Leadership Styles: Political Leadership Of Syria

Abdul Rahman Alnassan[1,] Dr Chavi Bhargava Sharma[2]
[1]*Research ScholarFaculty of Management studies*
[2]*SupervisorDean, Faculty of Management studies*
Manav Rachna International University

Abstract: *The Study is titled "Leadership Styles: A Case Study of Syria". The main objectives of the research work are to identify and then analyze the political leadership style in Syria, to generate a profile of past, current and emerging leaders of Syria, to study the reasons that led to the uprising in Syria and to assess the future consequences of the decisions taken by the Political Leadership.*
The study will be descriptive in nature. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, appropriate data will be collected from people and organizations from both, official and non-official, taking a look at the current and emerging leadership Styles in Syria. Survey for the political, security and economic situation will be carried. Both primary and secondary sources of data will be used for present research.
For analysis and conclusion of the results of the survey, appropriate statistical tools and analysis will be done.
Keywords: *Syria, Leadership Style, Political Leadership, Economic Impacts, Effective Management.*

I.   Introduction

What is Leadership?

In the past, some researchers have argued that the actual influence of leaders on organizational outcomes is overrated and romanticized as a result of biased attributions about leaders (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). Despite these assertions however, it is largely recognized and accepted by practitioners and researchers that leadership is important, and research supports the notion that leaders do contribute to key organizational outcomes (Day & Lord, 1988; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). To facilitate successful performance it is important to understand and accurately measure leadership performance.

Many people today are seeking to understand -- and many people are writing about -- the concept and practices of leadership. There are a great many reasons for the popularity of the topic, including that organizations are faced with changes like never before. The concept of leadership is relevant to any aspect of ensuring effectiveness in organizations and in managing change. This topic in the Library helps you to fully understand the concept and practices of leadership.

Recent empirical analysis suggests that individual national leaders can have large impacts on economic growth. Leaders have strongest effects in autocracies, where they appear to substantially influence both economic growth and the evolution of political institutions. These findings call for increased focus on national economic policies and the means of leadership selection, among other issues.

II.   Literature Review

Leadership Styles
Kurt Lewin's Leadership styles
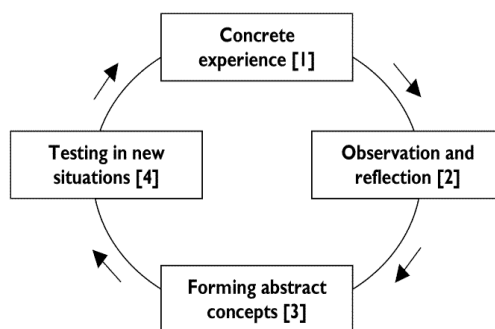
Leadership style refers to a leader's behaviour. It is the result of the philosophy, personality and experience of the leader. Kurt Lewin and colleagues identified different styles of leadership that is, Autocratic, , Participative, and Laissez-Faire. (Lewin *et al.*,1939):

- Autocratic or Authoritarian Leaders: Under the autocratic leadership style, all decision-making powers are centralized in the leader, as with dictator leaders. They do not entertain any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. The autocratic management has been successful as it provides strong motivation to the manager. It permits quick decision-making, as only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to the themselves until they feel it is needed by the rest of the group.
- Participative or Democratic Leaders: The democratic leadership style favours decision-making by the group as shown, such as leader gives instruction after consulting the group. They can win the cooperation of their group and can motivate them effectively and positively. The decisions of the democratic leader are not unilateral as with the autocrat because they arise from consultation with the group members and participation by them.
- Laissez-Faire or Free Rein Leaders: The phrase is French and literally means "let do", but, in a leadership context, can be roughly translated as "free rein". A free rein leader does not lead, but leaves the group entirely to itself as shown; such a leader allows maximum freedom to subordinates, i.e., they are given a free hand in deciding their own policies and methods.

Different situations call for different leadership styles. In an emergency when there is little time to converge on an agreement and where a designated authority has significantly more experience or expertise than the rest of the team, an autocratic leadership style may be most effective; however, in a highly motivated and aligned team with a homogeneous level of expertise, a more democratic or laissez-faire style may be more effective. The style adopted should be the one that most effectively achieves the objectives of the group while balancing the interests of its individual members.

