



UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN THE WAKE OF CHALLENGES: A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY MODEL

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ABSTRACT

In this article, researchers will introduce readers to the concept of leadership through perspectives of different schools of leadership thoughts. We intend to bring to notice an important discussion on leadership in military organisations and its implications on non-military organisations and institutions. There is a plethora of literature especially borrowing from military literature, which can set the stage for our understanding of what could make up for a robust leadership model comprising of competencies like- power of personal example and influence, adaptive resilience, making critical decisions amid uncertainty, regulated leadership behaviors and thoughts, preparedness, communicating with teams and building trust.

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1. Heading

Leadership is often considered as a cluster of behaviors and traits that consists of influencing people by providing purpose and direction and motivating their people to achieve desired goals (Northouse, 2015; Yukl, 2013). Since World War II, researchers have recognized that leaders exert protective value, such that teams with good morale and good leaders are less likely to suffer combat stress casualties (Howitt & Leonard, 2009). Good leaders are tagged with adjectives such as charismatic, confident, intelligent and strong (Chin, 2015; Lord et al., 1986). While leadership and its existence may be traced back to many centuries, what with great leaders leading armies into battles, crossing inhospitable terrain under inclement weather conditions and invading foreign lands which seemed most lucrative economic markets and now define the course of history (Bass, 1990). So what makes study of leadership construct and leadership traits, competencies more significant now, are the present day challenges and crises the human civilization is trapped in. The world at large is facing new, never-seen-before challenges each day (Boe et al., 2022; Rawat et al., 2020). Presumably so, mankind is put to test each day as goals are redefined in context of survival and thriving through testing times. Apparently, there is a new-found need to look up to people-leaders, with perhaps higher-order traits, cognitions, ability to create influence and impact which will enable smooth transition to the new world order as it emerges. The notion of effective leadership now evolves to be construed as resilient leadership.

2. Leadership through Different Lenses

General Baron Von Freytag-Loringhoven exclaims:

the real secret of leadership in battle is the domination of the mass by a single personality. Influence over subordinates is a matter of suggestion. Discipline acquired during peace and the power of personal example are both used to exact great sacrifices. (Office for the chief of information Department of the Army, 1911, p. 16)

When leading their men into harm's way, it is the personal character and credibility of the leader that is put to test and decides the fate and performance of the team. Leadership as understood in more general sense refers to the process of motivating people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things (Gill, 2021; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Leadership, as defined by Bush and Glover (2003) is a process of influence leading to an achievement of desired purposes. Thus leadership, involves inspiring and supporting a team towards goal achievement, bringing to our attention that leadership is a confluence of personal traits or characteristics of the leader as well as environmental or organizational context, that of a goal-driven team, or organization's or institution's purpose. Leadership as understood in the military is about influencing men by providing purpose, direction and motivation to accomplish mission objective (Wolters et al., 2014). This points to traits and character that leaders must possess in order to be looked upon as 'fit to lead' by their men. The 'Great Man' theory, which suggests that leaders are born and not made, did not stand the tests of times, understandably since it did not factor for environmental factors and overemphasis on the 'man' factor (Carlyle, 1841).

Chibber (1986) notes that when asked to describe an ideal senior officer, a batch of students at the military college pointed out that 'a higher commander must have an impressive personality, be clear and dynamic in attitude and must be immaculately dressed at all times, even under the most adverse conditions. He should be a showman and yet far more than that too', suggesting that men see some qualities to be quintessentially present in men (or women) who lead them. 'Trait theories' of leadership caught much attention in 1930s, which stated specific qualities or traits qualifying an individual to become a leader. Stogdill (1948) identified six trait clusters associated with leadership, namely, achievement, capacity, responsibility, participation, status and situation. The traits model theories also did not sufficiently factor for variables, thus were criticised for skewed trait-based explanation of leadership.

