



**BRITISH ACADEMY
OF MANAGEMENT**

BAM
CONFERENCE

3RD-5TH SEPTEMBER

ASTON UNIVERSITY BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM

This paper is from the BAM2019 Conference Proceedings

About BAM

The British Academy of Management (BAM) is the leading authority on the academic field of management in the UK, supporting and representing the community of scholars and engaging with international peers.

<http://www.bam.ac.uk/>

BAM 2019

**Building and Sustaining High Performance Organisations during uncertain times;
Challenges and Opportunities**

Track – Leadership and Leadership Development

Title – The Changing Nature of Leadership: The impact of the social media revolution on effective leadership.

Track – Leadership and Leadership Development

Title – The Changing Nature of Leadership: Is the evolution of social media changing what it means to be an effective leader?

Abstract

The global trend that is social media has significantly disrupted the nature of human interaction. The challenge for leadership is not simply a practical one of using social media but one of adapting to changing leader/follower relationships. This research, in partnership with UNICON, questioned whether the use of social media is changing our concept of leadership – and how those relationships are managed.

Using an empirical, multi method approach, the research found that whilst the fundamental attributes of leadership seem to be relatively stable, subtle differences in the practice of leadership are emerging; the dimensions of; leadership reach, communication speed, locus of influence, and focus of communications appear to be markedly different in the digital world.

The implications for leadership development and future research are considered.

Word count 125

Keywords:

Leadership; social media; leadership development; leader/follower relationship

There is broad acknowledgement that global trends, such as population growth, increased migration, and prolonged life expectancies, and political upheaval have produced significant changes for the world of work. Many of these changes are closely overlaid with technological advances resulting rapidly evolving skill requirements, alongside economic uncertainty and changing business models. Accompanying shifts in work force expectations and preferences have made the creation of more responsive organisations necessary in order to create the employee engagement needed to sustain high performance. As well as challenging traditional notions of employment and of employer/employee relationships, the concept of leadership itself is also challenged. As employees expect to be included more in organisational decisions, processes and structure, so they expect to be led differently. If high performance organisations are ones where “the process challenges everyone to become a leader of the organisation and leaders challenge followers to perform work at the highest levels possible (Northouse, 2016) then a traditional notion of leadership is no longer fit for purpose - power is distributed. This research examines how one part of the digital revolution, our use of social media, may be changing the perceptions and practices of effective leadership.

The way we think about leadership has always been evolving. The idea of ‘The Great Man’ or ‘Leader as Hero’ (Carlyle, 1840, Galton & Eysenck, 1869) held sway for many years (see, Hoffman, Woehr, Maldagen-Youngjohn, & Lyons, 2011, for one review). This school of thought, the forerunner of Trait Theory (1910 – 1948) held that leaders were different, unique individuals with particular characteristics and traits that marked them out as fit to lead. Following Stodgills’ (1948) survey which concluded that ‘a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits’ the focus shifted to specific ‘system management’ or external behaviours that are regarded as important predictors of leader effectiveness, which could be learned, such as providing direction, fostering trust, and delegating (for meta-analyses, see Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Core to this approach was the acknowledgement of the importance of context in leadership and the identification of two primary considerations, task oriented behaviours and relationship orientated behaviours (Stodgill & Coons 1957). Over time, the latter of these considerations has held sway, and leadership thinking has evolved to emphasise a ‘relational’ view focusing on the relationship between the leader and the follower (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Research into leadership per se has continued apace, with Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967) Charismatic Leadership (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) Transformational Leadership theory (Burns, 1978) and Systems Leadership (Heifetz, Kania & Kramer, 2004), with many of these approaches explicitly acknowledging the importance of characteristics of ‘the follower’ in the manifestation of effective leadership. However, followership itself has remained an understudied topic in the academic literature, with other terms such as ‘subordinates’, ‘direct reports’, ‘team members’ etc. being used interchangeably with the term ‘follower’ and an apparent assumption that leadership is more important than followership. This view, that effective task accomplishment is the result of good leadership has not always recognised the importance of the followers’ role in achieving those tasks.

