Role of the followers in the development of theories of organizational leadership

Papel de los seguidores en el desarrollo de las teorías de liderazgo organizacional

Papeldos seguidoresno desenvolvimento doteorias doliderança organizacional

Mónica García Solarte

*   Industrial Engineering. Masters degree in Business Administration from the Universidad del Valle, Masters degree in Management from Tulane University, USA. Associate professor of the Universidad del Valle, Management Sciences Faculty, Department of Administration and Organizations, San Fernando branch. Calle 4B No. 36-00 edificio 124 oficina 3013. Cali, Colombia. Email address: monica.garcia@correounivalle.edu.co

Resumen

La mayoría de revisiones acerca del liderazgo se han enfocado en el líder y su papel dentro de la organización. Las investigaciones actuales demuestran que los seguidores, como un elemento importante del liderazgo, poseen un papel activo en la selección del estilo de liderazgo y en la teoría desde la cual se le evaluará a un líder. Desde este punto, el objetivo de este artículo es identificar cuál ha sido el papel de los seguidores en el desarrollo de las teorías del liderazgo organizacional. Al evaluar el papel que tiene el seguidor dentro del desarrollo de las teorías del liderazgo se pudo concluir que de acuerdo con su percepción, su comportamiento y sus necesidades, exige cierta categoría de líder, que puede ser vista desde cada teoría.

Palabras clave: seguidor, liderazgo, teorías del liderazgo, líder.

Clasificación JEL: M10, M50, M54.

Abstract

Most reviews about leadership have focused on the leader and his role in the organization. Modern research shows that followers, as an important element of leadership, play an active role in the selection of leadership style and the theory from which a leader will be evaluated. From this perspective, the aim of this article is to identify what the role of followers has been in the development of theories of organizational leadership. In assessing the role of the follower in the development of theories of leadership, it could be concluded that according to their perception, behavior and needs, a certain category of leader is called for, which can be seen from each theory.

Keywords: follower, leadership, leadership theories, leader.

Resumo

A maioria dos comentários sobre a liderança centraram-se sobre o líder e papel dentro da organização. Pesquisas recentes mostram que os seguidores como um elemento importante de liderança, tem um papel ativo na seleção do estilo de liderança e teoria de que você será avaliado um líder. A partir deste ponto, o objetivo deste artigo é identificar o quetem sido o papel dos seguidores no desenvolvimento do teorias do liderança organizacional. Ao avaliaro papel doseguidor no desenvolvimento de teorias de liderança concluiu se que de acordo com sua percepção, seu comportamento e suas necessidades exigem ou exigir determinada categoria de líder que pode ser visto a partir de cada teoria.

Palavras-chave: teorias fan liderança de liderança, líder.

Introduction

Leadership has been defined as the capacity to influence others in order to accomplish objectives (Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin & Hein, 1991). Over time great importance has been given to leadership within organizations, as it can make people become more productive. From its origins, leadership has always been focused on the leader, their management style, and the theories under which this is recognized.

However, in the last few decades the importance of the follower in the leadership process has begun to be appreciated. Can and Aktaş (2012), Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera and McGregor (2010), Collinson (2006) and Sy (2010) propose the need to study the role of the follower in the exercise of leadership and their importance and influence on the style of the leader. In this sense, the follower takes on a role that is as relevant as the one that has been traditionally assigned to the leader, whereby this process of influence should be analyzed with the aim of identifying and strengthening the processes of leader-follower and follower-leader interaction, which would guarantee the effectiveness of leadership in organizations.

Many studies, such as those of Gil, Alcover, Rico and Sánchez (2011), Bass (1985), Burns (1978), Conger and Kanungo (1998), Howell and Shamir (2005), House, Spangler and Woycke (1991), consider the importance of the role of the follower, but they do not delve into the role they play in the development of each theory. For this reason, the aim of this article is to identify the role of followers within the development of the

theories of organizational leadership. The traits, behavior, contingency and emerging theories are the ones that have been selected for the identification of this active role of followers.

The conclusions reached by this revision identify the active role of followers in the leadership process and its effectiveness in the organization. Indeed, followers, seen from the theory of traits and behavior, have a more passive role, focused on the identification of the leader and the perception of said leader. According to contingency theory, the role played by the follower is much more active and starts to have a presence on its own, given that this theory specifically sets out the leadership style that is exercised according to certain characteristics of the followers and the context in general. The emerging theories suggest that the role of the follower is particular to the needs that they present to the leader in order to establish a win-win relationship.

Initially, in this revision, leadership is defined. Later on, the leadership theories, the decision of the follower and the role they play are outlined. At the same time, the relationship between leader and follower is presented and, finally, the role of the follower in the development of each one of the leadership theories is described.

LEADERSHIP

At present, organizations demand more of the person who is in charge. Leaders have become a continuous requirement within organizations, given that it is they who, in administrative terms, lead to the fulfillment of the vision of the organization.

More specifically, it has been proven that leadership style has an influence over the conduct of the individuals in the company (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). Moreover, it affects the processes of team work, the social environment, and the results (Evkall & Ryhammar, 1997; Kahai & Sosik, 1997). Rahman (2001) concluded that the leadership style, processes, products, services, as well as the people and the approach towards the clients explain the organization's results.