Psychoanalytical standpoint on leadership in 1940s, explored motivation to lead, followership, role of groups and organisations. Exchange-theories of 1960s followed in the quest to know if leaders

influence followers to adopt shared goals. These looked at how social exchanges between leaders and the group, including rewards, status and esteem may result in desired outcomes (Hencley, 1973; Hoy & Miskel, 2012). Empirical research in 1970s suggested that, situational factors and subordinates' characteristics influence leader's characteristics to be successful. For instance, House (1971) identified four important leader behaviors- directive, achievement-focussed, supportive and participative; and two situational variables, namely, personal characteristics of the subordinates and environmental demands as key to achieving goals.

It is interesting that until the beginning of the 20th century management was perceived intuitively, therefore a number of solutions used in the management of organizations were modeled on the achievements of the art of war. At the end of the seventies the theory and practice of management became an inspiration for the art of war (Kaczmarek et al., 2012, p. 15).

Late 1970s witnessed a great shift in the understanding of leadership with focus shifting from social to organizational psychology, where the distinction between manager and a leader became important (Andersen, 2012; Zaleznik, 2004). This led to looking at two broad types of leaders- transactional and transformational leaders with the latter being associated with strategic decision making and higher-order influence (Li et al., 2016). Transformational leadership, a term coined by James Downton (1973), refers to a leadership style in which leaders encourage, inspire and motivate employees to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape future of the organisation. Burns (1978) defined transformational leaders as those who seek to change existing thoughts, techniques and goals for better results and the greater good. This is done by setting example at the executive level through a strong sense of corporate culture, trust, employee ownership and independence in the workplace (Bass, 1996; Smirl, 2018). Leaders who follow this approach to leading their people look at challenges and chaos as opportunities to grow and reinvent ways and approaches to meet the ends (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2005; Riggio, 2009). Transformational leadership theory is a step closer to understanding the strategic nature and character of leaders.

Davies and Davies (2004) define strategic leadership in terms of a nine-point model which combines organizational abilities to include (a) direction setting, (b) translating strategy into action (c) aligning resources (human and institutional resources) to the strategy (d) determining interventions to achieve goals (e) developing capabilities to fend strategic plans, and individual characteristics of the leader- dissatisfaction with current state of things, prioritizing strategic thinking, creating mental models to converting strategy into actionable plans, and develop powerful and personal networks. Warn (2007), conceptualize strategic leadership as the capacity to conceive a new way of doing things that has significance at a wider level. According to Limerick and colleagues (2002), strategic leadership construct comprises of (a) ability to respond to a change process like a new world (b) ability to understand complex inter-relationships (like the ability of on-ground military leaders to think through uncertain battle conditions and availability and readiness of human resources) and change the status-quo (c) communicate or share vision, and (d) gather support, sustain and adapt.

2.1. Evolving Leadership Framework in Changing times

Human race, is at the helm of change and tectonic shift that has not been before. Even World War II, which by far was considered the most disastrous event of the century, has been overthrown by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has affected the entire world and even the rich economies and societies have been dwindling due to the attack by an enemy not even visible to the naked eyes. With the rapid and monstrous spread of the infection in no more than three to four months across the globe, most nations called for immediate measures like complete lockdowns and social distancing to curb the spread and safeguard its people. Dynamics of human societies and social interactions have changed dramatically in the recent times. Andrew Cuomo, who is compared to a wartime president described the virus' curve as the "the battle at the top of the mountain" (Campbell & Spector, 2020).

This period of great upheaval, can be viewed as a period of great learning. It is a perfect example of a term, first defined in 1990s- VUCA, an acronym which means volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (Stiehm & Townsend, 2002). Herbert Barber's article in the Journal of Management Development titled "Developing strategic leadership: The US Army War College Experience" in which he describes leadership at the top of complex organisations and specifically speaks of complex (uncertain, changing) context or environment in which strategic leadership must operate (Barber, 1992). Covid-19 pandemic amplifies VUCA as the pandemic has been ever changing in diagnosis, rate

of spread, hence volatile; uncertain because of lack of specific information, in that the next outbreak is uncertain, complex because of the global spread, there are so many interconnected factors that it is difficult to fully analyse the widespread impact of the virus and its effect on various sections of society and ambiguous as it is unprecedented (Koshemani, 2020).

