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CHANGE LEADERSHIP STYLES AND QUALITIES NECESSARY TO DRIVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Abstract:

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this paper was to investigate who should and can act as change leaders in South Africa to affect environmental sustainability.

Research design and methodology: A qualitative research paradigm was used, in particular an exploratory and descriptive approach where the aim was to identify who should and can act as change leaders, and to describe their leadership styles and qualities necessary to increase organisational environmental sustainability. Purposive and snowball sampling was utilised. The criteria for inclusion in the sample required that the environmental sustainability leaders interviewed were on a senior environmental management level and actively involved in environmental sustainability issues in the workplace. A final sample of 13 leaders from different sectors, in both the private and public sectors in three provinces; Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape in South Africa, were obtained. Data was collected by conducting face-to-face, email and telephonic interviews and analysed using content analysis and the constant comparison method. Trustworthiness was ensured as the participants were identified through an Internet search and their positions in the organisation could be confirmed on their website. Their environmental sustainability actions were outlined in their annual reports on their websites.

Research findings: Most participants chose well-known leadership styles associated with change such as visionary, transformational or charismatic. Change leadership qualities could be related to the personality traits of the participants, relationship- or entrepreneurial orientated. No conclusive evidence was found whether females are a better choice in driving organisational environmental sustainability.

Research limitations: The sample was only limited to large South African companies, which are obliged to report on their environmental sustainability actions. Other business forms and smaller organisations were not included in the sample as most of these organisations do not have to report on environmental sustainability actions.

Practical implications: When choosing leaders to drive environmental sustainability, leaders that display a change leadership style should be chosen. The change leaders chosen to drive environmental sustainability, should have the desired personality traits, be relationship and entrepreneurial orientated, so to obtain commitment from subordinates.

Contribution of paper: This paper contributes towards the body of knowledge with regards to which leadership qualities and styles could be utilised if organisations wish to implement environmental sustainability actions in South Africa or any other country for that matter.

Keywords:

Change leadership; environmental sustainability; Leadership qualities; Leadership stylea

JEL Classification: Q56

Introduction

Keys, Thomsen and Smith (2010, p.191) suggest that influential leaders have the ability to assess the impact of environmental issues on their organisations and influence groups within the organisation to ensure environmental sustainability. There is evidence to support the relationship between the organisation's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and its ability to attract and retain good subordinates, as younger subordinates now seek to work for organisations that pay attention to their stakeholders demands, and that focus on environmental and resource conservation. (Harvey, Bosco & Emanuele, 2010, p.503).

Braun (2010, p.246) states that organisations practicing CSR voluntarily decide to contribute to a better society and cleaner environment by integrating social and environmental concerns in their operations and interactions with stakeholders. Furthermore, regulatory compliance, competitive advantage, stakeholder pressures, ethical concerns, critical events and top management initiatives are motives for engaging in corporate environmental initiatives. A key global challenge in the 21st century is how to to ensure environmental sustainability. The King III report identifies environmental responsibility, which is the organisation commitment to an appreciation of environmental preservation as one of the seven primary characteristics of good governance (Hough, Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2008, p.177-178).

Olson (2009, p.4) states that organisations are learning to focus on improving efficiency to lower their environmental impact, which in turn improves business performance. The ability to address the risks related to environmental preservation can lead to significant business value as environmental stewardship improves and results in differentiated products, more effective operations and a more sustainable world. In sustainable organisations, managers incorporate environmental concerns into every strategic decision, revise policies and procedures to support sustainability efforts and measure their progress toward sustainability goals (Daft, 2008, p.154). Leadership development progress needs to be seen as a catalyst to the achievement of future organisational change (Hayward, 2011, p.29).

One of the dilemmas facing organisations today is that, although leadership effectiveness is reflected in financial performance, it is problematic to sustain it over time. Leadership in an organisation need not only be successful today, but also tomorrow to be able to remain in control and flourish (Svensson & Wood, 2006, p.531). From experienced chief executive officers to new managers who have just stepped into supervisory roles, leadership is a perpetual concern for anyone who needs to motivate, guide and inspire. Leadership is often regarded as the single most critical factor in organisational success or failure (Timizi, 2002, p.269).

