 300 characteristics of leaders that had been identified before.

He concluded that although leaders share some common personal characteristics, these characteristics cannot be employed as indicators of leaderships [5].

Later Stogdill (1974) reanalysed his classification and regrouped these common characteristics as characteristics and skills [6].

The approaches of characteristics of leaders were extensively criticised until the beginning of 1980s. More specifically, it is argued that only common characteristics of leaders cannot account for the leadership that is very complicated process and that the other related variables are not taken into consideration [7].

Lord, Vader and Alliger (1986) made a content analysis on the scales that were used to identify the characteristics of leaders and based on their analysis they modified these scales. They concluded that there is a close relationship between the personal characteristics of leaders and their perceived leadership status [8-10].

In regard to the approaches of the leaders' characteristics the following points can be indicated:

There is a relationship between certain personal characteristics and the perceptions about leaders. However, this relationship should be analysed taking into consideration such variables as duty, time, etc. And it should be recognised that leadership that is a complex process cannot be accounted for through such approaches based on the personal characteristics of leaders.

Such approaches can be employed only if the other significant variables are considered [11].

Later behavioural approaches to leadership were developed. The Ohio State and Michigan studies are the most well-known studies that led to the behavioural approaches. The Ohio State research analysed about 1800 leadership acts that were classified into 9 groups and they developed two classes of structuring and tolerance that included all these characteristics [12-16]. In the Michigan study, the aim was to identify the influential leadership behavior to increase the group performance. Leaders and followers defined two major behavior of leaders as job-oriented behavior and individual-oriented behavior [17-19].

The conclusions of two significant research with "behavioral approaches" can be summarized as follows: In both studies the style of leadership is defined through two basic patterns as structuring/ job-oriented behavior and tolerance/ individual-oriented behavior. However, limiting the leadership to these two patterns are not enough to define the leadership behavior that is very complex entity.

Both studies suggest an universal style of leadership. However, given that modern societies and contemporary organizations may have very distinct properties, such a proposal seems to be inefficient.

Furthermore, there are some criticisms about the designs of these studies. More specifically, these studies do not take into consideration such situational variables as organizational capacity, culture and climate. Therefore, the conclusions of these studies should be considered taking into these limitations.

However, these studies provide some valuable information the effects of the behavior of leaders on the group [20].

Later the situational approach was developed and this approach suggests that leadership is a function of the characteristics of leaders, the style of leadership and the situation of the leadership. Fiedler suggests that organizational behavior is a result of personal characteristics and the current situation and analyses the

leadership based on the interaction between personal characteristics and the current situation. In this analysis, the findings of previous studies are also considered and the effects of personal characteristics and the current situation on the efficiency of leaders. Two questions are tried to be responded [21, 22].

Why do two leaders with the same characteristics have different levels of efficiency under a similar situation?

Why a leader is efficient in one situation but not in another?

Fiedler argues that leaders may use three major factors to change and control the situation; 1) relationships between leaders and followers 2) structure of the job 3) power [23, 24].

Hersey and Blanchard developed a theory of leadership and attempted to make a connection between a variety of situations and the styles of leadership. In their theory, the styles of leadership are considered at two levels: job-oriented and relationship-oriented levels. These levels are considered in relation to the characteristics of followers [25]. In this sense, the styles of leadership are considered to be consistent with the characteristics of followers.

Blanchard's theory of leadership cycle has been widely employed. It provides some necessary findings that can be used in training of both leaders and followers. Furthermore, it makes the leadership more democratical since it relates the characteristics of followers with the effects of leaders on the group. On the other hand, the theory support the assumption that power like love increases if it is shared and that proper distribution of authority makes it reinforced [26].

In road-objective theory, necessary behavior of leaders to motivate their staff to achieve the goals of the organization is analysed [27]. This theory discusses four distinct types of leadership style: directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented [28].