Definition of Leadership

There are many diverse definitions of leadership. A few common approaches of the definition of leadership will be highlighted.

Peter Drucker (2003) sums up leadership as "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers." To gain followers requires influence but doesn't exclude the lack of integrity in achieving this. Indeed, it can be argued that several of the world's greatest leaders have lacked integrity and have adopted values that would not be shared by many people today.

John C Maxwell (1998): In the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, John Maxwell sums up his definition of leadership as "leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less." This moves beyond the position defining the leader, to looking at the ability of the leader to influence others - both those who would consider themselves followers, and those outside that circle. Indirectly, it also builds in leadership character, since without maintaining integrity and trustworthiness, the capability to influence will disappear.

Warren Bennis' (2003) definition of leadership is focused much more on the individual capability of the leader: "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential."

Transformational Leadership

Significant attention has recently been given to the theories related to transformational leadership (e. g., Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Bass, 1997, 1998). The concept of transformational leadership was first highlighted in a comprehensive manner by Burns (1978).

Burns (1978, p. 3) noted a qualitative distinction between transactional and transformational political leaders. In transactional leadership, leader - follower relationships are based on a series of exchanges or bargains between leaders and followers. According to Burns, the transformational leaders recognize the need for a potential follower but go further, seeking to satisfy higher needs, in terms of Maslow's (1954) need-hierarchy to engage the full person of the follower. Transforming leadership results in mutual stimulation and elevation that converts

followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. Bass (1997, 1998) has contributed a great deal to the evolution of the theory and understanding the ramification of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership includes charisma (providing a vision and a sense of mission, and raising followers' self-expectations), intellectual stimulation (helping employees emphasize rational solutions, and challenge old assumptions), and individualized consideration (developing employees and coaching).

Howell and Avolio (1993) note that leaders described as transformational, concentrate their efforts on longer term goals; place value and emphasis on developing a vision; change or align systems to accommodate their vision rather than work within existing systems; and coach followers to take on greater responsibility for their own development, as well as the development of others. These leaders are often described by the followers as inspirational (italic added). Such leaders frequently display transactional leadership behaviour as well (pp. 891-892).

Bass (1997) maintained that transformational leadership is more effective and satisfying than just constructive transactions and constructive transactions are more effective and satisfying than corrective ones. Apparently, the transformational leadership has been found to be an important variety of leadership functions.

Leadership Performance

In the past, some researchers have argued that the actual influence of leaders on organizational outcomes is overrated and romanticized as a result of biased attributions about leaders (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). Despite these assertions however, it is largely recognized and accepted by practitioners and researchers that leadership is important, and research supports the notion that leaders do contribute to key organizational outcomes (Day & Lord, 1988; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). To facilitate successful performance it is important to understand and accurately measure leadership performance.

Job performance generally refers to behaviour that is expected to contribute to organizational success (Campbell, 1990). Campbell identified a number of specific types of performance dimensions; leadership was one of the dimensions that he identified. There is no consistent, overall definition of leadership performance (Yukl, 2006). Many distinct conceptualizations are often lumped together under the umbrella of leadership performance, including outcomes such as leader effectiveness, leader advancement, and leader emergence (Kaiser et al., 2008). For instance, leadership performance may be used to refer to the career success of the individual leader, performance of the group or organization, or even leader emergence. Each of these measures can be considered conceptually distinct. While these aspects may be related, they are different outcomes and their inclusion should depend on the applied/research focus.

Leadership in Organizations

An organization that is established as an instrument or means for achieving defined objectives has been referred to as a formal organization. Its design specifies how goals are subdivided and reflected in subdivisions of the organization. Divisions, departments, sections, positions, jobs, and tasks make up this work structure. Thus, the formal organization is expected to behave impersonally in regard to relationships with clients or with its members. According to Weber's definition, entry and subsequent advancement is by merit or seniority. Each employee receives a salary and enjoys a degree of tenure that safeguards her/him from the arbitrary influence of superiors or of powerful clients. The higher his position in the hierarchy, the greater his presumed expertise in adjudicating problems that may arise in the course of the work carried out at lower levels of the organization. It is this bureaucratic structure that forms the basis for the appointment of heads or chiefs of administrative subdivisions in the organization and endows them with the authority attached to their position (Gibb, C. A., 1970).