The importance of environmental sustainability has been recognised worldwide. Although environmental sustainability has received attention in South Africa, much more still needs to be done. In order for leadership to be sustained, there needs to be

a move to focus on people, attitudes and engagements. The growing need for change in organisations has been widely acknowledged, but according to Higgs and Rowland (2005, p.121) globally up to 70 per cent of change initiatives fail. In addition, there is a growing realisation that change is a complex process, in particular with regards to environmental sustainability in the workplace.

Leaders with desirable personality qualities are necessary in order to engage subordinates to implement changes in organisations. Couros (2013, p.1) describes change leaders as individuals who act as catalysts for change, possessing certain characteristics. They have insights into the functioning of the organisations' systems, are committed to finding solutions, are persons of integrity and courage and have an understanding of "organic" change (ACPA, 2013, p.1). In order to achieve excellence, Marques (2008, p.820) indicates that successful change leaders' convictions are the practical reinforcement of what they believe in, in the environments they care for.

Females in organisations have made significant progress in recent years to top leadership positions due to new intrinsic leadership traits and a quickly changing corporate and social environment (Evans, 2010, p.347). Marshall (2007, p.166) states that whether and how females are change leaders and exercise power to shape discourses and practices of ecological sustainability is a question which needs to be addressed and suggests that CSR should become more gendered.

From the preceding statements it seems that corporate leaders, in particular females could perhaps be the change leaders in the organisation. It also seems that change leaders exhibit specific leadership styles and have the required leadership qualities to drive environmental sustainability in the workplace.

This led to the research in question, which is:
Who should and can act as change leaders for environmental sustainability in organisations?

The way leaders approach change affects the outcome thereof, depends on change leaders' qualities and the organisational working environment in which it operates. If change leaders do not engage subordinates in reducing the effects of environmental sustainability, it could be disastrous for people and the environment. Change leaders in organisations must therefore formulate and implement sustainable environmental strategies to effect the required changes.

The primary research objective of this paper is to investigate who should and can act as change leaders to assist in organisational environmental sustainability in the workplace. In order to achieve the main objective of this paper, the following secondary research objectives are identified:

- To provide a literature review on change leadership styles and qualities;

- To empirically investigate who can and should act as change leaders to drive environmentally sustainability in South African organisations;
- To make recommendations on how to identify change leaders within South African organisations to drive environmental sustainability issues.

In the next section a theoretical overview of change leadership styles and qualities is provided.

Theoretical Overview of Change Leadership Styles and Qualities

The mystique of leadership is one of the most widely debated, studied and sought after themes of organisational life. A leader is a person who inspires people to journey to a destination which they would not go to by themselves. Organisations, therefore, need competent leaders in order to reach their objectives both effectively and efficiently (Singh & Karunes, 2000, p.18). Taylor (2010, p.16) states: "producing change is about 80 per cent leadership … and 20 per cent management". According to DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty and Salas (2010, p.1070), there are three general levels of leadership in an organisation namely top-level leaders who are responsible for the strategic vision and broad goals; middle-level leaders who are responsible for the operational goals and coordination thereof; and supervisory-level leaders who are responsible for recruiting, dismissing and supervising task allocation. Although there are different hierarchical levels in the organisation, leaders on each level have specific roles and responsibilities which need to be carried out in order for the organisation to operate effectively. Change leaders could function on any organisational level regardless of the roles they play in the workplace.

Leadership accordingly is required whenever transformative change is needed (General review, 2011, p.19).Transformative change requires vision and creativity, the ability to see beyond the present to a future that has not yet been envisaged. Gill (2002, p.312) concludes that the effective leadership of change needs to involve certain elements in order for it to be a success namely having a vision, supporting values and strategy, empowerment and motivation and having an inspiration. There is also a need to have a change process in place. The four phases of change according to Erwin (2009, p.28) are: realising the need to change; planning the change; implementing the change and sustaining the change. For the change process to be successfully implemented it should be championed by a change leader with an appropriate leadership style and playing a fitting role in executing the change process.

