Leadership styles can increase the effectiveness of leader in different environments and situations. Leaders can be more effective if they can adapt leadership styles to situations and followers. Leaders must possess the ability to identify indications of different environment and situations to vary their behavior. This author has learned to an extent to do this. He is honest, forward-looking, inspiring, fair-minded, broad-minded, and straightforward. He displays sincerity and integrity in all his actions which are based on a set of goals and his vision of the future. He displays confidence and takes charge when necessary. He treats all people with sensitivity to their feelings, values, and interests. He values diversity. He uses sound judgment to make decisions at all times.

A Leadership Self-Assessment revealed that the student placed emphasis on behavior, ability, skill, and relationship. It also exposed that the student did not find traits as very relevant to leadership. Northouse (2008) exposes that, “Each of us approaches leadership with a unique set of beliefs and attitudes about the nature of people and the nature of work….These beliefs about people and work have a significant impact on an individual’s leadership style.”pg35

Being a Finance Major graduate and having a numbers approach to problem solving has distorted this author’s view of the importance of politics in Public Administration. After having read multiple articles on politics in public administration it is obvious of its importance in the role of public administrator. Politics play a vital role in the conduction of business in all public entities. The political skills of a Public Administrator must be utilized to make sure that the goals of the constituents are achieved. Per Gray (2011), to say that there is a political dimension to museums and galleries is to state the obvious, even if there can be unexpected forms of this political dynamic. As with all organizations – whether public, private, voluntary or community – there are power relationships embedded within not only what they do, but also within how they do it, the purposes that lie behind what they do, and the relationships between them and the wider public. These power relationships take multiple forms and lead to the creation of distinct strategies for the management and administration of the museums and galleries sector as well as having a clear territorial dynamic to them.

According to James L. Franke & Laurie M. Johnson Bagby (2001), specifically, in order to appreciate recent practical and theoretical changes in the field of public administration, this research will contrast the ancient to the modern view of "politics". Politics in the ancient sense describes a process by which citizens deliberate about, and arrive at, the common good. This ancient view embraced politics as an activity which most fully expressed and developed civic virtue in citizens. The modern perspective attempts to escape this ancient notion of politics by denying the desirability or even the possibility of citizens deliberating about the common good and thereby the development of political virtues. This author agrees with Franke and Bagby in that politics today are driven by self-satisfaction and it is not for the common good. Decisions are taken by Public Administrators to put themselves in a good position when it comes to personal advancement and not for the good of the whole.

To this author authority is the power to inspire or direct thoughts, views, or actions convened upon people and institutions by the will of the people. As Poliannikov, T. (2006) states, authoritarianism is understood as a rejection of liberal democracy, love of “strong authorities” and a “firm hand,” a hope for a charismatic leader, and the intent “to establish order and discipline in the country. Eagan (2007) states that “in contrast to authority, authoritarianism is the seizure of power in spite of the will of the people, and consolidating power in the hands of a few over and above the people. Authoritarianism tries to determine and impose the will of the people on them from without.”

Per Laurence E. Lynn, Jr. (2001), Public management is the subject of a rapidly growing literature that is international in scope and multifarious in content.The common sense of public management is relatively straightforward. Good public managers, whatever their particular positions or responsibilities, are men and women with the temperament and skills to organize, motivate, and direct the actions of others in and out of government toward the creation and achievement of goals that warrant the use of public authority. Few public laws and policies are self-executing, and, in their formulation, all might benefit from managerial insight and experience. Under virtually any political philosophy or regime, then, the achievement of good government requires the responsible and competent use of public authority by a government’s managers. Public management takes a private enterprise approach to the way the resources and decisions are handled. Public Managers are decisive, have a dynamic mindset, and are bias for action. Public Administrators tend to get hung up on rules and regulations which make their decisions lethargic.

The contingency approach bases its objectives on the realization of a group goal and/or the conservation of the group. Task behavior refers to the degree in which the leader is task oriented and directs the work of subordinates toward goal accomplishment. Relationship behavior is how attentive is the leader towards subordinates, their trust, and their ideas. Starling (2008) states, “using various combinations of the two kinds of behavior-task and relationship-Reddin developed four basic leadership styles: supporting or human relations style, coaching or participative style, delegating or laissez-faire style, and directing or autocratic style. Pg.355”

The Leadership Style Questionnaire revealed to the student that his leadership style resembles the assumptions of Theory Y. As Northouse states, “Democratic leaders treat subordinates as fully capable of doing work on their own. Rather than controlling subordinates, democratic leaders work with subordinates, trying hard to treat everyone fairly, without putting themselves above subordinates. In essence, they see themselves as guides rather than as directors”. Pg42 The student always saw himself as possessing a coaching style of leadership which falls along the lines of the democratic style of leadership.