Several changes have taken place which merit a closer look at the concept of followership and its’ relationship to effective leadership. The traditional organisational hierarchy between leaders and their followers has eroded over time, partly due to social movements and the growing empowerment of followers through their ability to access information more easily (Cross & Parker, 2004), so leaders are no longer the sole source of information about their

companies or sectors. High profile incidents at companies such as Enron, BP, Lloyds, TSB, and Exxon have led followers to question and potentially distrust top leaders, while mergers and acquisitions continually disrupt the stability of leadership. Other factors such as new business models, the gig economy and the concept of ‘slashies’ - people who describe themselves as ‘market analyst/app designer/author/yoga teacher’ showing the breadth of their interests and skill, rather than identifying themselves as a ‘programmer’ or a ‘administrative assistant’, are all blurring the distinction between leaders and followers.

The literature to date on followership has sought to examine follower motivations (Strebel 1996), follower values and trust, (Froggat, 2001) and the characteristics of effective and ineffective followers (Kelley, 1988). Kelley (1992) identified different types of followers (alienated, exemplary, passive, conformist, pragmatist) according to the dimensions of thinking and acting and sought to argue that followers have a dominant style of followership, as leaders may have a preferred or dominant style of leadership. Other writers (Manning & Robertson, 2016) emphasise that the development of effective followers underpins the development of effective leaders, and that it is the interdependence of both roles that contribute to the development of effective organisations.

However, neither the leadership nor the followership literature to date has addressed how these two concepts may be fundamentally changing. Particularly in the light of the fourth industrial revolution, where social media and other new technologies are blurring boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological worlds, leadership and followership theory and practice needs to evolve again, with scholars bringing the next wave of leadership ideas and strategies to the forefront (Avolio, Kahai, & Dodge, 2000).

This research considers one specific aspect of the relevant changes here and that is the phenomena that is social media. This has radically changed the nature of human interaction and impacted on the quantity and the nature of information exchanged, affecting both local and distant relationships (Joo & Teng, 2017). The impact is not simply a practical one of leaders using social media to spread their messages; the scale and the unexpectedness of, for example, the recent American election in which one candidate’s Tweets arguably played a considerable role and Bulman (2016) suggests something deeper may be going on. Indeed, we can see the impact of social media on leadership and followership simply by considering its’ language. ‘To follow’ used to refer to behaviour which meant to ‘go behind’ someone else, so a follower would tread in the footsteps of a leader. Social media has repurposed the term and now implies a choice made by the follower regarding information, or communications, which may or may not have any behavioural consequences. This choice is selective, voluntary and multi channelled.

It seems likely that this significant change to the way we communicate, our social media experiences, may fundamentally change the concept of what we understand leadership and followership to be – particularly with regard to interpersonal dynamics. Power and Phillips-Wren (2012) suggest that social media can exert a powerful influence both on personal and managerial decision-making, sometimes overwhelming logical thought altogether. And, as Turner (2014) indicated, social media affects social power dynamics in profound ways – it allows low, or no, consequence choices of who to ‘follow’ and ‘unfollow’; and when to comment or remain silent. It allows selective sharing and endorsement of opinions (e.g., Facebook comment and ‘likes’), with endorsements being relatively easily obtainable, and with those with large numbers of endorsements may increase perceptions of message credibility, “click-validity”. Social media also allows for emotional investment to be declared and shared perceptions to be cultivated; it affects discourse; and, of course, it has vast, global

reach, which may be particularly significant in times of worldwide uncertainty and unrest. It is appropriate, in the light of the current global challenges facing businesses everywhere, not just in the digital arena, that we re-evaluate what it means to lead effectively. This is particularly pertinent for those of us engaged in the business of developing future leaders.

Research is beginning to examine how the Internet affects cognitive, psychological, and language development (e.g. Johnson, 2008), suggesting that this can affect humanity at the most basic levels. Other research examines the dynamics of trust between customers and companies in online shopping contexts (e.g., Urban, Amyx, & Lorenzon, 2009), and between virtual and face-to-face teams developing relationships through computer mediated communication (Wilson, Straus, & McEvily, 2006).