Road-objective theory attempts to analyse the relationship between leaders and followers in terms of the efficiency of leaders and the motivation of followers. This analysis that seems to be consistent with the findings of the research based on motivation theories relates the efficient leadership in the organizations with the motivation of staff and the need for such a motivation [29].

Some of the current approaches to leadership are transformational leadership and charismatic leadership that are based on the interaction between leaders and followers. Additionally, some other approaches have also

been developed, for instance, visioner leadership, cultural leadership.

Theory of transformational leadership that is based on Burns' studies is introduced by Bass [30]. Bass argues that transformational leadership has three significant behavioral elements: 1) charisma 2) intellectual stimulation and 3) respect for individuals [31, 32].

There are different views on the characteristics of transformational leaders and on transformational leadership. Some researchers make a distinction between charismatic leaders and transformational leaders. The others consider these two as the same. Still others argue that the concept of transformational leadership includes that of charismatic leadership but the latter is a different leadership style. Moreover some other researchers argue that charismatic and transformational leaderships are two different processes but the concept of charismatic leadership includes that of transformational leadership. However, the developer of the theory Bass regards charismatic leadership as a part of transformational leadership. He states that charisma is a necessary but not exclusively needed part of leadership process. For instance, movie stars, singers, sportsmen etc. are all charismatic people transformational but they do not have systematical transformational influence [33].

Transformational leadership and its elements have been defined in different ways. For instance, Bennis regards transformational leader as a person who allocate the authority and empower the staff to achieve the vision and states the elements of transformational leadership as follows: 1) vision 2) communication 3) decisiveness, loyalty, concentration; 4) empowerment 5) provision of organizational learning opportunities [34].

Schermerhorn, on the other hand, considers transformational leadership as the use of charisma to achieve maximum performance level of staff and to make them perceive their characteristics and proposes six parts of transformational leadership: 1) vision 2) charisma 3) symbolism 4) empowerment 5) intellectual stimulation and 6) honesty [35].

Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman define transformational leadership as a way to make use of charismatic abilities, interest and personal characteristics to make followers' emotions more intense and to motivate them at a maximum level and they identify three parts of transformational leadership: 1. vision 2. design 3. management of influence [36].

Similarly, Kreitner ve Knicki define charismatic leadership as a process of transformation and they do not deal with transformational leadership as an independent entity [37-39].

Gordon considers charismatic leadership and transformational leaders as intervened processes and argue that leaders use their charisma to inspire the followers and that it is hard to define the concept of charismatic leadership in terms of its functions. Using related findings Gordon tries to account for both types of leadership in terms their behavioral elements and levels [40-43].

Yukl regards the organizational culture as a dynamic source for change and charisma as means for the institutionalisation of charisma in regard to transformational and charismatic leadership and points out a distinct leadership process called cultural leadership [44].

Leadership is a cultural process and it gains its sense through cultural environment and leaders contribute to cultural environment. Cultural leadership is analysed at two levels: 1) protecting and maintaining the current culture and 2) developing a new culture [45].

The elements that are included in the latter dimension are similar to those related to transformational and charismatic leadership. The dimension of new culture development of cultural leadership refers to creation and modification. Trice and Beyer states that transformational leaders change the old culture. However charismatic leaders creates a new culture. Based these statements the following brief conclusions can be given: Discussions about transformational and charismatic leadership will continue. Transformational and charismatic leaders differ in terms of the relationship between leader and followers, characteristics of leaders, changes aimed and realized by leaders and followers.

In terms of new culture development transformational, charismatic and cultural leadership styles differ.

In all styles of leadership, namely transformational, charismatic and cultural, the concept of vision is significant [46].

Since the concept of vision is very significant in new approaches to leadership, some researchers propose a different leadership process, namely visioner leadership. However, there are debates about the differences between visioner leadership and the other processes of leadership, namely transformational, charismatic, cultural, etc. For instance, Sashkin suggests that visioner leader is person who primarily tries to achieve the vision of the organization and to transform the organization [47,48].

Since all these approaches to leadership have been criticised and shown to be insufficient, a new approach, namely quantum leadership model, has been proposed.