Change Leadership Styles

Different leadership styles are required for different situations and each leader must know when to exhibit a particular leadership style (Randeree & Chaudhry, 2012, p.62). However, not all of these leadership styles will be conducive to effect changes successfully in the organisation. The most common leadership styles used in organisations are the autocratic and democratic styles. Autocratic leadership is

described by Nyberg, Westerland, Magnusson-Hanson and Theorell (2008, p.805) as when the leader makes decisions in a dictatorial way and tells subordinates what to do in a commanding way. According to Rustin and Armstrong (2012, p.60), in a democratic leadership style guidance is offered to team members and active team member involvement is encouraged.

The most highly regarded leadership styles associated with effecting change is visionary-, charismatic-, transactional- and transformational leadership styles. Kantabutra and Saratun (2011, p.999) state that visionary leaders effectively communicate their visions to promote change in a simple manner which allows followers to grasp the message and broadens leader support among their followers. Transactional leaders in essence represent efficient leaders who are able to focus on the task at hand, communicate clear expectations to their subordinates, solve immediate problems and reward performance (Tatum, Eberlin, Kottraba & Bradberry, 2003, p.1006). Charismatic leaders create excitement and momentum in others and provide opportunities for people around them to follow their example and take personal responsibility for changing the organisation (Baker, 2013, p.1). Charisma is attributed to leaders who engage in unconventional behaviours, make self-sacrifices and act confidently in most situations (Michel, Wallace & Rawlings, 2013, p.470). Ivey and Kline (2010, p.247) indicate that transformational leadership prompts effort and commitment from followers by attending to emotions, values, ethics and long-term goals, and by assessing followers' motives, satisfying their individual needs, and treating them with dignity and respect.

There are also enduring leadership styles such as ethical-, paternalistic-, servant-, authentic- and persuasive leadership styles. According to Brown and Treviño (2006, p.616), an ethical leadership style is more conducive in driving change as it influences subordinates to emulate ethical leaders' behaviour because such leaders are attractive and credible models who exemplify normatively appropriate behaviour. Öner (2012, p.302) suggests utilising the paternalistic leadership style to effect change as it entails behaving like a father would behave towards his children by looking after subordinates, nurturing, guiding and protecting them. The paternalistic type of leader therefore exhibits concern for the subordinates' general wellbeing. Sendjaya and Pekerti (2010, p.645) describe the servant leadership as focusing on the followers and not the organisation, where autonomy, development and holistic needs are taking preference. Crossan and Mazutis (2008, p.135) mention that authentic leaders are said to be "those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values and morals, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character". Change leaders also needs to have a persuasive leadership style which is centred on how a leader's style fits in with the culture of the team being influenced, as organisations have a collective personality (Woodward, 2010, p.59). In order for a leader to have the best

possible outcome, moderate levels of assertiveness are more likely to result in effective leadership outcomes (Ames & Flynn, 2007, p.320).

In addition to utilising the most appropriate leadership styles to create change, there are certain leadership qualities which change leaders possess in order to drive change within an organisation.

Change Leadership Qualities

Brodie (2013, p.1) proposes that change leaders should focus on their goal and outcome and see the bigger picture. They do so by thinking of new ways to use existing systems and processes and envision organisational solutions to challenges faced (Kross & Kitazume, 2013, p.1). Edwards and Walton (2000, p.35) state that one of the most vital skills of leadership is the ability to manage conflict or disagreement.

There are various personality qualities which change leaders possess which influence them in their workplace. Commitment is one such quality, where change leaders are committed to change to improve ways of doing things and believe that the organisation's future is dependent upon the change (Baker, 2013, p.1). Furthermore, change leaders should focus on one change area and follow through with it (Fleischer, 2009, p.1). Although energy is required Brodie (2013, p.1) indicates that change leaders need to have the courage to follow through on the changes and stay focused on their goal and outcome, despite the change being difficult or unpopular. Bennett (2002, p.16) believes that change leaders have indispensable capabilities such as being optimistic about the future. Change leaders are intelligent leaders and Abbas and Asghar (2010, p.21) suggest that these leaders have the skills and knowledge gained from experience to allow them to manage daily organisational tasks in an effective and efficient manner.