With reference specifically to leadership, some studies have looked at social movements and, how social media affects followers' willingness to act on behalf of a cause, (Turner & Seidel, 2012). Other research has begun to explore ways in which specific groups of leaders may utilize social media. For example, Porter, Sweetser, Chung, and Kim (2007) found that public relations practitioners with blogs perceived themselves as having more prestige power and expertise power than those who did not blog. Luo, Jiang, and Kulemeka (2015) interviewed public relations professionals and found four central themes around how they used social media in leadership roles: exhibiting expert power, demonstrating tangible outcomes to gain decision power, displaying vision. Subsequent work by those same authors (Jiang, Luo, & Kulemeka, 2017) showed that communications professionals using Facebook and YouTube for strategic communication and environmental scanning were more likely to undertake leadership behaviours.

As yet there has been little research directly examining the implications of social media and computer mediated communication more generally for successful leadership strategies and leadership development pedagogy. We have, for some time, acknowledged that many leaders are leading people who are much more social media savvy than themselves and, that some business areas such as marketing and sales are further ahead in understanding social media's impact on strategy.

What are the implications for example, on our assumptions about the nature of the relationship between leader and followers? Or with regard to the key leadership attribute of creating trust or how to effectively motivate others? If our concepts of leadership are evolving, so too must our strategies for leading successfully, and our approach to developing leaders for the future. If we do not evolve to meet the realities of the modern environment, we risk irrelevance. However, before we can rethink our leadership development tactics, we must understand exactly if, and in what ways, the new leadership paradigms differ from the old.

This research aims to consider this important question of how leadership may be developing in an age dominated by the use of social media for communication and information sharing. The research question is broken down into two key areas;

1. An examination of the key attributes of leadership;
 - Are accepted, traditional leadership attributes changing? If so, what does this mean for leadership practice? Is the impact and influence of leaders on followers being redesigned?

- Are there demographic differences that seem to matter?
2. If the key attributes of leadership are being reshaped, what are the implications for how business educators should respond?

Method

We initially conducted a pilot study during the 2018 BAM conference which constituted a structured development inquiry session with 42 participants who were either senior academics or senior professionals in the L&D community.

During this session we examined both individual experiences and opinions, and created ‘vignettes’ or short case studies of 5 publicly recognized leaders who appeared to be fluent users of social media. This allowed an examination and analysis of exemplars of leaders using social media effectively.

The second stage of the research proceeded using three different methodologies:

1. We conducted a focus group of approximately 18 executive MBA participants with leadership aspirations. This was designed to:
 - Articulate an emerging and adapted leadership model reflecting the next phase of leadership thinking
 - Provide a forum for participants to discuss how leadership is evolving alongside the use of easily available social media platforms.
 - Allow participants to explore the opportunities and challenges for the development of future business leaders.

2. We conducted an electronic survey, with 86 respondents
 In our sampling design for the survey, we selected leaders who were leading established teams. We considered a team to be composed of one team leader and a minimum of five team members who reported directly to the leader. We also included respondents who were either involved in leadership development as faculty members or consultants. The survey respondents included volunteers who responded to a call for participants whilst participating on an executive leadership course at a leading UK business school, or through their membership of a research based international organisation. Respondents were asked to complete a web based survey and followed up with a reminder after three weeks. The total number of completed responses was 86. 54 Respondents were male, 32 were female)
 No significant differences were detected between the participants joining the web survey via the business school or the research based organisation.

3. We interviewed ten senior managers, who participated in the survey and who volunteered to take part in a follow up interview. Interviews were semi structured and contemporaneous notes were subsequently content analysed.

Measures

We used a leadership framework adapted from Yukl, Gordon & Taber (2002) to construct both the survey and the interview protocol. The framework considered three dimensions of leadership behaviours; task, relationship and change related behaviours and comprised six categories;

- Task behaviours; clarifying roles and responsibilities, target setting and performance management.
- Relationship behaviours; encouraging and recognizing others, developing and inspiring others.
- Change behaviours; challenging the status quo, inspiring and communicating a vision.

Participants were asked to rate the importance of leadership attributes on a 7 point Likert scale, using the anchors ranging from ‘most important’ to ‘least important’.

Findings

Quantitative analysis

As the total number of respondents to the survey was relatively small ($n = 86$), and participants had been categorized as falling into 2 main groups, ‘leaders’ and ‘consultants’, quantitative analysis was conducted to see if both groups were distinct, or could in fact be treated as one set of participants. Analysis was also conducted to check the integrity of the model used.