In contrast to the appointed head or chief of an administrative unit, a leader emerges within the context of the informal organization that underlies the formal structure. The informal organization expresses the personal objectives and goals of the individual membership. Their objectives and goals may or may not coincide with those of the formal organization. The informal organization represents an extension of the social structures that generally characterize human life — the spontaneous emergence of groups and organizations as ends in themselves.

In prehistoric times, humanity was preoccupied with personal security, maintenance, protection, and survival. Now humanity spends a major portion of waking hours working for organizations. Her/his need to identify with a community that provides security, protection, maintenance, and a feeling of belonging continues unchanged from prehistoric times. This need is met by the informal organization and its emergent, or unofficial, leaders (Knowles & Sax berg, 1971).

Leaders emerge from within the structure of the informal organization. Their personal qualities, the demands of the situation, or a combination of these and other factors attract followers who accept their leadership within one or several overlay structures. Instead of the authority of position held by an appointed head or chief, the emergent leader wields influence or power. Influence is the ability of a person to gain co-operation from others

by means of persuasion or control over rewards. Power is a stronger form of influence because it reflects a person's ability to enforce action through the control of a means of punishment (Gibb, C. A., 1970).

A leader is a person who influences a group of people towards a specific result. It is not dependent on title or formal authority. Leaders are recognized by their capacity for caring for others, clear communication, and a commitment to persist (Hoyle, J. R., 1995). An individual who is appointed to a managerial position has the right to command and enforce obedience by virtue of the authority of his position. However, she or he must possess adequate personal attributes to match his authority, because authority is only potentially available to him. In the absence of sufficient personal competence, a manager may be confronted by an emergent leader who can challenge her/his role in the organization and reduce it to that of a figurehead. However, only authority of position has the backing of formal sanctions. It follows that whoever wields personal influence and power can legitimize this only by gaining a formal position in the hierarchy, with commensurate authority (Gibb, C. A., 1970). Leadership can be defined as one's ability to get others to willingly follow. Every organization needs leaders at every level (Hakala, D., 2008).

Leadership Changes in Arab Region

Almost without exception, Arab summers are hot: temperatures above forty degrees normal. However, summer 2011 may go down as one of the region's hottest seasons irrespective of mercury readings. Several Arab countries still feel the heat of popular revolt.

The "Arab Spring" was fast and dramatic: Nonviolent revolutions in the streets removed presidents in Tunisia and Egypt in a matter of weeks, and similar revolutions got underway in Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen. The "Arab Autumn" is a much slower and messier affair.

Demonstrators in Bahrain were driven from the streets by massive military force, and Libya's revolution only triumphed after Western military intervention in support of the rebels. In both Syria and Yemen, originally nonviolent protests risk tipping into civil wars.
Clearly, the Arab world is in a transitory period.

It might be social media, a globalized world, a population bulge or simply a passing of the leadership baton to a younger generation. Most likely, the travails are a combination of all four and then some more.
So far, change within the Arab world has been of two types: cosmetic changes of 'personalities' and more revolutionary 'regime change.'

Syrian Uprising

Now to Syria where Human rights groups say that up to 8000 people have now died since the protests began in mid-March. The Syrian government blamed "terrorist" attackers for killing and death of many people, including Security forces and army men, and declared that its forces had seized a large number of weapons in many parts of the country.

The Arab League, the European Union, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Turkey, and the United States, have condemned the use of violence against the protesters, among others. The government of Iran, Assad's primary regional and political ally, initially suggested the demonstrations were a foreign plot. The Arab League has suspended Syria's membership over the government's response to the crisis.

Many Gulf States have pulled their ambassadors out of Syria, The UN Security Council has not condemned the violence, thanks to vetoes twice from Russia and China.
India, Brazil and South Africa, which hold non-permanent Security Council seats and are considered a bloc of influential developing countries, abstained from the vote first time, prompting criticism from Human Rights Watch.