The interest in this subject has been growing since the twentieth century (Nader, 2012). Despite the interest in this phenomenon, Antonakis, Cianciolo and Sternberg, (2004) maintain that thanks to its complexity, the consolidation of the concept still leaves many questions unanswered.

Many theorists have tried to outline a clear concept of leadership and have generalized that it refers to the influence exerted by one person over their reference group. Through this influence, the leader gets others to fulfill the tasks they have to do in the service of collective effectiveness (Fleishman et al., 1991). The success of the organization is the main criterion by which to measure the effectiveness of its leadership. Leaders are traditionally dealt with within the

framework of the positive and the negative, depending on their performance within the organization (Kelley, 1988; Meindl, 1995).

Leaders frame the nature of the problems of the organization, develop and evaluate the potential solutions, and plan and implement the decisions designed to solve said problems (Zaccaro, 1995). The cognitive foundations and the values of leaders limit the field of the selective perception, the interpretation of problems, the definition and assessment of the possible solutions, and the selection and implementation of the strategy. For this reason, leadership style is a variable that has direct effects on the decision-making processes and the results of the organizations (Waldman et al., 2001).

Lussier and Achua (2002, p. 6) refer to leadership as a: "process in which leaders influence followers, and vice versa, in order to achieve the objectives of an organization through change." In this sense, the authors indicate that leadership has a series of elements that should be taken into consideration, such as: influence, leaders, and followers, people, change, and organizational objectives.

Theime and Treviño (2012, p. 40) refer to leadership as the influence that the behavior of the leader can have on the performance of the group: "The diverse studies about leadership explained in terms of behavior have had modest success when trying to identify consistent relationships between the patterns of behavior of the leader and the performance of the group." This explanation is due to the behavioral study that, at one point, did not take the situational element into account as regards the exercise of leadership. However, it is accepted that the probability of success of leadership is a complex issue that does not solely depend on a series of behaviors (Theime & Treviño, 2012).

In addition, Northhouse (2001), highlights four components within the definition of leadership:

a) It is a process, not a characteristic that resides in the leader; it is not linear, rather it is an interactive event that occurs between the leader and the followers.
b) It involves the influence of the leader over the real and potential followers.
c) It occurs in groups which are the context in which leadership takes place.
d) It includes attention to the goals that the group of individuals is given.

Although the term has been conceptualized in different ways, there is a certain agreement in associating it with the perceptions and attributes of the followers, influenced by the qualities and behaviors of the leader, the contextual situations, and the individual and collective needs of the followers (Yukl, 1998). In this sense, Padilla and Quintana (2012) suggest that another way of analyzing leadership is through its construction, taking into account who is led, and not who leads.

LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership is one of the topics that is widely dealt with in the area of organizations. For example, the identity of the leader, the way in which the leader leads, the response of the subordinates and the leader-follower relationship, are some of the topics that are dealt with in several studies. In this context, the first leadership theories emphasized the characteristics of the leader, determined more genetically than socially, with said characteristics passed on to be what determined the skills of the leader. Later on, the contingency leadership theory appeared, in which the situational factors and the personality of the leader were essential aspects in outlining the leader-follower relationship. Other theories focused their interest on decision-making mechanisms and organizational situations, or on the balance between being focused on the task and on human relations. Nevertheless, the concept of transformational leadership and transactional leadership has received more attention in the last few years, and is part of the emerging theories.

Traits theory

The traits theory focused on identifying the personal characteristics that make a leader. Under the criteria of this theory, it was thought that effective leaders should have certain characteristics or personal qualities which are above those of other people. Since Fayol's (1986) studies, it has been suggested that only certain personal traits tend to be associated with leadership. However, this author does not state this directly; instead he highlights his studies about traits, focusing on the description of technical and administrative skill.

For Fayol (1986), the traits that great leaders should have are health and physical fitness, intelligence and intellectual vigor; "the moral qualities of determination, energy, courage, sense of duty, and care for the common good; a sound general education; managerial ability comprising a competence of his five elements of management; a general knowledge of all the essential functions; and the widest possible experience in the specialized activity characterizing the concern."

Among the most common traits found are, intelligence, knowledge and experience, expertise, self-confidence, high energy, stress tolerance, integrity and honesty, and maturity (Jones & George, 2010). Although this theory has been classified within traits, not all of them are necessarily related to personality. Many of the traits are associated with aptitudes, skills, knowledge, and experience that the individual has.

Behavioral theory

This theory was outlined in the State University of Ohio, where the different behaviors that leaders have were studied. Lussier and Achua (2002) point out that this theory proposes the recognition that organizations do not only need results but

also people. The idea of these two authors is that behavioral theory is based on recognizing leadership styles according to their efforts.

From this new approach, interest is not focused on the traits of the leader, but rather on what they do and how they do it (Palomino, 2009). This approach contributed to different authors focusing on identifying the patterns of an individual that allow them to have influence on a group or organization (Robbins, 1999).

In the beginning, Likert (1961) proposes that management is a process that assumes different positions in each organization, depending on its internal and external conditions. On that basis, characteristics of the organizations emerge that shape leadership styles. Depending on the way in which these characteristics are represented in the managers, four systems or management styles can be identified (Likert, 1961): system 1. exploitative-authoritative; system 2. benevolent-authoritative; system 3. consultative; system 4. participative.