There comes a time, perhaps seldom, when leaders have the responsibility to go beyond the leadership behavior checklists and exemplify what coming out of crisis means and lead themselves and people who follow. It is believed that the way leadership cadre guides and drives the organization through the tide decides how strong the organization comes out of it (Silverman, 2020). The nature of the crisis adds daunting pressure on leaders and people in leadership roles to ensure that people they lead, have the necessary will and skills to thrive, develop an understanding of new world order themselves, show grit, test new waters and show determination to come out with as less damage as possible (McLaughlin & Levenson, 2020).

Understanding the new reality stands as the foremost challenge to the leadership cadre. Meaning making comes under scrutiny in adverse events in which people must adjust their initial appraisal of the situation to match their true experiences (Rawat et al., 2020). Making meaning of the situation which requires assigning purpose and significance to the goals, experiences and existence has witnessed major shift in the pandemic, this in turn means that at the outset, leaders have to go back to the drawing board and rechart the strategy and plan to rebound —to build resilience capacity and a resilient workforce. In military parlance, leaders facilitate meaning-making by being the kind of leaders others are willing to follow into dangerous contexts, provide an answer for the question “why is this worth doing?” and develop a workable strategy to communicate and implement a meaning based culture.

In the unpredictable, atypical and volatile context, a strategic leader is expected to take on a unique mission and charter immediate actions that display prudence and responsibility —to limit the direct effects of the crisis, overcoming the crisis and managing post-crisis period. At an individual level, a leader has to make delicate decisions regarding prioritizing ethics or moral principles, religious dogmas, human rights and more (Dotlich et al., 2009). A decision to restrict a religious community from practicing their fundamental right to worship, because a leader must impose national lockdown, a leader’s conviction and determination are out to test. At a macro level, a leader’s strategy should account for analysis of national, regional and international connections which can be accessed to provide assistance to cooperate and prevent crisis spillover (Barton, 2008; Rawat, 2017).

2.2. Competencies of Leading and Influence

What makes leaders successful? While there’s no definite answer to the question, researchers attempt to find solutions by defining success in terms of competencies or skills which correlate positively with mission success or desired goals. Competencies are defined as measurable patterns of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that needed to perform a task successfully (Rodriguez et al., 2002). Campion and colleagues (2011) define competencies as combinations of knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform a given role. Thus, in context of leadership, we will look at competencies which result in higher probability of success. Success in this case needs to be understood as the desired goals or objective, as end results of behaviors, which could be anything from garnering trust from the team, to team progressing effectively toward new reality or the end goal of mission attaining desired monetary objectives. For instance, during operations, leadership competencies will be put to test beyond the chain of command, a foot-soldier could be the last of standing men and their action could determine the success of the mission. In challenging times, like the pandemic, for instance how women are able to successfully juggle between multiple roles through planning and organization will speak volumes of leadership traits in them. In this section, we will identify competencies which are found to positively affect results and outcomes, with data and anecdotes from military and non-military contexts. The list of competencies, we ascertain, will be a solid scaffold (or ready reckoner) for future models of leader competencies in the present and future challenging times.

Power of Personal Example: For a leader, s/he must be seen as being in the center of things, not sitting out. A leader is expected to be a good teacher, living and exhibiting values, behaviors and character that they expect their teams to follow-in as well as which are imperative for mission success. The idea is that leaders provide for critical role model behaviors which they want to see in their teams

and or behaviors which result lead to success. General Colin Powell of the US Army states “the most important thing I learned is that soldiers watch what their leaders do. You can give them classes and lecture them forever, but it is your personal example they will follow” (The Military Leader, 2020, p. 1). A leader is expected to lead the team, by exhibiting themselves what they would expect of their people and a leader should not hesitate to set an example (Gabilot, 2020; Rawat, 2017). A commanding officer, who shows no personal commitment to gun down an enemy or call out any misconduct in the functioning of the regiment, will not be looked up to by their team as a role model and may not be in a position of direct the actions of their teams. Leaders who set example of integrity and courage are likely to build highly functional and successful teams (Bang et al., 2015, 2021; Boe et al., 2017). In a study involving 67 work groups in Israel, Yaffe and Kark (2011), found that leader’s role model behavior positively affected employees’ organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). Employees who perceived their leaders to walk the talk were likely to engage in helping their coworkers and go beyond tasks in their job description. Organizational climate and organizational support is of great importance for OCB in the Army (Piotrowski et al., 2020).