In this new approach, the term of leadership is analysed using quantum physics. For instance, Malloch, K & T.Porter-O'Grady [49] define the process of quantum leadership as testing assumptions, reading signposts, stretching the limits, pushing perceptions, creating new mental models, reaching for the potential and behaving with boldness and the characteristics of quantum leader as fluid, flexible, mobile, reflects synthesis, works from the whole and coordinates the intersection. On the other hand, Blanck [50] attempts to define quantum leadership based on the five distinct assumptions of quantum physics in contrast to classical physics. Erçetin[51] inspired by this study accounts for quantum leadership based on four points eliminating one of Blank's assumptions. These are as follows:

Leadership is an interaction arena in regard to leader and followers.

- Leadership cannot be structured and predicted.
- The fact of leadership has components.
- The influence of leaders is based on interaction.
- In the approaches to leadership mentioned above leadership is regarded as a process. These approaches provide significant contributions to account for leadership that is very complex process. However, these approaches do not pay attention to the perceptions in regard to leadership. This study, on the other hand, proposes a new approach to leadership that is based on perceptions in a multi-dimensional way.

**Perceptual Multi-dimensional Leadership Model (Muldimperlead):** The model proposed is analysed in accordance with the following points:

Basic assumptions that are the basis of the model

Four major conditions of leadership at dimensional dimension

Variables influencing perceptions in specific ways

Variables influencing perceptions in general ways

Basic assumptions of the model

The model is based on five assumptions. They are given as follows:

- Everyone is a potential leader.
- The basis of leadership is made up of perception.
- The status of leadership is determined by the perception of the leaders and his/her followers. Thus, perception may be analysed at two different levels, namely individual and group levels.
- Evaluation of leadership can be carried out for a specific time point.

- The status of leadership that results from the perceptions of leader and those about leader cannot show us whether or not a person is a efficient and succesful leader.

**Everyone is a potential leader:** In regard to leadership, the question that is frequently discussed seems to be "Is leadership an inborn quality or can it be taught?". In our culture, dominant view in regard to this question is that leadership is an inborn quality. Such a view implies that not everybody can be leader and that only those with inherent qualities can be leaders. However, in the approach we propose the premises of "Everyone is a potential leader" is adopted. Therefore, everybody is a potential leader but it is not known when and how this potential occurs. For instance, a person who is a leader in worklife may be a follower in her/his social life. Therefore, it can be argued that human beings may exhibit different qualities of leadership under different places, positions and conditions. In other words, leadership is a process that changes in accordance with the changes in places, time, position and conditions. Therefore, leadership is not a continuous but specific to a certain time period and the reason for the changes is the perceptions in regard to leadership.

**The basis of leadership is made up of perceptions:**

Leadership is a dynamic perception that occurs between leaders and followers and that is influenced by certain factors affecting the existence of leadership and the style of leadership. The leadership itself affects these factors.

Although personality and judgements on emotions have been analysed in numerous studies, the perceptions of people about other people have not been commonly analysed. However, it has been established that such perceptions are affected by the people themselves, the others that are the subjects of the perceptions and the conditions in which perceptions are developed [52].

Cognitive accounts of perceptions were developed through the theory of representation of perceptions in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This theory assumes that our affects represent the world but we can reach the world only through our senses. Let's think about an everyday experience. When we put our hands into containers one with cold water and one with hot water for 30 seconds and then put both hands into another container with warmer water, we recognize that it is cold for the hand that was put into the container with hot water and vice versa. It implies that the exact temperature of the water and the perception of it are two distinct things. It also means that perceptions of senses are significantly influenced by the

conditions. Similarly, two subjects may perceive very differently the same object. Moreover, the same subject may differently perceive the same object at two different time points [53]. Inceoglu [54] states that we receive information about the external world through our senses and that it is related to the physiological dimension of human beings. However, Inceoglu argues that perception is a social and psychological fact. Similarly, perception is defined as a choice of individuals among environmental stimulus and organization of them to develop meaningful experiences. In this process, information about the objects in the external world is searched, gathered and processed. It implies that human beings are not passive observers of the external world since they make choices and organize [55, 56]. It also shows that perceptions have both individual and group dimensions and that perceptions can be influenced, controlled and directed.

