



# Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Gendered Perspective

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## Abstract

The study sought to explore leadership, leadership effectiveness, personality, and leadership behaviour from the vantage point of a female leader in a public hospital in Jamaica. The study examines leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century from/based on a gendered perspective. The study employed a qualitative epistemological approach and utilised a descriptive contingency theory by way of a case study. From the perspective of the interviewed person, some issues of importance emerged, and these are as follows: I have to now employ various leadership strategies depending on the situation or problem I have to deal with. Hence, it has, over time, helped me to become an even better leader. There are some similarities in my leadership style and who I believe is an ideal leader. However, I will need to think deeply about this one. Managing resources and people has been challenging, and working with people is the hardest. I have faced situations where people expressed that I should not have gotten the position because other senior staff were at the institution before me.

However, I have had good experiences because I allow people to feel comfortable to come to me with whatever problem they have, and I also try to be fair in my decision-making. Before being selected for the Director's position, I struggled with some senior managers because they felt I was after their job. I qualified for the director position, and they felt threatened. However, as a senior manager, the staff thought I would be extremely hard on them because I strongly believed in discipline and order. What makes the difference is my leadership style. I do not lead with emotion; I am a rational leader, if there is any such leadership style. This unique leadership style, devoid of emotion, is a fascinating aspect of the study. Although rich insights were gleaned from the findings, no generalisations can be made simply because of the subjective data collection method. On this premise, the work interprets the results within the context of descriptive contingency theory, which provides scientific facts from a subjective position.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Leader Effectiveness, Personality Trait.

## Introduction

The discipline of economics forwarded that there are four (4) factors of production. These factors are 1) land, 2) labour, 3) capital, and 4) entrepreneur. The entrepreneur is the owner of the other aspects of production, and they are the individual who organises, directs, controls, manages, forecasts, and coordinates the factors in anticipation of meeting a need of a customer, such as clothing, equipment, and buildings. Initially, the entrepreneur was seen as the manager and **NOT** the leader, but in fact, they were the leader of the organisation (or business). Since the entrepreneur is the person who manages the entire business process, specialisation and division of labour have resulted in additional leaders in an organisation as the entrepreneur takes a backside to trained leaders (Stone & Patterson, 2005). Therefore, entrepreneurs, in many instances, are the leaders who specialise in building a production process, referred to as entrepreneurial leadership (Butler, 2017; Hussain&Li, 2022; Nidhan& Singh, 2020; Wei-skillern, 2006). These dynamic leaders must be brought into the leadership discourse to understand the successful Organisation.

Entrepreneurial leadership, in other words, refers to business owners and managers who are willing to take chances, exploit opportunities, seek creativity, and be creative, producing, exchanging, and strategic (Nidhan & Singh, 2020, p.328)

Put, division of labour and specialisation of tasks means that the entrepreneur employs paid leaders to function in his/her absence in the production process as he/she is now called the shareholder. Therefore, the division of labour and specialisation have created new leaders such as the chairman of the board, chief executive officer (CEO), senior managers, junior managers, and other leaders such as community leaders, politicians, et cetera. Stone and Patterson (2005) used a diagram to indicate that a leader is a person who is responsible for 'brokerage' with the customers, shareholders, vendors, local community, and employees (see Figure 1 below), which suggests that he/she is divorced from the entrepreneur or owner and easily could be considered to be the manager.

Stone and Patterson (2005) opined that "Leadership, and the study of it, has roots at the beginning of civilisation, Egyptian rulers, Greek heroes, and biblical patriarchs all have one thing in common leadership" (p. 1); yet, initially, this phenomenon was twinned with management and study from that vantage point (Bass, 1990; Hersey et al., 1996; Morgan, 1997). Stone and Patterson (2005) postulated that "Weber's concerns about bureaucracy, however, did not affect theorists who set the stage for what is now known as 'classical management theory' and 'scientific management'" (p. 2). Those predate the study of leadership—the early 1900s (see Terry, 2017). This paper is not concerned with the refinement and the correctness of a leader or a manager, so it uses both concepts interchangeably. However, leadership experts have said that these are different phenomena. In Jamaica, there are public, private, and quasi-organisations with various leaders responsible for organising the land, labour, and capital for the owners of the resources. One such organisation is the Ministry of Health, owned by the nation's people and governed by the Minister of Health, Permanent Secretary, health boards, directors, et cetera. The current paper is ascertaining information from a Director of the National Chest Hospital, St. Andrew, Jamaica. The Director is responsible for managing, coordinating, directing, forecasting, controlling, and