Differences between participant groups.

Statistical analysis revealed that the first three survey questions revealed no significant differences between the consultants and the leader groups;

- On self-reported styles of leadership.
- On how they ranked change, relational, and task behaviours.
- On what they believed to be the most significant attributes of effective leadership

All these analyses indicated low power, which may suggest the results are due to low respondent numbers.

Also there were no significant difference between consultants and leaders when asked about their own ability to use social media to utilize change, relational, and task behaviour. Again even lower power.

Overall while there are no significant differences between the two groups, there were some interesting points to note. For example, the consultant sample seemed more confident in their ability to use social media when compared to leaders in all three taxonomies. Effect size was, however, small.

Additionally, when asked about effective leaders and how often leaders are using social media today, the leaders group indicated that they viewed leaders as using social media more for task behaviours than consultants did. This seemed to be about a medium effect size and possibly with a large sample size this finding could have been significant.

- Does count of reported social media usage sites relate to leadership style preference?

There were no significant correlations between the numbers of social media sites the participants reported using and the effective leadership question or the role of social media in their working role. However, there was a significant correlation between number of sites used and self - reported confidence in ability to use social media in change and relational leadership behaviours. The correlation with task behaviour was not significant but just barely. While it seems that the more participants reported using social media the more confident they

were in being able to use social media in their working role, this correlation was weak with all being below .25.

Insert Table 1 about here

- Platform usage. LinkedIn was the most common most often used platform so we looked at those who listed LinkedIn as their most used vs those who listed anything else. For looking at change, relational, and task behaviours for effective leaders there were no significant differences or notable effect size.

There were no significant differences when asking how often leaders are using social media today but there was a trend where those who did not cite LinkedIn as their primary social media platform viewed all three of the taxonomies as being used more than the LinkedIn group. If using just a Cohen's D the effect sizes for those differences seems to be around .4 which is about medium. With a larger sample size this would possibly be significant. The non-LinkedIn group also tended to report higher ability levels but these were not significant but the difference between means relative to standard deviation is noticeable:

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 2a about here

- Leadership questions to age?

There were no significant correlation between age (category) and leadership questions. Having age be an interval variable rather than category may be a better choice to pick up age trends. There were no significant gender differences on any questions.

Insert table 3 about here

- Integrity of the scales – although using a recognized and validated model, we checked whether the questions factored out in our data. The taxonomy used three categories outlined above; Task Behaviours, Relations Behaviours, Change Behaviours; It does appear that the relations and change behaviours are factoring together, with task behaviours being more independent. This may aligns with models such as transformative and transactional leadership styles where task behaviours would be more transactional and relations and change behaviours fit together under transformative.

- Do the questions correlate across three types of questions?

The individual questions asked seemed to correlate with each other as expected, with higher correlations within question type (questions about effective leadership, social media use of leaders, self - reported confidence in social media):

Insert Tables 4 & 4a about here

The two sets of social media questions correlated more with each other while most of the effective leadership questions (the relational and task questions) were not significantly correlated with the social media questions. This shows that the question sets (one asking about effective leadership, one asking about leaders' use of strategies with social media, and one's own confidence of social media use) seem to be distinct.

Insert Table 5 about here

Qualitative findings

Content analysis of the qualitative data explored six themes. They were;

1. Social media usage
2. Leadership effectiveness
3. Changing attributes of leadership
4. Changing attributes of followership
5. Pitfalls and challenges

1. Social Media Usage;

We were interested to understand how leaders are actually using social media, the leaders interviewed reported variable levels of social media usage, from between 30 minutes a day to up to some 6 hours a week and most leaders reported using between 2 to 4 platforms with Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube being cited most frequently. (LinkedIn was the most likely platform among respondents to our survey.) They were then asked about how much time this involved, how many platforms were used, etc. There seems to be more variations than similarity across our sample about the key characteristics of what constitutes a high user of social media. Most participants pointed out that it is common to use social media differently in personal and professional lives. Our respondent group had a broad distribution between those who had only recently begun to use social media (in the past year) others who described themselves as early adopters and a range of experience in between the two.