Leaders, while are expected to be in the center of things, it should be understood with caution, that leader’s self-destructive behaviors could be picked up by the teams they lead (Schmid et al., 2019; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). During pandemic, leaders who knowingly or unintentionally sideline self-care may push their teams to brinks of exhaustion. Thus, leaders must be careful of the influence they exert on their teams or organizations they lead, especially in times of stressful events. One suggestion for leaders could be to adapt to a modified level of business operations, rather than going all in, which maximizes business goals without fostering burnout (VanSlyke et al., 2020).

Influence: In today’s real world, influence becomes an important discussion point in the context of how leaders inspire their people to look beyond the challenges faced and safeguard strategy and achieve desired goals. Leadership influence thus is defined as the ability to move others into actions toward the goals set (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2010). Some researchers would see influence and leadership as being synonyms of each other; leadership cannot exist minus influence. Influence refers to the power of an individual or groups of individuals to bring about a change in another individual’s thoughts, affect or actions (APA, 2020). This could be moderated by qualities of expertise, authority, charisma etc. Some early research views have defined leadership as direct or indirect influence on others by means of formal authority or personal attributes to act in accordance with one’s intent or a shared purpose (Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005). This definition in the military context could imply military leaders in accordance with the organization’s code of conduct, military ethos and mission demands, would extend influence and motivate their teams to function to achieve mission success. Influence, when viewed through a value-neutral perspective does not necessarily suggest good or bad influence. We have examples of both good influence- when leaders influence their teams in adapting good habits or refraining from disruptive behaviors and emotions, as well as examples of bad influence —when over nine hundred followers led by cult-leader Jim Jones died of cyanide poisoning (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015; Dittman, 2003; Tajasom et al., 2015; van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013).

In a recent edition of the Harvard Business Review, researchers Laker and Patel (2020) talk of two types of leadership influence- transactional influence and transformational which relate to the types of leadership. Transactional influence, by the very nature is likely to be more common in top-down and hierarchical organizations and focuses on leaders moving their teams to complete tasks. This kind of influence is likely to be direct and to the point. This kind of influence will likely work when complimented with rewards, contingent reinforcement or rules of discipline for the teams. Transformational influence, owing to transformational leadership style, is likely to be rooted in empathy, where a leader’s objective is to motivate and inspire their teams. Transformational leaders motivate their followers to do more than they think they can. This kind of influence is typical of higher expectations and likely to result in higher performance (Bass, 1998; Khan et al., 2020; Towler, 2019). Researchers further state that in order to exercise influence, a leader must lead by example, exhibit active listening and also be perceived as authentic and committed to their team’s success.

Transformational influence could be a key to problem-management strategy in the pandemic where a leader inspires their teams to think out-of-box, actively listen to their problems, a focus away from just tasks will also instill a sense of confidence and independence in teams to function even in most dynamic environments.

Adaptive resilience: It is generally believed that in challenging times, successful leaders and organizations and teams are able to adapt and sustain the change (Rawat et al., 2022). Transformational leadership models focus on an important competency of resilience in both leader's success and organization's ability to sustain the challenging time (Folan, 2019; Wasden, 2014). Resilience has been conceptualized as the ability to withstand and recover from extreme events and or difficult experiences (Richardson, 2002; Walsh, 2003). Resilience is a hot topic of study to understand how individuals persist in the face of exigencies or reintegration from disruptions that one faces (Richardson, 2002; Villagran et al., 2013). Adaptive capacity of leaders in the wake of challenges almost seems like a magical ability to transcend even highly fluid conditions, as in case of the pandemic —transcending the new normal (which is highly unpredictable and dynamic).