In the light of that, The Syrian economy continues to weaken as international sanctions against the regime become more painful and the adverse effects of the political turmoil takes its toll on people.

Leadership of Syria Trying to Manage the Crisis

Since the beginning of the uprising, the Syrian government has given several concessions. On 21 April 2011, emergency law in Syria was lifted after forty-eight years of enactment, which had granted the government sweeping authority to suspend constitutional rights. Furthermore, on 24 July 2011, a draft law was introduced in parliament to allow for the creation of more political parties under the conditions that they were not based on religious, tribal or ethnic beliefs and does not discriminate against gender or race. However, these concessions were widely considered trivial by protesters demanding more meaningful reform.

Economic Impacts of the Crisis

With sanctions restricting the export of crude oil as of November 2011, the Syrian Ministry of Petroleum has instructed most joint venture producers to reduce output because of a shortage of storage facilities in Syria. The latter is having difficulties exporting its crude.

In a bid to stem the rise in demand for foreign exchange, the CBS on 23 November 2011 announced a fourth auction of $41.925mn (sold at $1=S£53.01) to reduce the pressure on the Syrian pound, which has lost over 15% of its value since the beginning of the political unrest in March. The official price of the dollar rose to $1=S£55.26 on 19 December 2011, while the black market rate edged up to $1=S£62.

The continuing violence in the country is slowly bleeding the economy. Admitting the magnitude of the problem, the Syrian Minister of Economy Muhammad al-Sha'ar said on 24 November 2011, that the economic crisis was not an easy matter and that "it will have grave repercussions for Syria," which could spill over into other Arab countries. Businessmen complain of cancelled contracts, disrupted trade and laying off employees, as commercial entities continue to suffer from the violence and uncertainty since March 2011. Direct foreign investment has dried up, tourism income is negligible and there has been a regular outflow of capital since March 2011, although details as to where the funds had been transferred are not available. Some reports suggest that banks in Beirut and Dubai may have been the main beneficiaries.

Economic sanctions against Syria are sending a message to the regional business community to distance itself from the regime of President Bashar Al Assad, according to experts.

Dr Abdul Hamid Radwan, a leading economist in the UAE Ministry of Foreign Trade, told Gulf News that "Not only will the sanctions hurt the Syrian regime but they will also place additional pressure on Syrian traders, who have not yet taken a stance against Al Assad's regime, and make them unable to pay for their imports," .

Opposition to sanctions seemed likely to weaken their impact. Iraq, Syria's largest Arab trading partner, abstained after making clear that it would not back punitive measures, partly in the light of its own experience under Saddam Hussain.

Lebanon, still dominated politically by its larger eastern neighbour, voted against the sanctions.

Managing the Crisis and Economic Difficulties

The imposed economic difficulties are adding to an already difficult situation that has continued over the past nine months. No doubt that all this is having a negative impact on the capabilities of the government and on standards of living for the majority of citizens. According to Gulf News, Government projects and private investment have stopped, capital has fled abroad, and the tourism sector, which makes up 12 per cent of Syria's GDP, has nearly evaporated. Industrial production has shrunk, resulting in unemployment for part of its workforce, agriculture is affected heavily due to the vast army operations, exports have been cut to half, unemployment has increased to around 25 per cent, and prices have risen due to widespread shortages. The European Union halted imports of Syrian oil, which account for 90 per cent of the country's revenues, causing it to lose about $400 million a month. Syria's trade with the EU is based mostly on oil exports, which were halted by the EU sanctions. But in the past few days, Iran bought an 80,000 tonne shipment of Syrian oil, the first since the sanctions were imposed. Syria's second biggest trade partner, Iraq, which abstained in a vote to suspend Syria's membership in the Arab League, might not commit to imposing Arab League sanctions.

Unfortunately, Syrian citizens will also be hurt by the sanctions as they already face oil and gas shortages and increases in prices of commodities. The situation in Syria is getting very critical. Food prices are soaring; gas cylinders are not available in the market as well.