Starling (2008) states, “for an organization to be successful in managing programs, administrators must lead and motivate their people.” pg. 350 Leadership is a process in which one person socially influences others to accomplish a common goal. There are different leadership styles that are effective in different situations. A particular leader’s style may fit specific circumstances and resources available.

This author understands that social position and expertise do not determine who gets into positions of authority. Authority is a subject of personality. A person can have the traits, in the absence of force and argument, which motivate and influence others for the better of the whole. This author agrees with Eagan’s (2007) statement that “the problem of authoritarianism is social and institutional, rather than a matter of personality.” This author concludes that authority and authoritarianism create a hierarchy regardless how the public administrator is conceived. This hierarchy creates the relationship of people who take the dominant role and those who are content to be subordinates. But the difference is that authority is given by the will of the people and Authoritarianism is imposed on the people.

This author started his management carrier as a Customer Service supervisor in the US Postal Service in 1997. He served as a first line supervisor for seven years. During the first few years, he was an ineffective leader. He overemphasized the tasks to be done and directed his subordinates toward goal attainment. He gave a lot of instructions, he constantly planned, and was very rigid with deadlines and work schedules. He was not very mindful of his subordinates and he did not care about the ideas or feeling of the employees. He was a directing style manager. He had great task orientation but lacked the relationship orientation. He attained many short term goals but did not find the commitment from the employees for the long term objectives.

Through formal training and on hands experience, he has learned to adapt to different environments. He has most importantly learned that a leader cannot get the most out the work force unless one is mindful of subordinates, respects their ideas and feelings, and establishes mutual trust. He has gained knowledge on how to adapt to the culture of the organization, the nature of the work performed, and to the needs and expectations of my superiors, subordinates and co-workers.

His professional goal is to progress to the Senior Executive Series within the Department of Homeland Security-Bureau of Customs and Border Protection. He intends to advance in the ranks until he becomes the Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection. When He started Public Service with the US Postal service fifteen years ago, he had no goal in mind. It was just a job. He rapidly became part of management. He became a supervisor and then an acting manager but he did not have any goal within the organization or the public sector. Since becoming a Customs and Border Protection Officer, he has set many goals within the organization and the public sector. He wants to facilitate the enforcement of the laws that protect our nation from terrorism, illegal activities, illegal entry of individuals, smuggling of prohibited goods, and any other immigration or customs law violation. He wants to build excellence within the organization. He will strive for Excellence within the bounds of doing what is right for his organization and our nation.

As a Supervisory Customs and Border Protection Officer, he considers himself to be a coaching style manager. He motivates his work force but sets very high standards. He treats everybody as individuals working towards a common goal. He tries to empower every employee and convey to them that they are a very important part of a team. He emphasizes that their goals are the long term safety of our nation and at the same time the facilitation of trade for long term economic benefit.

After taking the Leadership Perception questionnaire, the student realized that he had misjudged his philosophy of leadership. “Do you think people like work or do you think people find work unpleasant?” was address by Douglas McGregor in his famous book The Human Side of Enterprise (1960). The student was surprised to find the significance of behavior on his style of leadership. He thought of himself as a goal oriented leader with excellent relationship skills. To his surprise he is interested in the motivations of workers and their attitudes towards work. The student’s biggest weakness is not adapting the leadership style to the situation and person’s involved. Getting a better understanding of his philosophy of leadership and how it forms his style of leadership will definitely help the student to become a more proficient leader.

The skills that he feels that he can improve on are his written communication and that he may have at times being a compromiser and autocrat. He has sometimes being influenced by pressure from other officers and failed to have confidence in other officers. To improve in these areas, he has come back to school to improve his written communications. He is constantly investigating and learning more about immigration, customs, and agriculture laws to be able to make decision without the influence of others. Instead of not having confidence on other officers, he is trying to train or develop employees to perform their work.

The Masters in Public Administration will provide this author with the knowledge to develop in management, leadership and public service. He is experienced in working with the public and enforcing immigration and customs law. He lacks formal training in the Public Administration field. The MPA should help him with the management and systematic investigation of executive organizations. He should develop his role in the principles of public administration, public policy management and its implementation. He should develop substantially in the appropriate research methods, personnel management, and the relations between Customs and Border Protection and other public entities.

He will benefit the most if he expands his cognitive and affective domain areas. To improve in these areas, he is going to apply Bloom’s Taxonomy to the discussions, assignment questions, and any future learning in general. He is also going to try to understand and develop critical thinking. Per Scriven and Paul (1987),

critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

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