Following the model which underpinned the research, social media usage was reported as follows;

2. Leadership Effectiveness

- **Inspiring and communicating a vision.**

Many participants spoke of using social media for marketing and brand communications, for telling the organisational ‘story’ and sending powerful messages to both current and potential employees. Company visions can be reached by all employees, can be revised and kept in the public eye, creating brand identity. On a personal level, leaders use social media to develop their personal leadership brand, to expand their influence and share opinions on professional matters creating high visibility and a coherent message. A key factor is the increased ‘reach’ offered by social media, as it allows organisations and leaders to communicate directly and more quickly (if not instantly) with a much broader range of stakeholders. Social media both amplifies and accelerates organisational and individual messages, making effective connections the key to effective leadership.

- **Encouraging and recognising others**

This was the most often quoted usage of social media for many participants, and appears to be a leadership attribute that may be increasing in importance. They spoke of publicly congratulating team members, encouraging and rewarding their teams, acknowledging success and highlighting great performance. This seems to be a very effective motivational tool, acknowledging what success looks like and encouraging aspirational performance from not only direct reports, but with a wider company reach than has previously been possible.

- **Developing and empowering others.**

This again was an important area for leaders. Participants talked of the wider scope for collaboration and empowerment through social media, and the opportunities for personalised and immediate coaching ‘in the moment’. It is particularly relevant for dispersed or virtual teams, minimising the disruptions of time and geographical differences.

“For my direct team I use our internal media system; they have a 5 minute check-in each Friday night to look at last week – both the positives and negatives; have they used their strengths? Priorities for next week and what do they need from me as their boss? I comment on each, then we catch up in a weekly real time meeting.”

- **Challenging the Status Quo.**

A key challenge to the status quo has been in the field of customer relations. Social media can now publicise customer complaints instantly, and leaders acknowledge the need to respond equally publicly and equally instantly. We heard of bad customer experiences being immediately transformed into good PR through effective use of social media, or indeed into reputational damage through poor responding. We also heard one or two examples of leaders using social media to ‘check the pulse’ of their organisations and making changes in the light of the informal ‘noise’ that they detected. A key feature of social media that disrupts organisational functioning is the speed with which data can be collected and used, this often challenges existing process.

- **Clarifying roles and responsibilities**

Although this was a factor in our leadership model, no participants reported using Social Media for any aspect of this leadership task.

- **Target setting and performance monitoring.**

Participants often reported how they found social media useful in getting things done, through improved communications. It is used internally for performance monitoring and

reporting, particularly through closed groups such as WhatsApp. Live Twitter feeds are also used for reporting aspects of delivery. Many teams report that using social media helps them to speed up what they do, thus achieving targets more quickly, and picking up early on problems that might hinder performance.

3. Changing attributes of leadership

There also seem to be some developments in contemporary leadership that can be linked to the emergence of social media.

A key trend is the emergence of the importance of ‘thought leadership’ for leaders today. To be seen as effective, leaders need to be seen as thought leaders who can build momentum and publicly call others to action. This visibility is a source of leadership power and is related to the wider communication network that characterises fluent social media users. To be influential, leaders must be seen to ‘own’ a narrative and to have the courage to share their opinions widely.

For this public presence to be influential, however, our participants reported that leaders needed to be able to command trust, through establishing authenticity. The way leaders do this successfully is to ‘have the courage to be vulnerable’. By this, our participants meant that leaders must allow others into their personal lives, and be prepared to share personal information. This requires an honesty, and a sharing of emotions which has not been seen as a traditional leadership requirement.

Leaders who demonstrate thought leadership effectively have excellent ‘message management’ skills. As well as managing outbound communications, it is equally important that they have the ability to manage incoming communications. Social media can lead to information overload and effective leaders can filter the ‘noise’ and respond appropriately within moments, on different platforms and using different modes of communication.

More than ever, effective leaders today must be excellent communicators, on many levels. This communication must be two way, quick and authentic.

4. Changing attributes of followership

A key issue for effective leadership are the changing needs of followers. People are used to having their views heard and responded to on social media, and so expect their leaders to do the same. They want fast, personalised responses from their leaders. A new generation of followers, digital natives, are used to choosing the information and communications they receive, and leaders must ensure that they are ‘chosen’. Social media has changed the way relationships are developed and maintained and leaders who do not address these changes were described by some participants as ‘irrelevant’.