Most researchers treat resilience as a relatively permanent disposition that determines the process of flexible adaptation to the constantly changing life requirements (Block & Kremen, 1996).

A more relevant competency, an extension to resilience is that of adaptive resilience; it refers to ability to recover from an adversity, adapt and thrive (Southwick et al., 2014). The emphasis is on the ability to thrive or grow. Researchers Walker and Nilakant (2014), have studied factors that helped lifeline organizations to operate more effectively even during crisis, like the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010-11. They found that some organizations did not just adapted but also discovered new opportunities of growth through the period of calamity, became more confident and emerged better at change management. Walker and Nilakant (2014) discovered that adaptive resilience was the key to success. In this case adaptive resilience organizations were quick to adapt, whole organization being coordinated on the plan of change and being agile. This type of resilience is dynamic and an individual's response mechanisms are based on evaluation of the situation, and quick to change if the situation changes. Factors that broadly determine adaptive resilience in organizational context would be - type of leadership (that is to say for example transactional leadership or rigid leader behaviors may not be conducive to adaptive resilience), level of collaboration within the organization, how employees are valued.

Related to adaptive resilience is the concept of post-traumatic growth (PTG). Simply understood, post-traumatic growth is the positive psychological, social and spiritual growth after trauma. Post-traumatic growth mindset implies growth in the areas of personal situation or approach, altered priorities, improved relationships and finding meaning in life, or finding new meaning in life after a severe trauma-inducing event or events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Zoellner et al., 2008). As the saying goes, from good can come great suffering. Seminal work by Tedeschi and colleagues (2004) in the area of post-traumatic growth suggests that individual characteristics, social support, opportunities for disclosure coupled with restructuring of cognitive mechanisms can result in perception and evaluation of trauma or extreme situations as growth opportunities. There is empirical evidence which suggests that post-traumatic growth mindset is enhanced by social support (Cao et al., 2018; Prati & Pietrantonio, 2009; Zhou et al., 2016). This finding could be particularly important given the magnitude of COVID-19 pandemic and how global communities can support each other in rebuilding of societies, businesses and nations.

In a study by Wood and colleagues (2020) on PTSD, PTG and depression cases among soldiers, they found that PTSD and PTG correlated inversely and so did PTG scores and depression. In addition to this results also supported that post-traumatic growth had positive relationship with perceived organizational support and perceived unit cohesion. They found evidence that domain-specific leadership moderated the relationship between exposure to combat conditions and probability of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another study also revealed that soldiers who perceived leadership to be more transformational in nature and along with belief that they can stride successfully out of combat situation, showed fewer signs of post-traumatic stress disorder and depressive symptoms (LaRocca et al., 2018). Perception of transformational leadership behaviors and post-traumatic growth attitudes were mediated by belief in oneself or self-efficacy coping. Mamon et al. (2016) studied war veterans for 17 years. They analyzed a relationship between posttraumatic obsessive-compulsive (OC) symptoms and PTG. OC symptoms predicted PTG even when initial PTG levels and PTSD symptoms were controlled in the struggling group. These preliminary findings suggest that the symptoms of OC may play an important role in facilitating mental development. Gallaway et al. (2011) noted a significant inverse relationship between PTG and recent suicidal thoughts, and soldiers reporting recent suicidal thoughts reported significantly lower overall PTG. In conclusion, it could be deduced

that training leaders, organizations, communities across the globe on developing a growth mindset especially as they focus on post-traumatic reorganization. Plentiful evidence from soldiers of war, returning from Vietnam war or Afghanistan war suggest that post-traumatic growth has a positive relationship with resilience and negative relationship with cases of depression (Feder et al., 2008; Forstmeier et al., 2009; Iversen et al., 2011). It is worth noting that the term PTSD was introduced in connection with numerous clinical observations and research results based mainly on veterans of the Vietnam War (Kulka et al., 1991).