III.   Objectives
By Studying the Leadership Style of Syria, we aim to:
• To identify and analyze the political leadership style in Syria.
• To study the reasons led to uprising in Syria.

IV.   Research Methodology
Problem to be investigated

Leaders carry out their roles in a wide variety of styles, e.g., autocratic, democratic, participatory, laissez-faire (hands off), etc. Often, the leadership style depends on the situation. Leading is a very human activity -- we're all humans and most of us have strong feelings and beliefs about leadership.

This study attempts to identify and analyze the political leadership style in Syria, to identify the past, current and emerging leaders styles in Syria, what was the reasons led to the uprising and how the Syrian Political Leadership managed the crisis.

The researcher expects that the present paper will help in answering if leadership style matter to the uprising, and how it's related. Since leaders matter, the decisions they make – i.e., their policies – appear to matter.

Sampling and Database Collection

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, appropriate data will be collected from people organizations from both, official and non-official. Taking a look at the current and emerging leadership Styles in Syria. Survey for the political, Security and economic situation will be carried. The data would be collected with the help of Questionnaire Based Survey. The sample size, which will be Stratified Sampling (probability), for the study would be of 2030 people. The Sample takes into account the geographical and ethnic distribution of all the Syrians, as it will be taking into account the participation of all according to those ratios.

Data Collection

There are two types of the data for such type of research; one is the primary data which would be collected with help of questionnaire and personal interview method from the people of Syria.

Findings

We raised a long questionnaire of several important points, with open answers to the questions to tens of thousands of Syrians inside and outside Syria. And 2030 people of different ages and party affiliations, ideological, religious as well as cultural and social background participated in answering the questionnaire.
After five years, of "Revolution" and "conspiracy", as called by the opposition, and the government respectively, the Syrian Crisis has witnessed the entry of the foreign players in addition to the influx of fighters from all corners of the world to fight with the sides of opposition or the regime or even Islamic Militants which had their way to Syria.
Here, we should take the views of Syrians into consideration to know their point of view regarding the ongoing in their country, as millions of them have been displaced or became refugee after the conflict.

Factors led to spark the demonstrations

Nothing creates out of nowhere that is certain, for every reason a cause. The Syrian situation is no different, Syrians mentioned many reasons and factors led to the launch of the protests and popular demands. Most participants stressed that it is not limited to one factor, but several factors combined to witness demonstrations Syria has never seen such in many decades. The most mentioned factors are social (the spread of corruption and favoritism) which 69.41% mentioned it, then Economic factors (high rates of unemployment and poverty) 55.76% and Political factors (lack of political life and the absence of expression and media freedoms) 50.84%. And of course there was the External factors(trying dumping Syria in civil problems in favor to Israel, as Syria leads the Israel's reluctance axis) which was mentioned by 39.51%.

How much the demands of the demonstrators' were right

With the start of the demonstrations in Syria the demands varied and numerous, so we asked about the opinion if there was right demands of the demonstrators at the beginning of the movement. Most of the participants 61.58% said All of the demands were right At the beginning of the movement, while 30.98% saw Some of them were right and very little percentage 6.90% said There was no need for these demands.

Responsibility for inflaming the situation in Syria

The opinions varied about who is responsible for inflaming the situation and affecting the peace in Syria. 19.66% have blamed both sides, the regime and opposition, while 26.50% saw that the full responsibility lies on the demonstrators who took up arms on directions from outside. But the majority 53.84% blamed only the regime by following the Security option.

How much the armed opposition favored the demonstrators

Till today the controversial question lies whether the formation of the armed opposition favored the protesters. Minority of participants expressed their belief in the usefulness of the armed opposition, in which 31.53% said yes, they provided some protection for the demonstrators whom the regime tried to suppress by all means, but 39.85% saw that it fueled the situation in Syria, and drove out the nature of peaceful demonstrations and 27.44% said there was no option but to protect those in isolation, who were being shot by regime security forces, but at the same time had negative impacts on the popular movement.