Lewin (1951) gave one of the first explanations of the styles of leadership, with the argument that they arise from the use that the leaders give to the authority they possess. From this, he was able to establish three management or leadership styles that follow his criteria of analysis: the autocratic leadership style, the democratic, and the *laissez-faire*. These leadership styles are specifically based on the behavior of the leader.

Finally, Blake and Mouton (1964) developed one of the best-known tools as regards the measurement or definition of management styles, the leadership grid, which was updated with the support of other colleagues and has been adapted to diverse management areas. The matrix was developed in a two-dimensional framework: the interest in production (results) and the interest in individuals. Its importance lies in indicating the nature or the strength of the assumptions and the values which lie in any approach (Blake and Mouton, 1964). This tool allows for the identification of facts, opinions, attitudes, and emotions from an introspective point of view. In this sense, the authors made an important contribution to the behavioral theory.

Contingency theory

The possession of certain traits or behaviors does not guarantee the existence of a leader. In this aspect, the theory breaks with the schemes and states that all situations require leadership. The leader is exposed to an environment in which he develops with his followers; thus, this variety of situations makes the contingency or situational theory emerge as an effective leadership theory, depending on the situation. This theory is supported by the research carried out by Fiedler (1967), Vroom and Yetton (1973), Evans (1970) and House (1971), among others. In this approach, the authors state that someone who wants to be a leader should be capable of quickly grasping the peculiarities of the diverse situations

they are faced with, and of selecting for each one of them, the most appropriate leadership style (Palomino, 2009).

In the framework of this theory, there is not one sole type of leadership, but a style that suits each situation and operates effectively in the context (Palomino, 2009). From the perspective of the theory, among the related factors of influence are, according to Guillen (2006): the training of the follower, their requirements for self-realization, their experience, and maturity. Thus, this approach begins to consider the relationship between the leader and the follower, from the perspective that both have an influence on the leadership style (Palomino, 2009).

A fundamental contribution to this theory were the models of Fiedler (1967), Hersey and Blanchard (1969). Fiedler was one of the first researchers of leadership to maintain that a leader should be contingent, which is to say, determined by the characteristics of the leader and the situation. This model suggests that many individuals are leaders in one situation, but not so much in others. Moreover, Fiedler (1967) argues that leadership style should be considered to refer to the personal characteristics of the individual, and mainly highlights relationship-oriented leaders and those oriented towards tasks. Relationship-oriented leaders are principally interested in having a good relationship with their subordinates, and being agreeable to them. Task oriented leaders are particularly interested in their

subordinates having high performance levels and that they focus on completing the task (Jones & George, 2010).

Fiedler also considered the situational characteristics for the identification of the leader. He indicated three situational characteristics which determine the favorableness of the situation for its management: member-leader relations, as the degree to which followers like their leader, trust him, and are loyal to him; task structure, as a measure of whether the tasks for completion are clear and structured; position power, the amount of legitimate power, to reward or coerce that the leader has in virtue of their position.

On the other hand, in the work carried out by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) it is pointed out that leadership based on behavior is related to tasks and relationships, determined by the relationship they have with the follower. The innovative aspect in the research of these authors was the introduction of four quadrants which symbolize the dimensions of tasks and relationships, and the dimensions of behavior they mention are: telling, selling, participating, and delegating.

Emerging theories

These theories are mainly oriented towards transformational leadership. This leadership style is when leaders transform their followers. To this effect,

this style proposes the idea that this is realized through the followers' sense of achievement in that they are fully conscious of the importance of their posts for the organization. At the same time, transformational leaders make their followers conscious of their personal needs for growth, development, and realization. These leaders motivate their followers to work well, not only for the benefit of the organization, but also for their personal benefit (Jones & George, 2010).

Transformational leadership takes place when "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" (Burns, 1978). "The result of transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (1978, p. 24).

Bass (1985) defines a transformational leader as one who motivates followers to do more than they were expected to do. Bass' fundamental point is that transformational leaders expand and change the interests of their followers, at the same time that they generate understanding and acceptance of the objectives and the mission of the group. According to this author, transformational leadership consists of four factors: charisma or idealized influence, inspirational leadership or motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Also, Bass (1981) worked on a version of transformational leadership based on the work carried out by Burns, House, and other authors, whose proposal focused on the needs of the followers; more than those of the leader. He suggested that transformational leadership can be applied to situations in which the results are not positive.

THE FOLLOWER

For Lussier and Achua (2002) a follower is someone who has been influenced by a leader and can be managed or subordinated and at the same time provides a level of recognition to the leader. For Chaleff (1995) a follower is not a synonym for a subordinate. A subordinate reports to an individual of higher rank and can, in practice, be a defender, an antagonist, or indifferent. The follower shares a common purpose with the leader, believes in what the organization is trying to accomplish, and wants the leader as well as the organization to succeed.