Making Critical Decisions amid Uncertainty: Decision-making is a skill put to use every day. However, extreme events like the pandemic require leaders to roll up their sleeves and make critical decisions under fog of uncertainty and complexity which may have far reaching consequences. Leaders are expected to make decision as well as be flexible and adapt to the changing demands of the situation. While making decisions may not mean that challenges are washed off, it is mainly a process of employing methods to increase the odds of succeeding when leading in an uncertain terrain. Thus, decision making under uncertainty implies choosing between two or more courses of action when the outcomes of both the actions are as uncertain as the options, perhaps owing to the complexity of the circumstances (Bartsch et al., 2020). Examining how decisions are made in military operations, police drills, or by firefighters, can give us some insight into how leaders in government, organizations and communities may be required to respond in stressful situations, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Another element of complexity added to decision-making is to carry on through one's intuitions despite the uncertainty as well as being flexible and use different modes of thinking (Zucchini, 2004). Simon (1996) called this as operating in "bounded rationality", that is while leaders are expected to make decisions most rationally, they are limited in their capacity to acquire and process information resulting from the situation, and have to act in spite of limitations.

A good leader understands that delays in decision or no decision could be most detrimental to the team's mission (Brodie, 2019). In military operations, it is assumed that a wrong decision will bring less damage than no decision. Field Marshall Sam Maneckshaw of the Indian Army, often referred to as the 'the victor of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War', when asked about key competencies of a good leader, said that during a crisis even a not so good decision that promotes actions is better than doing nothing. The pandemic has brought to the fore, how important it is for leaders to take timely decisions, a delay of even one day could result in the risk of infection multiplying by two folds. In such situations where leaders in government, politics and communities at risk, it could mean that their actions and decisions are conducive to managing the spread of the infection as well have positive impact on the plans for the future. There's no denying that researchers in pure and social sciences have not faced an event like the pandemic, but their work so far in the domain of leading in crisis could prove beneficial to leaders. For instance, the intuitive-decision making (which explains decision making beyond 'gut' feeling), explains a process of intuiting which leads to intuitive judgement- subconscious, holistic, experiential inductive and innate way of personally knowing the right choice from the wrong one (Dane & Pratt, 2007). Research in fact supports the intuitive decision-making model, in times of crisis, with a caveat that intuitive leaders often are not fully able to explain how they reached the decision, but know that they were right about it (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Williams, 2012). One of the critics of the intuitive-model could be that it could suffer from heuristic and biases in decision-making. But given the limited resources and timelines that are inherent to crisis, leaders may be required to supplement their intuitions with act-sense-respond decision pattern (Snowden, 2002; Snowden & Boone, 2007). Intuition may not necessarily be a trait in all of leader categories. Leaders who may be at the privilege of being the 'intuitive' ones, may need to extend a conscious evaluation of a multitude of factors like the resources available and required, nature of operational environment or context, and forces or events that work against the plan, and possible contingency plans, while making decisions and lowering the risks of failures.

Regulated Leadership Behaviors: In times of crisis, leaders are not always at liberty to behave and respond as they please. Since those affected by the crisis are likely to look up to them for role-model behaviors, leaders are expected to have measured and appropriate behavioral and emotional response for others to follow-in. Davis-Laack (2014), in fact, regard self-regulation as the building block on which resilience can be built. Self-regulation simply consists of self-control, self-discipline and willpower, is the ability to control or redirect one's disruptive emotions, behaviors and impulses to adapt to changing circumstances (Baumeister, 2014; Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Goleman & Boyatzis,

2017; Rawat, 2021). The trait self-control is important for well-being and mental and physical health and essential for military leaders (Nilsen et al., 2020). Emotion regulation refers to mental fortitude or regulation that provides the individual with mental hardiness and self-regulation to cope and manage adversity and produce positive outcomes (Avey et al., 2009; Luthans et al., 2005; Rawat, 2021). Further when we look at regulation of behaviors, researchers like McClelland and colleagues (2014) define it as a deliberate multi component process involving selective attention, cognitive flexibility, regulation of cognitions or thoughts and inhibitory control in order to manage the behavioral response of the individual in an event. In high-tension operational environments, troops look up to the behavioral and emotional reactions of their leader, how a leader reacts to complexity of the environment. Combat zones leave leaders with little scope to redo or correct an action or emotion, however, the same could have far reaching or disastrous consequence not just for the leader but also for the troops they lead. Goleman et al. (2002) suggest that in a complex situation even if a team gets just about everything right, if the leader falls short of driving emotions in the right direction, nothing they do thereafter would work, simply put the desired outcomes may not be achieved. Leigh (2012) further goes to suggest that it a leader's responsibility to maintain a positive emotional command in the team.