organising the land, labour and capital of the National Chest Hospital. Hence, an interview with the Director will provide critical insights into some leadership issues and contrast these with established leadership principles and theories. A qualitative research methodology, phenomenology, was used to answer the following research questions:

1. Is leadership recognisable at an earlier stage before engagement in the leadership role?
2. What is effective leadership?
3. How is communication a tool for effective leadership?
4. How do followership (or subordinates) impact leadership effectiveness?
5. How can training in management or leadership aid in the leadership process or effectiveness?  
and
6. How can personality traits enhance or otherwise enhance leadership?

## Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework, therefore, holds the keys, assumptions, and perspectives and guides the approaches that are in and so frame the methodology. Lloyd Waller aptly summarised the value of the theoretical framework when he postulated that:

A theoretical framework is a self-conscious set of (a) fundamental principles or axioms (ethical, political, philosophical) and (b) a set of rules for combining and applying them (e.g. induction, deduction, contradiction, and extrapolation). A theoretical framework defines the objects of a discourse, the permissible ways of thinking about those objects, and so determines the kinds of knowledge about the objects that can be produced legitimately within the framework” (Cubitt, S, personal communication, October 6, 2005, in Waller, 2006, 25)

The theorising above offers invaluable insights into the rationale for using a theoretical framework in research, albeit political, public management, social, economic, or otherwise, including leadership. Therefore, a theoretical framework sets the parameters for viewing, obtaining, collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data. Hence, this paper used a *descriptive contingency theory* to examine leadership at a particular hospital in Jamaica. Yukl (2006) contended that “A descriptive contingency theory may explain how leader behaviour typically varies from one situation to another...” (p. 19) and provide a basis for understanding a specified issue that cannot be generalised. This study provides pertinent information on leadership, leadership effectiveness, change, personality, and leadership behaviour from the vantage point of a leader in the healthcare sector, and as such, this should not be considered outside of the context, time, situation, and interview.

Nevertheless, the information obtained from the interview is not intended to be generalisable; it is intended to merely understand how the participant in this study carries out issues in leadership. This justifies employing a qualitative epistemology and using subjectivity in data collection and interviewing methods. In addition to using a descriptive contingency theory, the paper is grounded in two other leadership theories: management and situational. The former examines issues from the perspective of the role of supervision, organisation and group performance, which makes for leadership from the vantage point of a system of reward and punishment. The latter theory, however, looks at leadership from the situation perspective. Leaders operate based

on the situation, so their actions or inactions are based on this. As such, leadership is not based on generalizability but more on the situation in which the leader is exposed and how decisions are made due to this fact.

## Key terminologies

**Leadership:** DuBrin (2013) defined leadership "... as the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organisation goals," indicating that leadership is qualitative (p. 2). Winston and Patterson (2006), instead of defining leadership, speak of a leader as one who inspires, trains, and influences followers into action in pursuit of the organisation's objectives (see also, John Hopkins School of Education, 2016), positing that leadership is intertwined with followership and that the definition changes with the scholar. On the other hand, Andrews University (2016), instead of looking at the broad concept of leadership, narrowed it to Christian leadership and opined that "... [It] is a dynamic relational process in which people, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, partner to achieve a common goal - it is serving others by leading and leading others by serving", which is in keeping with the interrelation of leadership and followership in a definition of leadership. However, for this paper, Yukl's definition of leadership will be used therein, which is "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2006, p. 8).

**Manager:** Yukl opined that "...the term leader, manager, and boss are used interchangeably in this book to indicate people who occupy positions in which they are expected to perform the leadership role, but without any assumptions about their actual behaviour or success" (Yukl, 2006, pp. 8, 9), which is the same sentiment for this paper.