Below, in Table 1, some approaches are set out with respect to the definition of the follower and their role in the exercise of leadership:

Table 1. Followers and their role in the exercise of leadership

Author	Theoretical approximation
Kohles, Blighy & Carsten (2012)	When the followers share the values of the organization and make them their own, their desire to remain part of the organization likely increases. Moreover, the processes of leader-follower communication should be bidirectional and be related to the vision of the organization, given that this could distinguish the organization from others in which tenets only exist on paper. When the vision is clearly centered in the followers, it encourages them to reflect upon their contribution to it, then the followers are more inclined to create a new concept of themselves associated with better performance and alignment with the organization.
Can & Akta (2012)	Although in many sources there is an emphasis on the central role of the leader in the leadership process and the influence he has over the followers, some of the studies establish the importance that the followers have because of their participation in decision-making. The followers, according to some studies carried out by Kelley (1988), show some aspects of the behavior that determine their role and form of participation in the exercise of leadership, leading them to think critically, be innovative, creative or role models. The types of followers are: alienated, exemplary, passive, and conformist.
Carsten, Bien, West, Patera & McGregor (2010)	They point out that some authors such as Meindi (1995) have explored how the followers build leadership; others, like Felfe and Schyns (2006), analyze how the personal characteristics of the followers influence the perceptions of leadership. However, the real contribution of the follower to leadership should be analyzed and the way in which this builds a series of interpretations that lead them to establish a significant role in the organizations.
Miller, Butler & Cosentino (2003)	Followers and their behavior are seen to be determined by the degree of control that the leader manages to exert. For this reason, some elements related to interaction are required to facilitate the precise and appropriate influence on the part of the leader in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the followers in their roles.
Collinson (2006)	Followers have never been as important as they are now, as different authors have tried to identify the role followers have in leadership. This role goes far beyond the categorization of the followers under certain stereotypes, given that current leadership is shared and has to take into consideration the skills, faculties, and expertise of the followers.
Sy (2010)	There are a series of implicit leadership theories that allow for the identification and explanation of leader-follower relationships, taking as their starting point the fact that everyone seeks to direct their behavior and actions in accordance with the achievement of their goals. Therefore, the performance of the followers may depend on their perception of the leader and the interactions established between them.
Peterson & Avolio (2012)	Followers attribute characteristics to those leaders they consider authentic and determine their own performance according to the work environment that the leader creates for the development of activities. That is why, when the follower perceives positive intentions from the leader, their performance increases, which allows us to assume that the positive and negative emotions of the followers are closely related with individual performance and achieving goals.

Autor	Aproximación teórica
Hoption, Christie & Barling (2012)	The performance of the follower can be affected by the understanding had of the term he is labeled with. This concept can be negative and incline one to think that the follower is an individual without ambitions and totally identified by the influence of the follower or, on the contrary, he can be seen as a complement to the exercise of leadership by determining, in a certain way, the performance of the leader. However, in an effective leadership process it is necessary to include a positive concept of the follower which secures a positive effect on performance.
Sy & Choi (2013)	Followers may be seen as receptors of the mood of the leader, and determine their processes of behavior and their performance depending on the interaction that this allows. It is expected that the follower spreads the mood that the leader generates, to achieve greater success in fulfilling their activities.
Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Izak & Popper (2007)	The follower-leader relationship can be explained from the attachment theory, attempting to determine the proximity processes between them, the object of their relationship, the risk-taking and self-development. The insecurity of the followers as regards their performance, affects the leader-follower relationship, creating psychological barriers and disturbing performance, development, and adjustment to the group. However, this insecurity may be the result of a lack of empowerment, which is the responsibility of the leader.
Howelly & Hall-Merenda (1999)	The work and efficiency of the follower is determined by the rewards systems which are negotiated with the leader, as a consequence of his performance. In general, the duties, behaviors, and results of the follower are defined by the leader and the type of leadership that he decides to implement in order to achieve objectives. An almost unilateral leader-follower relationship is identified. The leader-follower exchange and positive management are elements that can predict the performance of the follower It is expected that the leader implements transformational leadership which will allow them to obtain better results from the followers.
Podsakoff, Mac-kenzie, Moorman & Fetter (1990)	Followers are seen as the result of the influence of the leader. Leaders transform the basic values, beliefs, and attitudes of the followers so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels stipulated by the organization.
Lee, Almaza, Jang, Nelson & Ghiselli, (2013)	Followers are seen as dependent on the type of leadership exercised, particularly on the transformational, which has no direct influence on them, but rather on the organizational environment that, at the same time, has a certain impact on the attitudes of the followers within the exercise of leadership.
Erez, Misangyi, Johnson, Lepine & Halverson (2008), Conger, Kanungo & Menon, (2000)	Followers are conditioned by the leader's charisma, which is associated with positive and negative effects on the followers. A charismatic leader has followers that are more positive and task-oriented, whereas the followers of a non-charismatic leader have a poor performance and are not task-oriented. The followers influenced by charismatic leaders have more self-confidence, satisfaction, sense of identity, better group performance, and feel more empowered.
Palomino, Espi-noza & Aguilar (2013) citando a Bass (1990)	"Followers have a greater disposition to follow their leaders and are affected differently depending on the leadership style in times of uncertainty. Additionally, followers tend to overestimate the responsibility of the leaders in the results of the organization under conditions of uncertainty." Followers need to feel they are protected and valued by the organization.

Source: the author

As shown in Table 1, many authors focus their analysis of the role of followers on leadership, on passive agents governed almost completely by the perceptions, emotions, and processes of influence of the leader. The behavior of the follower and his performance depend on the degree in which the leader establishes effective processes of interaction and influence. Nevertheless, authors like Sy (2010), Collinson (2006), Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera and McGregor (2010), Can and Aktaş (2012) propose the necessity of considering not only the follower, but also his relevance in the exercise of leadership, putting him in a position of privilege by giving him the responsibility of influence on the actions of the leader and the leadership style he decides to adopt.