“If the slowest mode of communication you have ever experienced is email, your expectations are different and leaders must adapt to survive.”

The issue of trust was raised by our participants in the sense that who and what to trust is now a conscious decision by followers. In the world of ‘fake news’ many followers do not expect to be able to trust all they see and hear. Again, leaders need to be ‘chosen’ to be influential, and it would appear that the concept of trust is being recalibrated as we speak. There is no way of knowing whether being ‘liked’ is the same as being trusted.

There has been a significant movement away from the command and control leadership of the early approaches, and even from the participative models of more recent years. The power distance is now much shorter between leaders and followers, and followers have the power to decide who is influential or not. This decision is sometimes seen to be clouded by the need to

be entertained and the power of celebrity culture that pervades the media. Leaders need to be both interested and interesting in order to hold that space.

5. Pitfalls and challenges

Our respondents talked of two significant risks associated with the use of social media by leaders. The first is the tension between the need to be personally open and transparent in order to invite trust, and the risk of becoming vulnerable through such exposure. The challenge is to protect privacy whilst welcoming intimacy. A lack of consistency between on line and offline personas creates mistrust and loses influence, such inconsistency may be historic or indeed unintended. Although regulatory frameworks are currently being developed, there are still dangers associated with the indestructible nature of information posted on social media and with the lack of checks and balances. It is often impossible to control the development of a message, for example when it goes viral, or to correct malicious misinterpretation.

The way in which communications are managed also pose a risk. If social media is simply used as a megaphone, it loses power and credibility. However, if used to listen, understand, and respond appropriately, it affords leaders a significant competitive advantage. Some of our respondents felt that to manage this risk was extremely time consuming, whilst others disagreed, viewing it as an opportunity to be more effective leaders.

The second key risk identified by our respondents was another tension, that between the need for speedy and attention holding responses versus the leadership responsibility for thoughtful and considered views. It was felt that the former pressure could lead to ‘sound bite leadership’ making strategy the casualty of short term thinking. This can also oversimplify complex issues, ultimately affecting organisational success.

Discussion of findings

The lack of difference between the leader group and the consultant group in the quantitative analysis allowed us to collate the open question comments from both groups and treat them as one for qualitative content analysis.

There was no significant correlation between age (category) and leadership questions, which seems surprising as received wisdom holds that there are significant difference between ‘digital natives’ or younger groups, and more mature individuals. Our qualitative data did include a younger group, but again, no significant differences were apparent. This may be a technical matter, having age be an interval variable rather than category may be a better choice to pick up age trends.

The relations and change behaviours in our model appeared to be factoring together, with task behaviours being more independent. This may align the transformative and transactional (Judge & Piccolo 2004) leadership styles, where task behaviours would be more transactional and relations and change behaviours would work together under transformative. However, in this set of findings was the observation that the respondents who reported LinkedIn being their preferred or most used platform actually reported that they thought social media was not used much for leadership. Those who did not cite LinkedIn as their preferred mode, seemed to feel it actually made leadership more effective. The reasoning behind this is not clear but there may be a difference between people whose primary social media account is more work focused on LinkedIn than less work focused such as Facebook and Twitter. There may also be a difference here related to the ‘sophistication’ or ‘fluency’ of social media use.

More than ever our results suggest that leadership is unique and focuses on personal strengths and profiles. Many of our respondents talked of the need for leaders to ‘humanise’ themselves by sharing personal information through social media. This allows for intimacy and familiarity with the leader, which can create trust if effectively managed.