Islamic Opposition

Most of Syrians believed that Islamists have influential control over the opposition that demands overthrowing the Baath party regime in Syria. Where 48.13% of respondents in the survey believe that Islamic movements have great

influence on the opposition, 39.16% think there is equal influence between Islamic and Secular movements over the opposition and only 5.62% believe that Secular movements have greater power.

The positions of the Western countries led by the United States

Western nations and on top of it the United States, whose president Barack Obama said more than once that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has lost legitimacy, expressed solidarity with the Syrian people, stood full to their side in face of the regime, as described by these countries, but how Syrians are seeing the positions of the Western countries led by the White House? Only 3.26% saw it as positive attitude, supportive of the revolution and freedom of the Syrian people, whereas 33.10% said it is negative attitude that contributes to the entry of Syria in a civil war and the majority 62.56% saw it as manipulator position swinging on the ropes in an attempt to get as much concessions from the conflict parties in order to serve its aims in the region.

Russian and the Chinese positions

Syrians views towards the Russian and Chinese position, which used the veto in more than one occasion in favor of the Syrian regime, were not much better. Only 23.99% saw it as positive because it refuses to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria, while the majority expressed their dissatisfaction of this position in which 33.84% said it is negative as they support the Syrian government in the face of opposition and 40.99% said there is no guarantee on their position, as they are also looking for their own interests like the Western countries.

V.   Conclusion

Majority of Syrians believe that revolts are for the rightful demands. The many reasons that led to protests like corruption and favoritism, high rate of unemployment and poverty, political factors ,the absence of media freedom. The opinions varied about who is responsible for inflaming the situation and affecting the peace in Syria, around have of them blamed the Syrian regime. They splitted about the formation of the armed opposition, but the majority believe that it did not favour the protestor or the situation in Syria. It was clear that the Islamic opposition has the superior influence. Very few people believe that United States of America had positive attitude to the crisis. Also, they did not like the Russian Role.

References

[1]   Barling, J., Weber, T., & Kelloway, E. K. (1996). Effects of transformational leadership training on attitudinal and financial outcomes: A field experiment. Journal of Applied Psychology, 81, 827 - 832.
[2]   Bass, B. M. (1997). Does the transactional - transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? American Psychologist, 52, 130 - 139.
[3]   Bass, B. M. (1998). Transformational leadership: Industrial, military and educational impacts. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
[4]   Bennis, W. (2003). On becoming a leader (Rev. Ed.). Cambridge, MA: Perseus Pub.
[5]   Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper & Row.
[6]   Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc..
[7]   Campbell, J. (1990). An overview of the Army selection and classification project. Personnel Psychology, 43, 231-240.
[8]   Day, D. V., & Lord, R. G. (1988). Executive leadership and organizational performance: suggestions for a new theory and methodology. Journal of Management, 14(3), 453-464.
[9]   Drucker, P. (2003). The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era.
[10]   Gibb, C. A. (1970). Leadership (Handbook of Social Psychology). Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley. pp. 884–89.
[11]   Hakala, D. (2008). The Top 10 Leadership Qualities. HR World. http://www.hrworld.com/features/top-10-leadership-qualities-031908/ accessed on 19.06.2010.
[12]   Howell, J. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 78, 891 - 902.
[13]   Hoyle, J. R. (1995). Leadership and Futuring: Making Visions Happen. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.,
[14]   Kaiser, R. B., Hogan, R., & Craig, S. B. (2008). Leadership and the Fate of Organizations. American Psychologist, 63(2), 96.
[15]   Katz, R. (1974). Skills of An Effective Administrator, Harvard Business Review, September
[16]   Knowles, H. P., & Saxberg, B. O. (1971). Personality and Leadership Behavior. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley. pp. 884–89.
[17]   Lewin, K.; Lippitt, R.; White, R.K. (1939). "Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates". Journal of Social Psychology 10: 271–301.
[18]   Maslow, A. H. (1954). Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper.
[19]   Maxwell, J. C. (1998). The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
[20]   Meindl, J. R., & Ehrlich, S. B. (1987). The romance of leadership and the evaluation of organizational performance. Academy of Management Journal, 30(1), 91-109.
[21]   Yukl, G. A. (2006). Leadership in Organizations. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.