**Follower:** "[The] person who acknowledges the focal leader as the primary source of guidance about work, regardless of how much formal authority the leader has over the person," Yukl said (Yukl, 2006, p. 9). Yukl's definition of a follower will be used in this paper.

**Subordinate:** Yukl postulated that a subordinate is "Someone whose primary work activities are directed and evaluated by the focal leader" (Yukl, 2006, p. 9), aptly fitting this paper's perspective. As such, there is no difference between a subordinate and a follower in this paper.

**Leader effectiveness:** Yukl's perspective aptly fits this paper's viewpoint on "...the extent to which the leader's organisational unit performs its task successfully and attains its goals" (Yukl, 2006, p. 10).

**Power:** Power is the ability to influence others (Yukl, 2006; Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992).

**Personality trait:** Personality traits refer to the personal attitudes or characteristics hidden or displayed by an individual (Yukl, 2013; DuBrin, 2013). These include humility, trustworthiness, authenticity, assertiveness, a sense of humour, self-confidence, extraversion, enthusiasm, optimism, and warmth.

## Methodology

The philosophical assumption of this work is social constructionism, which explains the use of interpretivism (theoretical perspective), phenomenology (methodology) and document analysis, theme identification, narrative, interview (i.e., elite), and case study methods (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 2005). For this paper, social constructionism via case study methodology was used as the philosophical assumption, and this is seen as a non-scientific approach to inquiry. Historically, scientific inquiry was based on logic, precision, general principles, verification principles, the standard of rigour, gradual development, "*search for truth*," and proofs (Creswell, 2013; Kuhn, 1996). The proofs were critical to the pure sciences before establishing laws, principles, theories, and apparatuses. Traditionally, science, therefore, was guided by positivism. Positivism holds itself to (i) the collection of quantitative data, (ii) the separation of the researcher from the research process, (iii) objectivity, (iv) measurability, (v) generalizability, and (vi) repetition. Thus, when social science was born, the researchers embodied inquiries using the same approaches as the pure sciences. It follows that what was known about human behaviour had to be discovered through positivism and logical positivism. Social sciences, like the natural sciences, were guided by logic (the study of valid forms of reasoning), metaphysics, the fundamental kinds of things that exist, and the justification of knowledge (epistemology), which saw experimentative research widely used to conduct inquiries. Science, therefore, was about the study of truth, not meanings (Balashov & Rosenberg, 2006). Why people do things (i.e., meaning) was unimportant in research. Instead, it was about discovering truth and justifying the employment of a social constructionism epistemological framework in scientific inquiry. Within this context, the advantage of qualitative research justifies its usage in leadership research. Yukl (2006) opined that "The qualitative methods offer some advantages for studying leadership from a systems perspective, but these research methods also have limitations" (p. 452), suggesting that there are delimitations and limitations to qualitative inquiry that warrant a need for mixed methodologies. Despite this, Yukl argued that "The research question should dictate the methodology and choice of samples, not the other way around" (Yukl, 2006, p. 456), which justifies the employment of a qualitative research epistemology, social constructionism. The social constructionism epistemological framework lends itself to thinking that obtains peoples' perspectives as truth in social inquiry. It accounts for using phenomenological methodology and elite semi-structured face-to-face interviews as a data collection method.

## Interviews- Face-to-Face

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were chosen as they were closest to the unstructured interview, which is *flexible*, *iterative*, and *continuous* (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 43; Shepsle & Bonchek, 1997) as well as more likely to yield information that was not planned for (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 148). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews allow for systematic consistency while giving sufficient latitude for the subject to 'digress,' thus enabling a deeper probe (Berg, 2001, p. 70) and facilitating new and unexpected information (Daugbjerg, 1998, p. 15). Using a semi-structured (instead of structured) format study enabled the researcher to probe deeper into the issue of *leadership*, *leadership effectiveness*, and *personality and their effect on leadership effectiveness at the National Chest Hospital in Jamaica*.