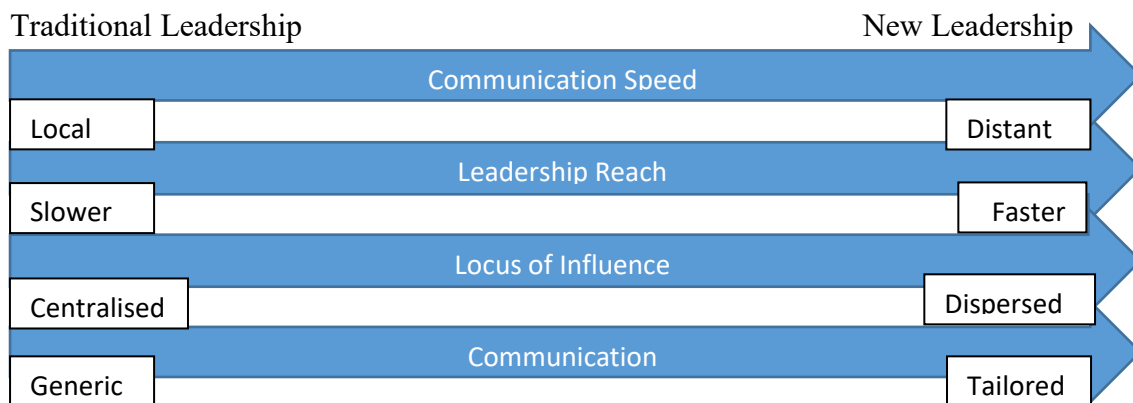
We may be witnessing an evolved model of leadership, which in some respects mirrors the ‘great man’ approach in that leadership is personal and resides in individuals. There is a paradox here however, the new perspective redistributes power rather than attributes it to an elite, and this redistribution is seen as a key feature of high performing organisations. As well as being about intimate, tailored communications, leadership also must accept this redistribution of power, where others have access to as much information as they do, and can share their views as easily. This seems to imply a need for greater inclusivity, with leaders needing to, and being able, to acknowledge and include the views of others in their decision making. The apparent interactions of the relationship and change dimensions of leadership could suggest that in a period of constant and increasing change, leader/follower relations become critically important and the speed, intimacy and ultimately the inclusivity of those decisions may be the key to competitive advantage. A further evolution of leadership thinking in line with this thinking is that of shared leadership (Alvolio et al. 2009) which takes the concept of inclusivity further into strategic decision making.

Leadership is clearly about the ability to influence others, (Haslam, Reicher & Platow 2010) and the key to this is emotional engagement, through conversation, which involves as much listening as ‘talking’. With redistributed power, ‘followers’ can choose who to listen to and who to ignore. This is an important change. The key to effective leadership is to have an authentic voice, which people want to hear – emotional engagement is at the heart of this. We cannot ignore the fact that followership is changing and therefore leadership must change. Digital natives have different expectations and expect to be led ‘up close, personal’ and fast.

While the distance between leaders and followers is now much closer, leaders are open to more scrutiny and can receive as well as send messages much more easily. The breadth of their reach is clearly far more with social media than in the past. Not only can leaders reach many more people but their communication is much, much faster and a single message (good or bad) may be indelible once out there on the Internet. Followers can now be as powerful as leaders, as influence is distributed but although these changes all seem to create more risk for leaders these may well be superficial differences. After all, leaders have always been judged by those around them and decisions made about whether or not they are effective and worth following. Possibly, now in this social media era, those decisions are clearer and the power of followers more evident to their leaders.

However, when examining what has changed and what has remained the same, we see that beliefs about the essential attributes of leadership have not changed. The dimensions we used in our survey were not challenged at all and respondents endorsed the model that was offered. Is it a brave new world? What has changed is the nature and granularity of the relation between leaders and their stakeholder groups. This research identified several aspects of this changing relationship; breadth of reach; speed of communication; redistribution of influence and individualization of messages. It is important to note that these dimensions can also provide new opportunities that some of our participants said are helping them manage their time more effectively, as well as to be more effective leaders. The importance of authenticity, managing relationships, the ability to influence others, being a great communicator, recognising the efforts of others and the ability to communicate a vision are key elements of effective leaders.

Changes from traditional to 'new' leadership



What may be happening is that there are certain leadership paradoxes, or tensions, that are amplified and accentuated by the use of social media. One example of this is the need for speed in responding on social media versus the importance of providing a lucid, appropriate and considered response. It can be hard to resolve this tension, with some suggesting that strategic thinking may be a casualty here. Another is that the 'big' personality and confidence which helps develop a social media persona must be balanced with personal communications with followers. Our study did find some polarised views, with some participants believing that social media is not a major tool for leadership and that leading is all about face to face relationships. However, although personal, individual relationships are important to effective leadership there seem to be many ways social media can help leaders with communication and engagement.