Our perceptions about a person lead to impressions about her/him. Watts [57] argues that perceptions are instant. Each moment is very short so that we could not think about it. Then, the question is that how we develop impressions about other people without thinking it consciously. Barker [58] defines perception as first one of the two levels of thinking. This first level ends with coding of reality in the form of words, numbers, diagrams, pictures, maps, etc. Asch [59] developed a configurational model for the development of impression. His model argues that basic features are firstly used in developing impressions and that basic features have significant effects on the final impression. Basic features also influence the meaning of other features and the perceptions about other people. In other words, basic features lead to a comprehensive configuration about impressions.

Cognitive algebra is an approach used in the studies on the development of impressions. It focuses on how we assign positive or negative values to qualities and later how we relate these values under a general evaluation [60].

Asch's perspective pays attention to the descriptive or qualitative aspect of impressions while cognitive algebra focuses only on quantitative aspects. Advances witnessed in social cognition lead to substitute basic features by a cognitive schema that is a general concept. Schema is a cognitive pattern representing information about a concept or a stimulus including its qualities and relationship among these qualities [61]. It is a group of interrelated cognitions (ideas, beliefs and attitudes).

Schemas make it possible to understand a person, an event or a place based on limited knowledge. Certain evidences activate the schema and later it fills the empty points.

The theories beginning by Heider's [62] theory of naive psychology, on the other hand, suggest that causal inferences are used as basis in the development of impressions. It is further argued that human beings make inferences about the reasons for their and others' acts and that they develop judgements through these inferences.

In regard to leadership, these approaches assume that leadership occurs as a result of interaction between the perceptions of the leaders him/herself and of followers.

Judgements such as efficient, successful, inefficient, etc. aims at describe the leadership. Therefore, such judgements do not affect the existence of the leadership but are directed to evaluate the leadership.

**The status of leadership is determined by the perception of the leaders and his/her followers:** The relationship between leaders and followers in terms of the approaches mentioned above, leaders or objects are perceived by followers through senses. Leaders are perceived by both themselves and their followers. Therefore, leaders are both the objects that is perceived and the subjects that perceive themselves and their own perceptions about themselves are also decisive as much as those of followers. Adopting such an assumption about perceptions leads to the recognition that perceptions have two levels, namely individual and group levels.

**Individual perception:** Individual perception refers to the perception of the leader about his/her leadership. There may be a difference between leaders' perceptions about themselves and the perception of followers about their leadership. Leaders may not aware of the perceptions of followers about themselves and there may have some conflicts in regard their perceptions and followers' perceptions [63].

Leaders' own perceptions can be sometimes so powerful. As argued by Damasio [64], perception includes the gathering of environmental signs as well as the influencing the environment.

**Group perception:** Group perception is a social perception that reflects the followers' level of acceptance of leaders. Leadership qualities developed in the previous

studies are all factors influencing the individual and group perceptions. These factors are as follows:

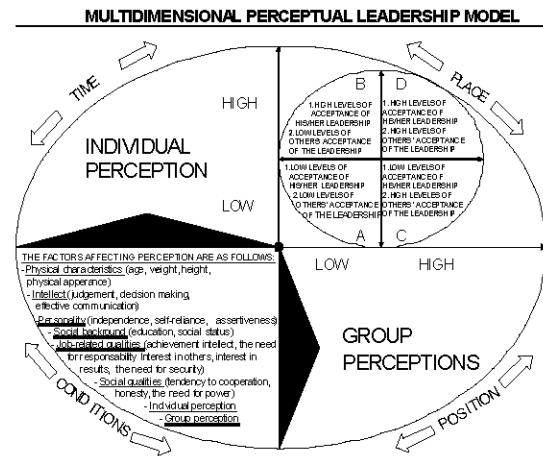
- Physical characteristics (age, weight, height, physical appearance)
- Intellect (judgement, decision making, effective communication)
- Personality (independence, self-reliance, assertiveness)
- Social background (education, social status)
- Job-related qualities (achievement intellect, the need for responsibility, interest in others, interest in results, the need for security)
- Social qualities (tendency to cooperation, honesty, the need for power)