The face-to-face interviews took the form of a “*guided conversation*” (Rubin and Rubin 1995, in Gubrium and Holstein 2001: 85), in which the interviewees were seen not as “*passive conduits for retrieving information*” but more for *interpretation* and *perspective*, thus facilitating a deep probe. The interview schedule is within Appendix I, with the study's various semi-structured questions. The intended time for each face-to-face interview would be about sixty minutes.

## **Administrative procedure**

The instrument was administered solely by the researcher, and this will be explained later. The researcher decided on convenient days and times over a certain period to conduct the interviews. The instruments went through vetting, editorial, and respondent reviews before they were accepted and pilot-tested. The researcher sought permission from the Director of Nursing at the National Chest Hospital to conduct a face-to-face interview with her, and the instrument was forwarded to her beforehand so she could prepare for the interview. The Director indicated that she would be unavailable to meet with the interviewer but would answer the questions on the telephone or by writing her views. The interviewer indicated that she would respond by writing and that any follow-up could be done on the telephone if necessary at a convenient time. Although the interview was conducted via the participant’s writing her perspective on selected questions (see Appendix I) and forwarding this in a Word document, the researcher ensured that ethical considerations were followed.

## **Ethical Consideration**

Social science is an inquiry into social phenomena, meaning peoples' attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions. Because social science is about people, care must be taken regarding how the information is gathered (Babbie, 2007; Neuman, 2006). To comprehend the seriousness of ethical issues, in Neuman's book entitled "Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches" chapter 5 reads 'The Literature Review and Ethical Concerns, suggesting that document analysis, which provides the context for scientific investigation must take into consideration ethical standards that hold throughout the research process. Neuman opined, "Researchers need to prepare themselves and consider ethical concerns as they design a study so that sound ethical practices are built into the study design" (Neuman, 2006, p. 116). Neuman noted, "Ethics define what is or is not legitimate to do, or what 'moral; research procedure involves" (Neuman, 2006, p. 110).

In addition, participants were informed of their rights and responsibilities as subjects and that they could withdraw from the process if they so desired. Before the research was conducted, the Director was given an Informed Consent Form to sign (Appendix II). Following this stage, the researcher utilised particular data analysis methods to collect and analyse the data to interpret this work.

## **Method of Analysis**

The methods of data analysis were 1) themes and 2) narrations. The researcher collected data from observation of naturally occurring behaviours in their usual context through the detailed

record keeping of participants' events, feelings, conversations, and nonverbal communication expressions.

## Data Analysis

Three concurrent actions are pertinent in qualitative data analysis: data reduction, display, conclusions, and verification (Berg, 2001, p. 34). In this research, an equal amount of raw data was taken in note form, and tape recordings were retrieved during the interviews. For the qualitative aspect of the study, the researcher utilised a thematic approach (Crotty, 2005) in focusing, simplifying, and transforming, thus reducing the voluminous raw data into different themes (or social constructions). Having formulated a variety of themes, they were then used to shape the format of the presentation of findings (narrative, summative), which later informed conclusions and verifications. In cases where respondents were asked to rate a particular event, these were presented in a tabular form.

## Findings

The findings for this paper will take the form of 1) narrations and 2) themes. The interviewer asks questions, and the interviewee's responses are in narrative themes. Four major themes were identified for this paper: 1) leadership and leadership behaviour, 2) leadership effectiveness, 3) personality traits, and 4) leading change.

## Leadership and leadership behaviour

### Interviewer:

Who is your ideal leader, and why?

### Interviewee:

One who believes in people and sees people as human.

### Interviewer:

Did you always want to be a leader? Explain your perspective.

### Interviewee:

Yes, I have always wanted to become a leader. From high school, I would get involved in clubs and be selected to be the leader, and since then, I have just started to believe that I was a born leader. Upon graduating from nursing school, I again was placed in charge of the ward after just three months on the job.

### Interviewer:

What leadership style best describes your leadership style?

### Interviewee:

I am still determining. I will have to examine it closely, but I think it is a combination of styles rather than a leaning toward any style.

### Interviewer:

Have your leadership style changed over the years? Explain?