For Kelley (1992), followers are those employees who are exemplary; those who make the companies prosper. Davis and Newstrom (2000) mention that, at times, leaders also turn into followers, and that it is a dynamic subordination relationship where the ability to follow is shown. That is why, a follower is the person who is influenced by the leader and who follows him by his own conviction; he has a common purpose or believes in the purpose of the leader, and supports him in trying to achieve the goals set, with enthusiasm and energy and, at the same time, influences the leader positively.

Nonetheless, there are certain types of followers with whom a connection can be established, and who Kelley (1992) classifies as good, critical, conformists, pragmatic, and passive followers. Each style of follower has a certain level of participation and intellectual activity which determines their importance and role in the exercise of leadership. Therefore, the greater their relevance is, the greater will be the demand.

Chaleff (1995) indicates that there are three main characteristics that the follower needs to develop a good relationship with his leader. Those characteristics are:

- Commitment: the relationship between leaders and followers demands a mutual commitment. Commitment means mutual loyalty and trust between the people, their leaders, and the organization. Commitment is definitely a competitive advantage, but it is not free. Leaders must earn the commitment of their followers. Leaders and followers, who are continuously exchanging points of view, need to find a common ground for a loyalty that transcends the instability of their relations, instead binding them together in a framework of trust.

- Responsibility: if the followers want to have any kind of power, they must accept the responsibility for their role and for the role of their leaders. Only by accepting this double responsibility will they finally accept the responsibility for their organization and the people they

work for. However, Chaleff (1997) established three points that followers must understand in order to assume this responsibility: firstly, followers must understand their power and how to use it. The followers have more power than they commonly think. They need to understand the source of their power, who they work for, and what tools they have to carry out the mission of the group. Secondly, the followers must appreciate the importance of the leaders and take criticisms as contributions they make to the efforts of the followers. They should learn to minimize these forces and to create a climate in which the strengths of the leader are magnified, so the leader can serve the common purpose better. Thirdly, followers must understand the seductions and the traps that the power of leadership holds.

Effective followers assume the responsibility of learning the norms of the system in which they operate. At the same time, the attitude of the follower towards the norms is of great importance. This can affect the relationship with the leader and his response to the leader when inadequate orders are given.

• Communication processes: appropriate organization is necessary in order to carry out the common purpose and to support the leader. Therefore, effective followers are those who help leaders to clarify vision and objectives, and to develop the organization that the group needs to fulfill them. The most important organizational structures and processes are those that require communication. They indicate how all the other organizational processes are working. To provide a good service to the leader, followers should help him to detect the deficiencies in the communication and to design the correct combination of means to satisfy the needs of the organization.

According to Chaleff (1997), the design of the communication processes should be sensitive to the multiple needs, including the need of the leader to be able to communicate his vision directly to all the levels of the organization and to those responsible for his legacy, that those who continue the work have the ability to communicate their points of view to the leaders, that the information moves easily in all directions through the organization, in such a manner that no part of the group or the environment is disconnected; that the correct combination of media and technologies facilitate communication in a number of situations, communications that are oriented towards creativity, shared decision-making, coordination, implementation, and evaluation.

For this study, the follower will be understood as: "a person who recognizes the leader as a continuous source of orientation and inspiration, regardless of whether there is a formal relationship" (Yukl, 1998, p.6).

FOLLOWERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LEADER

The idea that followers' characteristics influence the impact of leadership is not something new in the study of this subject (Dvir, 1998). Castro (2007) points out that:

> The members of a work group develop, through socialization processes and past experiences with leaders, a series of implicit leadership theories (ILTs) (sic). These consist of a number of personal presumptions about the attributes and abilities which characterize an ideal leader. More specifically, the ILTs (sic) presuppose a series of cognitive structures or schemes that specify a series of traits and conducts that the followers expect from their leaders (2007, p. 8).

Thus, it is possible to identify how that relationship and the perception the follower has of the leader ends up affecting the traits of the latter. That is the reason why Castro (2008) maintains that:

> (…) the essence of leadership resides more in the follower than in the individual characteristics of the leader himself. In this way, Lord, Foti and De Vader (1984) argue that the different perceptions that the followers maintain as regards their superiors, form a series of hierarchic cognitive categories (or schemes), each one of which is represented

by a series of prototypes (Castro, 2008, p.8).

In this specific case, according to the approach of Lord, Forti and De Vader (1984), the perception of the follower becomes a determining element in the traits of the leader, and not only as it has been outlined in the traditional approaches to leadership, where the leader establishes to a certain degree, the traits and the performance of his followers, according to processes of interaction established between them. Leadership becomes, then, a bilateral process of relations between leader and follower, in which the latter fixes certain perceptions as a starting point e xpectingthe appearance of certain traits and behaviors of the leader. This is the reason why it could also be thought that the followers' performance can be the result of the appearance of special characteristics in the leader, with which the processes of influence on the followers can be improved.