Change leaders need to be entrepreneurial in finding the most efficient and effective ways to ensure organisational value and change management (Mohin, 2012, p.1). Crum (2012, p.1) asserts that change leaders are innovative in that they are curious, experimental and try to apply their "discoveries" to the organisation's goals. To be excellent, a change leader has to be willing to become a risk-taker, willing to stay true to his or her convictions for making the change (Whitaker, 2012, p.1). Furthemore, risk-taking propensity can change over time as opposed to remaining a stable and constant dispositional characteristic. Vision according to Abbas and Asghar (2010, p.10) are mental images of a possible and desirable future of the organisation, the change leader knows where the organisation has been and presents a picture of where it is going. It is through vision and foresight that a change leader excel by demonstrating that the change will produce a positive result (Whitaker, 2012, p.1). Furthermore, the purpose and vision aids subordinates in coping with the proposed change.

Not only are change leaders critical to the process of the way in which change is implemented, but they also need a certain degree of technical and social skills (Boehringer, 2012, p.1). Communication skills and the ability to manage a diverse group of people, are critical skills for leading in rapidly changing environments (Furst & Reeves, 2008, p.372). Change leaders need to be able to communicate the vision for the change effectively (Couros, 2013, p.1). Furthermore, leaders who communicate openly, demonstrate integrity and trust, and encourage participation, should outperform those with a more traditional command-and-control style of leadership. Emotional intelligence also plays an increasingly important role in an organisation where differences in technical skills are minimal in importance (Kleiner & Porterfield, 2005, p.49). Johnson, Birchfield and Wieand, (2008, p.1) state that change leaders with a high emotional intelligence can build effective relationships in a collaborative culture, which can "confront the brutal facts", and achieve unity without necessarily having consensus to achieve sustainable organisational performance. According to Tan and Kaufmann (2011, p.1), change leaders need considerable empathy and must be able to put themselves in the shoes of the subordinates who are being affected by the change.

Crum (2012, p.1) states that change leaders should have a passion to positively impact their organisation, their way of working, and to embrace new methodologies. Flexibility in decision-making means keeping options open, not making unnecessary decisions and to collect information timeously (General review, 2008, p.33). Achievement-oriented leaders can be distinguished from non-leaders in terms of their objectives and approaches toward risk-taking, creativity and proactivity (Kunnanatt, 2008, p.172). This means that leaders who have a strong desire to succeed will want to learn from their mistakes, be reflective and move forward. Bennett (2002:20) observes that change leaders have a sense of responsibility towards an issue or people. Abbas and Asghar (2010, p.25) note that change leaders provide responsibilities and opportunities for subordinates and they are responsible for the creation of such an environment.

Resilience is an important characteristic of change leaders, as they are known for their determination and relentlessness when confronted with adversity. Resilience can also be viewed as the entrepreneurial capacity and ability to overcome especially difficult circumstances (Calvo & Garcia, 2010, p.268). Couros (2013, p.1) states that change leaders need to be persistent in assisting individuals to explore opportunities and not just give up if failing the first time. Change leaders are highly motivated themselves, and they have the power to motivate, if not inspire, others around them. This suggests that change leaders are the ideal people to mentor individuals for development and for the improvement of the organisation.

Erpestad (2013, p.8) highlights that leaders for change are responsible for peer-networking, supporting relationships and building partnerships in order to ensure that people "individually and collectively create changes that make sense for long-term

prosperity and survivability of the organisation". Teambuilding and teamwork are thus essential for change leaders as effective collaboration and interaction can positively affect their team members and collective situations (Erpestad, 2013, p.8). According to Ortiz-Walters, Eddleston and Simione (2010, p.101), change leaders can mentor subordinates to promote career development, and expose then to challenging assignments in a formal mentorship programme.

The research methodology followed in this article is discussed in the section which follows.