### Interviewee:

It has definitely changed. I now have to employ various leadership strategies depending on the situation or problem I have to deal with. Hence, it has, over time, helped me become an even better leader.

**Interviewer:**

Describe the similarities and differences between your ideal leader and your leadership style.

**Interviewee:**

There are some similarities in my leadership style and who I believe is an ideal leader. However, I will need to think deeply about this one.

**Interviewer:**

Describe your perspective of the statement, "Leaders are born and not nurtured or made."

**Interviewee:**

Based on my experience in the area where I work, I firmly believe this statement is true. Even with advanced management training, some leaders are still very ineffective and seem to be just shadows because, often, someone else assumes the leading role even when the "trained" leader is present.

**Interviewer:**

How long have you been a leader at your place of work?

**Interviewee:**

I have been a leader for over 14 years, a junior manager for ten years, and a director (senior manager) for four years.

**Interviewer:**

What are some of our experiences as leaders?

**Interviewee:**

It has been very challenging to manage resources and people; the harder of the two is managing people. I have been faced with situations where people expressed that I should not have gotten the position because other senior staff members were at the institution before me. However, I have had good experiences because I allow people to feel comfortable coming to me with whatever problem they have, and I also try to be fair in my decision-making at all times.

**Interviewer:**

Describe your experience when you first started compared to today. Explain what makes the difference.

**Interviewee:**

Before being selected for the Director's position, I struggled with some senior managers because they felt I was after their job. I had the qualifications for the director position, and they felt threatened. However, as a senior manager, I believe the staff felt I would be extremely hard on them because I strongly believed in discipline and order. What makes the difference is my leadership style. I do not lead with emotion; I am a rational leader, if there is any such leadership style.

### **Leadership effectiveness**

**Interviewer:**

Explain what your view of 'effective leadership' is.

**Interviewee:**

Effective leadership is the leader's ability to get the staff to see their importance to the organisation and, as such, not commit themselves to ensure the organisation's success.



**Interviewer:**

Do you believe that you're an effective leader? Explain?

**Interviewee:**

I am an effective leader. I have received much feedback from staff and people outside of the organisation.

**Interviewer:**

Have you ever appraised your leadership effectiveness in the past, and how was this done?

**Interviewee:**

Yes, I have had several leadership appraisals. In fact, the Ministry mandates that each staff member have an appraisal each year.

**Interviewer:**

How do you think one's personality influences your leadership effectiveness?

**Interviewee:**

I think it may have some influence on the leadership style because an introverted person may find it more challenging to get through to staff versus one who is more extroverted. I do not mean overly extroverted because extremely extroverted persons tend to have problems controlling their temper, much less controlling the temper of a staff member with a similar personality.

**Interviewer:**

How has your leadership effectiveness been strengthened in the past?

**Interviewee:**

As I face various challenging situations, I have become a better leader.

**Interviewer:**

Describe whether a leader can lose his/her effectiveness. Explain?

**Interviewee:**

Yes, therefore, the leader must keep abreast of new trends and implement them as necessary to remain relevant.

**Interviewer:**

Describe how followers (or subordinates) are able to influence the leader's effectiveness or otherwise.

**Interviewee:**

They see leadership in a different light, and they are also on the "ground," interacting with their colleagues. Hence, Hence, the followers can give feedback about things they are unhappy with and make recommendations that can influence the leaders' effectiveness.

**Interviewer:**

Can training in leadership or management enhance one's leadership effectiveness? Explain?

**Interviewee:**

Yes. Training is important because it equips leaders with the knowledge and skills to help them be more effective.

**Interviewer:**

Have you completed any leadership training since your current leadership portfolio?

**Interviewee:**

Yes. This was done through the office of the chief nurse and as part of the orientation to this new position.

**Interviewer:**

How is the leadership or management training you use in your current portfolio?

**Interviewee:**

Not sure

**Interviewer:**

How do you evaluate your leadership effectiveness? Explain?

**Interviewee:**

I would rather have someone evaluate me because I cannot see my faults. Someone else's evaluation will be more objective.