Thus, the members of a work group develop, through socialization processes and past experiences with leaders, a series of implicit leadership theories (ILT), which consist of a group of personal attributes regarding the qualities and skills which characterize the ideal leader and which finally deal with the allocation of leadership (Kenney, Schartz-Kenney & Blascovich, 1996). Likewise, the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) is based on the fundamental idea of the exchanges that take place between followers and leaders (Gerstner & Day,

1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). This theory maintains that the relationship between leader and followers is mediated through the transactions that occur between them. Some studies have shown that this theory tends to be selective of a certain group of subordinates or followers that are more compatible with the leader, because of their gender or some other characteristic (Molero & Morales, 2011). In general, the transaction that occurs between the leader and the follower takes place because of the differentiation or not of their relationship and its characteristics (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2006). Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski and Chaudhry (2009) indicate how the leader's differential treatment of some of their subordinates in a work group influences the activity within the group in general.

In this sense, "a leader will be considered as such if his characteristics or conduct as perceived by his followers coincide with the prototype they have internalized (that is to say, if there is a match between the ideal prototype and the perception of the real leader)" (Castro, 2008, p.8).

Alves (2000) presents the characteristics of the leaders from the model proposed by Chelladurai, which envisions the influence of the characteristics of those being led on the behavior of the leader. According to the author, his research demonstrated that those who are led differ in their desire and their need of leadership. The capacity of the followers to assume responsibilities will not be a common denominator among all of them; on the contrary, it will be determined by the particular conditions of each individual in relation to the leader.

Chaleff (1995) established the role of the followers according to different levels:

- At the highest level, followers serve those for whom the organization exists – its members, clients, parishioners, and/or communities- frequently called those responsible for the legacy, because of their commitment to the results of the actions of the group.
- Beneath this level, and quite functional, the followers are at the service of those responsible for the legacy and their leaders, without conflict of interest.
- Further down, the followers serve their leaders and themselves, but not the bearers of the legacy. Even though the followers can be rewarded for this in the short-run, they are planting the seed of failure.
- Finally, in the lowest level, the followers serve their leaders but at the same time allow them to damage the organization and the legacy bearers through corruption, moreover, the followers themselves participate in that corruption.

According to what was stated above, if followers serve only themselves and not the leaders and the legacy holders, the followers are not loyal. Consequently, followers need to be aware of their role in the process of the organization.

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In addition to that, Davis and Newstrom (2000) establish some behaviors that followers need to have in order to support the leaders and be efficient followers:

- Not to compete with the leader for the spotlight
- Be loyal and give support as members of the team
- Not to automatically agree with everything
- Act as "devil's advocate" raising profound questions
- Constructively confront the ideas, values, and actions of the leader
- Foresee and prevent possible problems

For Northouse (2001), within the term 'to lead' is found the description of exerting influence over others and generating visions for change, that is to say, that it implies a relationship of influence between equals and does not include orders, whereby the followers have a role as equals before the leaders.

Bass (1985), for his part, mentions that the leader is an agent that transforms the followers making them more conscious of the importance and the value of results, leading them to transcend their own self-interest for the good of the organization. As a result, the followers feel respect and trust towards the leader, and are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do.

Although the efficient leader may, on occasion, point out a specific objective that people feel compelled to fulfill, it is more probable that their efficiency lies, above all, in their capacity to start the process of orientation (Weick, 2000, p. 107). The relationships between leaders and followers determine the efficiency of each process. It is this up and down relationship in the organization that builds or damages programs, and makes or breaks careers.

Padilla and Quintana (2012) citing Munchinsky (2006) set out the possibility of studying the processes of influence not only from the leader towards the followers, but also the other way around, in order to determine how the actions of followers affect the leadership. Authors such as Bennis,(1990) and Chaleff, (1995,1997) affirm that to be a follower requires loyal and energic support of the leader`s work, as well as the will to challenge the policies of the leader or his behavior, should they be harmful to the common purpose. Nevertheless, it is known that in a society inclined towards leadership, many feel uncomfortable being a follower, even when the two functions are inseparable.

For their part, López, Villagómez and Cruz de Galindo (2003) affirm that:

> Leadership is a source of power from the bottom up; a power that is handed over, as one of the important elements in the process of abdication of the follower: the leader subrogates himself in the personal affairs of the follower, and in exchange is granted power (p.52).

For this author, the influence exercised in leadership works two ways, not only downwards, but also upwards, depending on the interests and needs manifested by the followers. The leaders, same as the followers, are not passive receptors of the influence of the follower. They have their own individual differences, preferences, and perceptions that may amplify or attenuate the influence of the followers (Oc & Bashshur, 2013).

Barnard (2003) speaks about the authority which is accepted or not by the follower. This author demonstrates that when power moves in one direction, from leader to follower, it is finally the followers who decide if the authority is legitimate and if it should be accepted or not. Hence, in the exercise of leadership, the recognition of power is established by the acceptance or not of the follower.

Several authors (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hollander, 1993; Jermier, 1993; Klein & House, 1995; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992) agree that, in leadership, the relationship is produced jointly by leaders and followers. Leaders and followers have an active role in the formation of their mutual relationships, and they have a strong role in the formation of the results of the organization (Dvir, 1998; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Kelley (1992) affirms that for many the role of the follower is a conscious choice. The best followers, says the author, are the most actively committed to their leaders and their environment, and demonstrate independent and critical thinking.

For that matter, the essence of leadership resides more in the follower than in the individual characteristics of the leader himself. A person emerges as a leader if the group attributes characteristics of leadership to him related to the followers (Lord & Maher, 1991).