Methodology

A qualitative paradigm is used, in particular an exploratory and descriptive approach where the aim is to identify who should and can act as change leaders, and describe their leadership styles and qualities necessary to increase organisational environmental sustainability.

The population comprises organisations which operate in South Africa and are involved in environmental sustainability. The non-probability sampling technique was used, in particular purposive sampling. The criteria for inclusion in the sample was that the environmental sustainability leaders being interviewed were on a senior environmental management level actively involved in environmental sustainability issues within their workplace. A final sample of 13 leaders from six different industries which operate in both private and public sectors in Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape in South Africa were obtained. The focus of this paper is not to make a sectorial or provincial comparison.

Data collection took place by conducting face-to-face interviews, email and telephone interviews. In all cases the interview schedule were emailed to the participants prior to the interviews. The interview schedule was semi-structured open-ended questions and participants were allowed to elaborate on any issues raised. The interview schedule consisted of three sections. Section A canvassed the biographic data of the participants. Section B solicited background information of the participants' place of employment and the remaining section explored the participant's personal views on change leadership styles and qualities needed to effect environmental sustainability and the role gender can play in change leadership.

For the purpose of this paper and as advised by Patton (2002, p.40-41) the data analysis method used are inductive analysis. After the collection of all the completed interview schedules and supporting documents, the researcher retyped the data using the exact words and language as documented. After the telephonic and face-to-face interviews, the researcher emailed the participants to confirm whether the information recorded was accurate and correct, in case any information had been omitted from the interview. Participants were referred to using the assigned letter: for example, Mr A from Case A. This information was then analysed using the content analysis and

constant comparative analysis method. Content analysis was applied using Tesch's eight step process to identify relevant themes and sub-themes (De Vos, Strydom, Fuche & Delport, 2002, p.340-341) by:

- reading through all the transcriptions and jot down ideas as they came to mind to obtain a sense of the whole interview;
- selecting and reading through one interview schedule to thoroughly understand the underlying meaning of information obtained;
- completing the same tasks for all interview schedules, and arranging similar topics in groups by forming columns labelled major topics, unique topics, and unrelated topics;
- abbreviating the topics as codes and writing the codes next to the relevant sections of text within the interview schedules, and checking for new emerging categories or codes;
- identifying the most descriptive words for themes and converting these into categories while reducing the categories and grouping together topics that related to each other;
- finalising abbreviations for each category and alphabetising the codes;
- clustering the data (text material) belonging to each category in one place and performing a preliminary analysis; and
- recoding existing data where necessary.

Content analysis enabled the data to be categorised according to emerging themes and sub-themes. Data was thereafter analysed using the constant comparative analysis method by comparing the responses of the thirteen participants to observe differences and similarities of responses. These findings were then summarised in a table to present findings that were generic or specific to some participants only.

Trustworthiness was ensured as the participants were identified through an Internet search and their positions in the organisation could be confirmed on their website and the respective organisations report on environmental sustainability issues in their annual reports. Jackson and Verberg (2007, p.49) affirm that conducting member checks is part of credibility. The researcher used this method by gaining participants' feedback on the data collected from other participants, as well as their interpretations and conclusions. The compilation of case studies for each of the participants provided a good summary of the setting and thus made transferability possible. Dependability was ensured as all notes, emails, interview schedules, transcripts and memos were retained should an audit be required. The data obtained was continuously compared with the general findings in the literature review to confirm whether or not it confirms previous findings. This was done to ensure some conformability.

The key research findings are highlighted in the following section.

Empirical Results

Eight of the 13 participants interviewed were female. The average age of the participants was 45 years, with the eldest participant being 56 years and the youngest 27 years. Most of the participants had working experience exceeding 16 years, with only two having less than five years' experience. The majority of participants had been in their leadership positions for more than five years, but less than 11 years. Only two participants had been in a leadership position for more than 16 years, with two participants having been in a leadership position for between one and five years.

Table 1 depicts a summary of the results of the leadership styles associated with environmental change leadership. Some participants suggested more than one change leadership style.