## **Leading Change and Change Implementation**

**Interviewer:**

Is change necessary in an organisation? Explain?

**Interviewee:**

Yes. However, many see it as a threat because they have become comfortable with the status quo. Hence, when new leaders try to make changes, they are always met with resistance.

**Interviewer:**

How would you describe your general willingness to change?

**Interviewee:**

I am open to new things that would benefit the growth of the staff and the organisation.

**Interviewer:**

Is change feasible in your organisation?

**Interviewee:**

Yes, change is feasible everywhere.

**Interviewer:**

How do you facilitate change in your organisation?

**Interviewee:**

First, I try to convince staff that the change is necessary by showing them how something else might produce a better result. I also seek feedback from the staff on the proposed change.

## **Interpersonal Trust**

**Interviewer:**

How do you value interpersonal trust?

**Interviewee:**

Interpersonal trust is integral to the successful running of an organisation. When staff feels like they cannot trust you, they will not want to share issues that might be detrimental to the organisation with you, and that can be a significant problem.

**Interviewer:**

How do you build trust between yourself and subordinates in your organisation?

**Interviewee:**

Trust can be built when the leader is open and honest, willing to listen, nonjudgmental, and maintains confidentiality.

## Personality Traits

### Interviewer:

List some of your personality traits.

### Interviewee:

- I am a humble person/ not an intro or an extrovert, so I am in the middle.
- Likes when order and discipline are maintained
- Like to help others
- Listen to a person's concerns
- A very confidential person
- A confident person but not boastful
- Can become impatient with persons who should have grasped a concept after several months of training.
- Enjoy studying and helping student nurses.
- I do not surround myself with hostile people; I always strive for the best.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Managerial leadership focuses on the leader's functions, tasks, and behavioural patterns (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). On examining Lunenburg and Ornstein's leadership theories, one realised that only some of these theories could be tailored to suit organisations. This study has revealed some perspectives that have been highlighted and forwarded to the literature. The participant in this interview is a leader who operates based on 1) situation, 2) time, and 3) context. Although rich insights were gleaned from the findings, no generalisations can be made simply because of the subjective data collection method. On this premise, the work interprets the results within the context of descriptive contingency theory, which provides scientific facts from a subjective position.

We are impressed by the participant's (or leader's) candidness, challenges, strength of character, and willingness to 1) evaluate herself, 2) value people in her psychology, 3) empower them, and 4) have character traits that make for a great or effective leader. Although the participant indicated she is an effective leader, this study cannot validate this. Despite this fact, character traits such as confidence, humility, and respect for others are some ethical characteristics of an effective leader.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Protocol

1. Did you always want to be a leader? Explain your perspective.
2. Describe your perspective of the statement, "Leaders are born and not nurtured or made."
3. How long have you been a leader at your place of work?
4. What are some of our experiences as leaders?
5. Describe your experience when you first started compared to today. Explain what makes the difference.
6. Explain what your view of 'effective leadership' is.
7. Do you believe that you are an effective leader? Explain?
8. Have you ever appraised your leadership effectiveness in the past, and how was this done?
9. How do you think one's personality influences your leadership effectiveness?
10. How has your leadership effectiveness been strengthened in the past?
11. What leadership style best describes your leadership style?
12. Have your leadership style changed over the years? Explain?
13. Describe whether a leader can lose his/her effectiveness. Explain?
14. Describe how followers (or subordinates) can influence the leader's effectiveness.
15. Who is your ideal leader, and why?
16. Describe the similarities and differences between your ideal leader and your leadership style.
17. Can training in leadership or management enhance one's leadership effectively? Explain?
18. Have you completed any leadership training since your current leadership portfolio?
19. How is the leadership or management training you use in your current portfolio?
20. How do you evaluate your leadership effectiveness? Explain?
21. Is change necessary in an organisation? Explain?
22. How would you describe your general willingness to change?
23. Is change feasible in your organisation?
24. How do you facilitate change in your organisation?
25. How do you value interpersonal trust?
26. How do you build trust between subordinates and leaders in the organisation?
27. List some of your personality traits.