Leaders must acknowledge empirical research suggesting that how emotions are used and expressed, affect how resilient the teams would be in wake of crisis (Rawat, 2021; Stephens, 2014; Stephens et al., 2013). For instance, Frederickson and colleagues (2003), in studies on resilience after the disaster of September 11, 2001, found that people who were able to evaluate and use positive interpretations of emotions were less likely to be depressed than those who are little to no control over their emotions. Schall and Schütz (2019) examined 492 soldiers of the German army. The results showed that soldiers with greater knowledge of emotional regulation reported lower levels of perceived stress, which was partly due to a greater tendency to use more effective emotion regulation strategies, e.g. reassessment instead of suppression. Using a sample of active-duty military personnel, McLarnon et al. (2021) hypothesized and found support for that self-regulation (comprising distinct affective, behavioral, and cognitive processes) increments prediction of soldiers' outcomes over and above trait-based resiliency protective factors.

Building Trust and Communicating with Teams: There are plentiful anecdotes in history which point to the relationship between leader-team trust and achievement of unattainable feat. A study of Iraqi soldiers, found that trust was necessary and essential for a leader to exercise influence in combat, for soldiers who trusted their leaders were likely to be more ready to follow orders and were more motivated than soldiers who felt less trusted (Sweeney et al., 2009). Team members who trust their leader and who feel trusted themselves are likely to experience greater sense of security than members who do not. A mark of true impactful leadership thus is attributed to team member's ability to trust their leader and not mere compliance to standard procedures of operations. Thus, trust is the cornerstone of leadership across all kinds of organizations and contexts (Bligh, 2017; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Lewis, 2021; Rawat, 2021). A leader must spend time and resources to build trust in the team, allowing team members to collaborate, facilitate group cohesion, lessen dependence on the leader, and facilitate commitment to the goal and objectives of the team (Golembiewski & Mcconkie, 1975; Lewis, 2021). Winston Churchill, when for a moment thought that Britain was about to lose in the war, what he said to his people was "we will not surrender", which changed the course of outcome. His words boost the morale of the Britons and they actually believed their leader to change the course of war outcome (McChrystal et al., 2015). Through trust, a good leader is able to energize the teams, develop positive relations in the team, and make strides in their pursuit to achieving desired goals (Miranda, 2021; Sweeney, 2010). While major world economies are dwindling in the aftermath of the pandemic, leaders need to project and build trust in their people, show them the way to manage the crisis, get teams of economists, entrepreneurs, social scientists to work together and rebuild the foundation of societies as they were before the pandemic. Shepherd and Williams (2014) found in their studies that disaster or crisis leadership, if focused on building trust and relied on network relationships, had a higher chance of mobilizing a community and gaining confidence of the victims affected due to a disastrous bushfire, the response being quicker. The researchers concluded that trust facilitated resilience in the community.

To develop a positive relationship with the team and ensure that the teams works together to achieve the goals set out, leaders need to communicate effectively with the teams as well as allow for

the teams to communicate back their expectations and their understanding of the tasks and plans (Rawat, 2021). Clarifying expectations reduce potential conflicts and sets the stage for collaboration. It is believed that the difference between management and leadership roles is 'communication'. In order to create an environment of transparency, a leader must be willing to share information, in military parlance having a 'common operating picture' a singular picture of all relevant information for the mission (Kuusisto et al., 2005). This piece of information when shared with the team and all relevant stakeholders creates situational awareness and aids collaborative planning (Chewning et al., 2020; Lewinska, 2016) The best in class leaders take personal responsibility to gather all the information and communicate effectively what the team / company needs to know (Lewinska, 2016). Open communication facilitates building of trust in the teams, fosters group cohesion and also provides opportunity to impact the outcomes both by the leader and the team (Chen et al., 2005; Holth & Boe, 2017; Rico & Cohen, 2005).