Table 1:　Results of change leadership styles for environmental sustainability

Change leadership style	Frequency
Visionary	5
Transformational	4
Charismatic	3
Servant	2
Authentic	2
Inclusive	2
Autocratic	1

Source: Own construction

As can be seen in Table 1, most participants chose well-known leadership styles associated with change such as visionary, transformational or charismatic. One participant advocates an autocratic leadership style as he regards subordinates as not willing to change. Two participants advocated a servant leadership style, to quote:

- "*Servant leadership style, reason being it starts with picking up the piece of paper, lead by example. For example at this company, I need to go down to the garbage area and make a fuss to sort it into different categories (glass, paper, etc).*"
- "*When it comes to organisations being able to use corporate leaders as change leaders for environmental sustainability, the servant leadership style is best associated with these change leaders.*"

Another interesting finding was that two participants suggest an inclusive change leadership style. They provide the following responses:

- *"The leadership styles associated with these change leaders is someone who is inclusive".*
- *"Inclusive – we all need to be involved".*

The content analysis reveal three main themes namely that some change leadership qualities could be related to the personal qualities of the participants, while other qualities are relationship or entrepreneurial orientated. The sub-themes within these

categories could be identified to a large extent from the literature review conducted. Table 2 shows the main- and subthemes identified from the content and constant comparative analysis on the leadership qualities necessary to drive organisational environmental sustainability changes. It must be noted that all participants revealed more than one change leadership quality necessary to affect environmental sustainability.

Table 2:   Results of change leadership qualities for environmental sustainability

Change leadership qualities themes	Change leadership qualities subthemes	Frequency
Personal	Knowledgeable	10
	Energetic	6
	Passionate	5
	Committed	3
	Flexible	3
	Achievement-orientated	2
	Problem-solving	2
	Focused	1
	Courageous	1
Relationship orientated	Good communicator	7
	Persuasive	3
	Assertive	3
	Emotionally intelligent	2
	Credible	2
	Network	1
	Empathy	1
Entrepreneurial orientated	Resilient	4
	Perseverance	2
	Visionary	2
	Entrepreneurial	1
	Innovative	1

Source: Own construction

As can be seen in Table 2, most qualities associated with change leaders driving environmental sustainability were personal in nature. The top two change leadership qualities necessary to drive environmental sustainability are being knowledgeable on environmental sustainability issues and being a good communicator by expressing your views well on what is meant by environmental sustainability and the required actions needed to strive for organisational environmental sustainability. As two participants noted:

- *"Comes back to being knowledgeable about the topic, need to start with themselves, need to be able to engage with the people of the communities in which they are involved and need to live it out. Good communication strategy- need to be dynamic in what they do, person who is passionate about it".*

- *"Understand the basic product, i.e. be knowledgeable; need to know the difference what is available and what is better; practical experience in sustainability and to do what works in the markets they find themselves in and*

they need to be able to communicate effectively and have good interpersonal skills".

The second most highly regarded personal change leadership quality is being energetic. Some participants responded as follows:

- *"Need to be enthusiastic and energetic in order to be able to change behaviour".*
- *"Need to have energy, don't think that you are going to make a positive contribution to the environment. Need to know that you are going to make a positive contribution".*

To a lesser extent being emotionally intelligent, credible, network orientated and having empathy was regarded as desired entrepreneurial orientated change leadership qualities.

The second most highly regarded relationship orientated change leadership qualities are being persuasive and assertive. Some participants responded as follows:

- *"Someone who is persuasive, assist in creating buy in into that which affects the environment".*
- *"Need to be assertive".*

To a lesser extent being emotionally intelligent, credible, network orientated and having empathy was provided as desired relationship orientated change leadership qualities.

Fewer participants refer to having an entrepreneurial orientation as desirable for driving environmental sustainability leadership. The most common entrepreneurial orientated change leadership quality is being resilient. As one participant indicated: *"They need to be resilient, keep on pushing the boundaries".*

To a lesser extent being visionary, having perseverance, or being entrepreneurial or innovative orientated has been indicated as necessary change leadership qualities for driving organisational environmental sustainability.