Chaleff (1995) affirmed that the value of a follower is measured by the way in which he helps the leader and the organization to pursue their common objectives within the context of his values. He states that certain characteristics help to achieve this:

- Efficient followers are cooperative, an essential quality for all human progress.
- Trustworthy followers are those who integrate the needs of their ego with the responsibilities of the community they serve, instead of competing with their leader.
- Balanced followers are less prone to fall into the traps that lurk around leaders with strong egos and can serve as guides as regards these traps.
- Careful followers perceive the needs of the leaders as well as those of the other members of the group, and try to establish a connection between them.

People maintain their values as followers, so far as they remain loyal to those who serve the organization and they are brave enough to do so. If they bend to the will of the leader when he is in conflict with those responsible for the legacy, or if

they incline towards those who hold the legacy when they are in conflict with more important values, the values of the followers will be found to have considerably decreased.

Authors such as Lord, Brown and Feiberg (1999) and Shamir (2007) established that an important source of variation are the differences in the followers self-image. These are powerful determinants of the behavior of the follower and of the reactions that they have towards their leaders. On the other hand, leaders can have a powerful influence on the self-image of their subordinates and in consequence influence the behavior of the followers and other social processes.

This is one reason to think that leadership is a process that does not only depend on the leader, but also on their followers. Chaleff (1995) maintained that thinking about leaders without also of their followers is like thinking about teachers without students. Both situations are impossible. They are the two sides of the same process, the two halves of a whole. Leaders and followers form a sphere of influence around a common purpose.

This approach focused on the follower assigns him a more active role within leadership. Nonetheless, the preferences or attitudes of followers (by influence of their traits and emotional excitement) can, passively or actively, stop the leadership processes, according to some authors, such as Ehrhart and Klein (2001); Grant,

Gino, and Hofmann (2011); and Kark, Shamir & Chen, (2003).

THE ROLE OF FOLLOWERS IN EACH ONE OF THE LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Gil, Alcover, Rico, and Sánchez (2011) quote Weick in their article and mention that the new settings in which leaders intervene today are characterized for giving priority to continuous movement over distance and reflection; for transferring decisions to experts instead of people authorized to make them due to their positions; for greater improvisation and less routine; for updating and reasonableness being more important than prediction and precision; and for humility being more recommendable than arrogance. Now, followers in these new settings become agents of reflection where they expect leaders to give coherence and meaning to what they do. In this case, Weick (2000) explains that coherence is keeping in touch with the context and not giving generic or correct responses when making decisions.

Most of the leadership theories focus on the conduct of the leader or the structure of the tasks, the consideration and the support of the followers, and the inclusion of the followers in the decision-making process. Notwithstanding, the role of followers is conceived from the point of view of their susceptibility to certain behaviors or styles of the leader (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

The prevalent view of leadership frames followers as passive receptors of the characteristics of the leader, such as traits, skills, and behaviors, and is limited to examining the flow of influence from the leaders to followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hollander, 1980, 1992). Hence, below there is a description of the specific role of the follower within each one of the leadership theories.

Traits and behavioral theory

The role of the follower has been outlined joining these two theories, given that the follower as seen from these points of view exerts his influence from the perception that he has of the traits and the behavior of the leader. Within this theory, Howell and Shamir (2005) affirm that followers also have a more active role in the construction of the leadership relationship, the empowerment of the leader, and his behavior. These two authors focus particularly on the descriptions of followers with the idea of them following charismatic leaders, those who are attributed with the traits and behaviors of leaders.

These authors outline that the charismatic relationship in this theory is given directly by the follower. To be clear, the personal characteristics of charismatic leaders that contribute to the formation of a charismatic relationship include self-confidence, need for influence, moral conviction, and prosocial assertiveness assigned directly by the follower (Bass,

1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; House et al., 1991).

Howell and Shamir (2005) also suggest that depending on the concepts they have of themselves, followers may develop two types of relationships with their leader, according to their traits: personalized or socialized, which are based on the arguments of Howell (1988), House and Howell (1992), Kark and Shamir (2002), Shamir et al. (1993) and Weierter (1997). The personalized relationship that the authors mention is characterized by the attribution of desirable qualities to the leader, a definition of themselves in terms of the relationship with the leader, and the desire to become like him.

In the socialized relationship, followers have a clear sense of themselves and a clear set of values. The charismatic relationship gives them a means of expressing their most important values in the framework of collective action. Followers of this type derive their sense of direction from this guidance and expression, not from personal identification with the leader. The relationship with the followers has restrictions over the influence of the leader. In addition, they play an active role in determining the values expressed by the leader, they are less dependent on the leader, and are less susceptible to manipulation by him (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

Ehrhart and Klein (2001) maintain that a leader, who is evaluated in relation to

his traits and behavior, as is the case of the charismatic leader, communicates high performance expectations to his followers, shows confidence in achieving his goals, and takes calculated risks to break the status quo. So, the followers who are achievement-oriented, who have high self-esteem, and enjoy taking risks, have direct influence on this leader. According to the authors, the role of this follower in this theory is directly aligned to certain characteristics of the follower that link him to the leader.

Conger, Kanungo, Menon and Mathur (1997) refer specifically to charismatic leadership, where the role of the follower is given as an attribution based on perceptions of the conduct of the leader. The behavior observed in the leader is interpreted by the followers as expressions of his charisma in the same sense that the behavior of a leader reflects his orientations.