#### Individual perception

**Group perception:** All these factors listed above affect both individual perception and group perception. However, some of these factors affect mostly individual perception while the others group perception.

**4. Evaluation of leadership can be carried out for a specific time point:** Mostly leadership is thought to be a natural process and judgements about leaders are tried to be gained through the evaluation of this process. However leadership can be thought to be a process that is extensively influenced by various factors. Therefore, an objective evaluation of this process can not be possible because of complexity of factors and thier interrelationships. Thus, the evaluation is limited to the evaluator and each evaluator may reach different conclusions. Evaluating the leadership for a certain time point is much easier. Because leadership and the factors affecting the leadership are fixed for the related time point. Therefore, more objective evaluation is possible and such an evaluation approach may provide more productive results.

**5. The status of leadership that results from the perceptions of leader and those about leader cannot show us whether or not a person is a efficient and succesful leader:** Perceptual leadership model do not provide any judgement about whether or not a leader is succesful and efficient. However, it deals with necessary individual and group perceptions for leaders to be succesful and efficient and how these perceptions can be positively affected. Therefore, the model of perceptual leadership can be developed as follows:



This model assumes that there are four conditions of leadership.

**Implicit leadership:** This condition refers to a leadership style that has not been mentioned commonly. Persons belonging to this group are mostly passive, lack of self-reliance, withdrawn. They do not perceive themselves as leaders or they do not want to be leaders. They mostly prefer to be followers. Due to their signs directed to their environments, the others also do not perceive themselves as leaders. However, it does not mean that these persons cannot be leaders. When necessary conditions occur they may become leaders. Under certain conditions, they may pass to another leadership style.

**Potential leadership:** Persons belonging to this group are active, have high levels of self-reliance. For these persons, they have all necessary qualities for being a leader and they are ready to hold responsibility. However, they may have some problems with their followers in terms of communication and interaction.

**Reluctant leadership:** Such leaders may experience interactional problems with their followers. There may be two related situations. In the first situation, the person do not want to be leader but as a result of environmental pressure they act as a leader. In the second situation, they should act as a leader because of their managerial position. Such a condition may decrease the persons' own perception about their leadership status. Or on the contrary, followers may not respond the needs of the assigned leader.

**Ideal leadership:** It is desired and necessary leadership condition. Both leader and followers establish and employ

correct and proper communication and interaction conditions. The significant feature of this condition is that individual and group perceptions are consistent.

## CONCLUSIONS

The model of perceptual leadership includes analyses to identify the status of leadership at a certain time period. The analyses included in the model also provides new and distinct perspective on the categorization of leadership. It classifies leadership into four classes of implicit, potential, reluctant and ideal leaders. Model considers leadership as a changing process and assumes that an individual may hold different types of leadership. This change occurs as a result of changes in the individual and group perceptions. The model also assumes that the conditions of leadership should not be used as indicators of efficiency and achievement of leaders. For instance, ideal leadership cannot refer to efficient and successful leadership status. Let's think about a political party that had lower levels of votes. The party's leader did not resign and reelected in the party's congress. In this case, this person is the ideal leader since she/he has higher levels of acceptance by her/himself and the followers. However, it is not possible to describe this person as a successful and efficient leader. It is the point that makes it hard to comprehend what is the leadership.

In sum, the leadership status of a person is completely related to his/her perceptions and followers' perceptions about the leadership. The power of a leader is parallel to the size of the group that perceive him/her as a leader and the intense of this perception.

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