Seven of the thirteen participants indicate that change leaders for environmental sustainability could be either males or females. To quote: *"Both men and women are able to perform the function, although their styles are different, they are equally able".* However, five participants were adamant that females are more suitable to drive environmental sustainability change. It was interesting to note that of these five participants, three were males. The following quotes were supplied by these males:

- *"It could be argued that women are better as they are more empathetic and will have a greater impact."*

- *"There are reasons why women would be more effective: Mothers have more influence, specifically in some communities, are more appealing to the effect and able to get the word across."*
- *"Think that women would be best suited for driving this, reason being they are more compassionate, more in tune with the hearts of the individuals in which they come into contact with and thus makes it more a heartfelt thing and not head."*

One participant did not relate gender to driving environmental sustainability. The participant indicated that: *"I don't think gender is a relevant issue for leadership in this area".*

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the literature the leadership styles associated with change leadership were indicated as visionary-, charismatic-, transactional- and transformational. The results of the interviews with the 13 participants reveal that they favour a visionary-, transformational or charismatic leadership style which are in congruence with literature findings which indicate that these style are preferable for effecting change. Enduring leadership styles such as servant, authentic and inclusive, were suggested as desirable leadership styles for environmental sustainability, but to a lesser extent. Enduring leadership styles have a more long-term orientation according to Daft (2008:154) and the focus of environmental sustainability suggests a long-term orientation towards environmental preservation for now and in the future. Environmental preservation is the responsibility of all people not just employed people. Of interest is the fact that one participant indicate the autocratic leadership style as preferable to effect environmental sustainability actions. It seems that it can be expected to experience subordinate resistance and that subordinates need to be "forced" to participate.

According to the empirical results, the main change leadership personal quality required for change leaders to be effectively driving environmental sustainability initiatives is to be knowledgeable on environmental sustainability actions. Marques (2008, p.820) states that successful leaders' convictions are the practical reinforcement of what they believe in, in the environments they care for, which points to being passionate and believing in what they are to do. No evidence could be found in literature about being energetic to effect change. All the other personal qualities uncovered in the empirical findings namely: being committed, courageous, achievement-orientated, focused, problem-solving-orientated and flexible were confirmed in the literature (see Brodie, 2013; Couros, 2013; Erpestad, 2013; Whitaker, 2012, p.1). The personal change leadership qualities not indicated by participants were being encouraging, being a person of integrity and having a moral obligation and humility.

According to Fullan (2002, p.1), relationship qualities necessitate individuals who blend personal humility with professional qualities and they are more successful in the workplace. The empirical results revealed that being a good communicator is essential to drive environmental sustainability initiatives. Other relationship qualities indicated by participants and in the literature were being persuasive, assertive, being able to network, being emotionally intelligent and having empathy. Additional important change leadership qualities according to literature are having an outgoing personality and good interpersonal skills, being credible, dynamic, compassionate, responsible and good at conflict handling.

The participants also indicated some entrepreneurial qualities such as being visionary, resilient, innovative and having perseverance. These entrepreneurial qualities have been identified in literature as desirable in the workplace by several authors (Bennet, 2002; Couros, 2013; Crum, 2012; Mohin, 2012). These authors also consider being self-motivated and having a high propensity for learning (which can tie in with being knowledgeable) as desirable change leadership qualities.

Being visionary as an entrepreneurial quality requires a visionary leadership style and is in congruence with the empirical findings of being the most desired change leadership style for driving environmental sustainability. To become committed requires being motivated and to persevere which is evident in a transformational leadership style. It can therefore be said that there is integration between the findings of the change leadership styles and the desired change leadership qualities indicated by participants. The empirical findings of the change leadership qualities are also in congruence with the definitions supplied in the literature of the change leadership styles preferred to affect environmental sustainability actions.