Contingency theory

This limited perspective regarding the passive role of the follower started to change radically as from the contingency theory (Oc & Bashshur, 2013). In many of these theories, the effects of the follower are explicitly modeled, like Fieder (1967) and Evans (1970) do. In Fiedler's contingency theory, the relationship between the leadership style and the effectiveness of the leader is based on the context, in particular the quality of the leader-follower relationships.

Fiedler (1967) includes the followers' loyalty, their support and cooperation with the leader as a determining factor of the situation of those oriented towards relationships or tasks.

Other contingency theories, like those of Hersey and Blanchard (1969), suggested that leaders should find a balance between the use of tasks and behaviors oriented towards relations in terms of trust and the joint abilities of their followers. An affirmation later sustained by Evans (1970), House (1971) and House and Mitchell (1974). In addition, these authors maintain that the characteristics of the follower are key factors in shaping the effectiveness of the leader, finding there the role of the follower. In the same way, Hersey and Blanchard (1977) refer to the follower in their level of maturity, ability and confidence as factors that influence the suitability of different styles of leadership.

Kerr & Jermier (1978) and Vroom & Yetton (1973) include various characteristics in the model of decision-making styles and leadership that include experience, capacity, training, and professional orientation as factors that may negate the need for a leader or contain their impact with diverse results.

Emerging theories

From the transactional and transformational leadership theories, where the former is characterized by the exchange

between leaders and their followers, and the latter consisting of engaging others and creating a connection which leads to a level of motivation and morality in both, the leader and the follower. In this sense, the influence of transformational leaders is generated from the personal acceptance of certain values by their followers, and they provide a guideline for decision-making and conduct, as followers who share the values of the leader do not depend on their orders (Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 1999, p. 345).

Burns (1978) affirms that the transformation of leadership is a process of mutual influence between the leader and their followers, but his analysis of this type of leadership, like that of Bass (1985), is mainly focused on the leader. This same author stated that transformational leadership proposes that the leader establishes the highest values, purpose, or means of self-realization, and that from that point the relationship between the leader and the follower joins those purposes and takes them to a higher level.

Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) put forward the idea that leadership according to this theory has been generally understood as a transactional or exchange process, defining the relationship between the leader and follower as a transaction of interests in which the leaders as well as the followers gain their respective benefits. In Burns' (1978) text there is a

strong criticism of this leader in virtue of his relationship with the follower, given that the leader puts his own needs before those of the followers and this turns him into an immature person. For this reason, under the criteria of this author, in this theory the role of the follower has more relevance than that of the leader, and it is the former who determines his own behavior. Bass (1985) also points out in different wording that the transformational leader inspires his followers to do more than it is expected of them.

Bass and Avolio (1994) point out that transformational leadership is considered to be an expansion of transactional leadership and arises with the purpose of enriching and improving the leader-follower relationship. The followers of transformational leaders are more conscious of their personal needs for growth, development, and realization, and also work for their personal benefit (Jones & George, 2010).

The followers of transformational leaders experience total belief and identification with the leaders and their mission. This is why, transformational leaders are seen as helpful and kind (Krishnan, 2004). Transformational leadership implies a smooth interaction between both actors, leader-follower, the former trying to motivate, influence, and increase the maturity of the followers for them to try to go beyond their own interests,

guiding them towards group thinking, organization and society.

CONCLUSIONS

In the development of this article it has been identified that the leader as well as the follower are important in the leadership process. Even when the leader is granted more importance, they need followers in order to do a good job. Additionally, it is possible that a person finds themselves committed to both situations or roles. However, the person may be a good follower without aspiring to the role of leader.

Moreover, both leaders and followers, need to understand and respect the business of being a follower. Leaders only need to expect the best from followers when the decision of being a follower is explicit and, at the same time, they shape this behavior when appropriate. Also, when forming good relationships between followers and leaders, the followers need to influence the leaders. If they cannot influence their leaders, they can transform a poor relationship into a great learning opportunity, as long as they learn what motivates the followers and commit to not making the same mistake again. To support a leader effectively, followers need to create support to execute that part of the mission to which they are committed. So, the leadership process needs and demands something from both of them, leaders as well as followers, as they are inseparable.

For many years, followers were assigned a passive role within the leadership process. Nevertheless, most of the research shows that the follower has an active role, which began to be discovered as of the convergent theory.

The traits and the behavioral theories take a position given by the perception of the followers in identifying their leader and their alignment with him. According to this theory, the leader only exists if he is perceived as such by the followers and if he possesses particular attributes and behaves in a way that is accepted by the followers.

The contingency theory, on the other hand, formulates a more active role for the follower than in the previous theory, given that as most authors put it, the leader acts according to his context and the demands of the follower. This leader is always in accordance with that which the situation provides in order to act appropriately. This theory applied to organizations maintains that the leader may improve the efficiency of the organization if its context and the followers give the opportunity for an adequate leadership style to be chosen.

The emerging theory presents a role for the follower under which they are in constant transaction, that is to say, the follower is always offering the leader what he wants and, under those circumstances, the leader can negotiate with his followers to guarantee the effectiveness in achieving the goal.

The revision of the literature carried out in this article opens a window to the view we can have of followers and the paradigm under which they are going to be evaluated to determine the influence the leader has. Nonetheless, the revision of the literature is limited to the theoretical case of the exercise of the follower. That is why it would be interesting to evaluate, later on, empirically and with the use of applicable questionnaires, the role of the follower and the leader under a certain context.

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