The power of communication can also be found in the relationship between leader communication and employee anxiety, especially in challenging times (Argenti, 2020; Stern, 2013). Crisis management calls for leader communication which is transparent, factoring empathy and most of all, is authentic (Boe & Holth, 2015a, 2015c, 2015b). In order for any change management programs to work, it is essential that leaders in the organization must convey how important the change is and must reflect their personal and visible commitment towards the entire process of change.

Preparedness: Gauging the uncertain nature of crisis, leading to multitude of crises, a leader's preparedness must include ability to prioritize problems to be resolved at the outset, making resources-human and otherwise available for use, avoid redundancies and plan contingencies, should plans fail (Brown & Eriksson, 2009; Stern, 2013). Boin and colleagues (2005) provides us with an insight into what can go into crisis preparedness —organizing and selection of plans and resources, planning, educating and training resources and cultivating vigilance and protecting preparedness. Further, Stern (2013) asserts that in challenging situations, it is a responsibility of a leader to ensure that learning from past experience is readily available and the aim is to end the crisis. Further, leader preparedness has to be complimented with them communicating the same to their team members who are also experiencing the challenging event themselves and may be anxious due to perceived lack of preparedness on the part of the leader (Kielkowski, 2013; Morrison & Oladujoye, 2013). According to Morrison and Oladujoye (2013), leader's preparedness to adopt newer ways of functioning, continuously engaging teams in the process of change management and building new relationships would likely have a positive impact on the team's ability to thrive in the challenging times. A leader must be creative and open-minded because seldom during a crisis or combat situation, does a plan work fully as thought in the strategy room; there is a need for new and innovative solutions (Johnson, 2018). History of military organizations will point to the fact that military leaders are obsessive, for lack of better words, about planning and preparedness. During the Cold War, governments and armies had prepared should a nuclear war fall out, only such that their people and most important assets are protected (Martin, 1982).

National, organizational, and community leaders must be prepared for what may seem to be the consequences of the pandemic. They need to rethink their strategies with more inter-dependent and independent impact matrix. They must exhibit the ability to think innovatively and turn the crisis into a growth trajectory by safeguarding critical operations and force preservation and prepare for realistic evaluation of socio-economic impact that maybe a result if a similar situation arises in the future. It is important to note that the competencies listed above are well researched and backed by empirical data. That having said, just like we affirm that leadership construct is contextual and relative, the list of competencies is likely to be revised when used in different contexts and times and will continuously evolve.

3. Conclusion

Most major disastrous events, whether man-made (war, bio-terrorism, global warming) or natural calamities (earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, hailstorms), are likely to result in risk factors as stress disorders, depression, anxiety, experience of loss of loved ones, personal and professional lives being, and loss of social support (Brewin et al., 2000; Brooks et al., 2015; Neria et al., 2008; Tol & van Ommeren, 2012; Tracy et al., 2011). These results are likely to have far-reaching effects with global economies, societies and foundations of communities crumbling and it becomes most imperative a

priority of decision-makers, leaders, political, national, organisational, and community leaders to talk and walk the approach to rebuilding and reconstructing systems, processes and mental mindset which are futuristic and resilient.

This is a window of opportunity for leaders to influence and engage behaviors, and initiate people's movement back to new normalcy by actively listening to their issues, help their teams reframe challenges as opportunities and create formal structures which encourage new adaptive, resilient behaviors and skills. Researchers of this article believe that a leader's role in reconstruction is vital and leadership competencies of influence, power of example, adaptive resilience, preparedness, communicative power, leader's self-regulation and critical decision under uncertainty could hold answers to remodeling of leadership-competencies framework, most suited for the dynamic, evolving, complex and transformational tides of times to come.

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