There is no conclusive empirical evidence regarding which gender would be more successful in driving environmental sustainability actions from the empirical results. However, in literature, Mandell and Pherwani (2003, p.387) confirm that females might be better equipped to manage their emotions and the emotions of others than their male counterparts. Furthermore, in a study by Holmes, Burns, Marra and Stubbe (2003, p.422), it was found that effective women managers adapt their style with sensitivity and skill to the specific setting and have a deep sense of caring, which allows subordinates to be more emotionally engaged. They refute misconceptions about the ability of women in management roles to handle workplace humour, making them socio-linguistically very proficient communicators in the workplace and in this study seven of the 13 participants confirmed that being a good communicator is an essential quality for a change leader driving environmental sustainability. Other studies conducted consistently show that women express higher levels of concern towards the environment than men (Braun, 2010, p.247). All the literature indicates females change leaders having the desired change leadership qualities for driving environmental sustainability.

Managerial Implications

Environmental sustainability team leaders should ensure they are knowledgeable on the subject and possess good communicative skills in order to bring across their message in an effective manner. Subordinates could be educated about environmental sustainability matters by attending workshops on methods of environmental preservation actions. If leaders display an optimistic and energetic attitude and show their personal commitment to environmental preservation they may obtain with more ease the buy-in of subordinates. As the change process may require some intelligent planning and being knowledgeable on environmental sustainability actions, the change leaders can rely on knowledge gained through their previous experience to manage the process efficiently. Although there will be stumbling blocks along the way, change leaders need to be courageous to effect the environmental preservation changes. The leaders driving environmental sustainability should be passionate about the environmental and to pursue environmental sustainability in the organisation. This will require setting specific environmental sustainability goals with specific timeframes to be met. The environmental sustainability leaders have to remain focused and see to it that these goals are continuously pursued.

Problems may arise during the process and change leaders must have the ability to solve problems in an organised manner. However, they must be flexible if the implementation of environmental sustainability actions is not going smoothly. The environmental sustainability leaders should manage subordinates' conflict and resistance to effect the required environmental sustainable actions. A team work approach is recommended. The change leaders should also display a sense of responsibility towards subordinates and being assertive when necessary to achieve the environmental sustainability targets set. In order for change leaders to implement environmental sustainability effectively, they need to be able to be subordinate-orientated. Because change is not an easy process, to be persuasive is important to get the buy-in from the subordinates affected, in order to effectively implement the necessary environmental preservation actions.

The building of relationships in the organisation plays a pivotal role in effecting environmental sustainability in an organisation. Through the use of charisma, change leaders have the ability to influence team members to work towards achieving a common goal. By communicating effectively, change leaders are able to bring the message of the proposed changes across clearly and in doing so, allow for networks to be developed and maintained for the future. As these environmental sustainability leaders envision where the organisation is heading, they are able to mentor subordinates in their team and allow for relationships to be built.

Having an entrepreneurial orientation is important for environmental sustainability leaders as it allows them to find the most efficient and effective manner to drive intended changes. This will require to be innovative and to try new methods and

experiment and be willing to take risks to achieve the goals set. These change must be able to see the bigger picture and visionary and think ahead. Because there may be resistance to change, environmental sustainability leaders need to be resilient and not give up if they are faced with failure. These entrepreneurial qualities allow for these leaders to effectively drive the change required to be environmentally sustainable, in order to have a competitive advantage among its competitors.

It would be beneficial to identify, appoint and mentor female leaders to drive environmental sustainability initiatives as women have a nurturing nature, which suggests that they will take care of nature and the planet, and that they are more emotionally intelligent than men. Leaders within organisations could adopt a combination of leadership styles to drive environmental sustainability, since the ability to communicate is key in motivating, influencing and inspiring subordinates. Change leaders should read motivational books on change and the styles which have been successful in the implementation thereof.

Despite the sample size being limited and the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population, the research conducted in this paper is bound to make a valuable contribution to the field of environmental sustainability leadership in South Africa, considering the quality of information obtained in a relatively new area of research. The findings can be regarded as credible as participants were carefully selected to obtain responses from those most knowledgeable about environmental sustainability.

To conclude this paper: "Leadership comes from the passion of change leaders and identifying these people is important. Building a network of committed leaders at all levels is a first step to change. Only when there is a critical mass does change take place" (Benn, Dunphy & Perrot, 2006, p.133).

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