Social media does however have a dark side with significant risks at both a personal and corporate level and we heard that leads to caution on the part of some leaders (and some organisations) about using it. In the main, it seems that the use of social media offers important opportunities for a leader to be 'in the moment' with those around them, up close and personal, to increase the levels of trust and authenticity, and create a stronger sense of belonging which is what many followers want from their leaders. Social media can also offer tangible benefits for those who are leading teams across different time-zones and sites, making communication easier and more personal.

Implications for Leadership Development

Use of social media by leaders heightens the importance of authenticity, trust and personal openness, therefore a key development need for leaders in this context is for increased self-awareness. Many leadership development interventions do include input around self-awareness, witness the ubiquitous use of instruments such as the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) as the development of trust, demonstrated through openness and integrity is fundamental to any leader/follower relationship. However, this becomes even more important in the social media context for two main reasons. First of all, the importance of the leader's 'brand' and the visibility of the individual forms the basis of follower choice and thus is the platform for leadership influence. Secondly, because of the risk of inevitable and forensic scrutiny leaders are subject to through social media, they must be acutely aware of their values, their reasons for leading and their true leadership identity. Misalignment between

public and private personas can lead to loss of influence and reputation which may be terminally damaging for a leader.

There is also a clear need for leaders to have the technical competence to use social media effectively. Skill levels and confidence vary widely, and lack of ability limits the leadership toolkit. This would be counter intuitive to the recent trends in leadership development which have focussed on 'soft' skills, but it would seem that the inclusion of the 'hard' skills of technology mastery are necessary.

Future Research

The statistical analysis generated several non-significant results, however, these were all with low power. In this instance the effect sizes are moderate but it is still not significant. This low power probably indicates that we did not have a large enough sample size. For instance if the effect size was the same but the sample size was doubled it probably would have been significant. We still cannot be sure because with a smaller sample size the effect size is much more malleable but we did not find a small effect size and non-significance. So when we see non-significance but a moderate effect size we still cannot claim significance but we would suggest that future research, with larger samples, should look more into those variables as the sample size we currently have might not have been big enough to indicate those effects.

Limitations

The study has some limitations such as the small sample size of our survey indicated above and the fact that the study was largely UK centric. A further limitation was that no objective or subjective measure of leadership effectiveness was included in the survey. Future research should address this issue. The fact that the interviews (and leadership case study vignettes) focused on individual leaders may be another drawback. It would be interesting to conduct a similar project with a leadership group in a single organisation, which would control for variables such as culture, support and common practice which our study did not consider. It would also be useful to further contrast age and gender differences, leadership experience and function.

Concluding Comments

This study explored an important area in the field of leadership research. Leadership thinking has continually evolved in response to social change, and we can track these changes through the agrarian, industrial, service and knowledge revolutions. We are now considering the concept of 'high performance organisations' which focus on achieving high employee ownership at every level of the business. In practice, every employee is encouraged to take an active leadership role to ensure sustainability and long term success. Clearly this development requires us to continue to evolve our thinking about leadership. It now appears that we are in a digital age, where connectivity, relationships and blurring boundaries hold sway. Social media plays a large part in this development and it is reasonable to assume this development will affect leadership thinking in the way that previous evolutions have done.

Our research has provided a useful contribution to knowledge in this field by highlighting the subtle changes in leadership practice which are influenced by the social media phenomena. It is likely that these changes will afford a mixture of risks and benefits which leaders themselves and leadership development professionals must take account of. We encourage colleagues to undertake further research to clarify how best we can continue to develop and support effective leadership.

References:

- Avolio, B. J., Kahai, S., & Dodge, G. E. 2000. E-leadership: Implications for theory, research, and practice. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(4): 615-668.
- Avolio, B. J., Reichard, R. J., Hannah, S. T., Walumbwa, F. O., & Chan, A. 2009. A meta-analytic review of leadership impact research: Experimental and quasi-experimental studies. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20(5): 764–784.
- Bulman, M. 2016. Donald Trump's 'celebrity-style' Tweets helped him win US presidential election says data scientist. *Independent*. Retrieved January 2019 from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-twitter-account-election-victory-president-elect-david-robinson-statistical-analysis-a7443071.html>
- Burns, J. M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
- Carlyle T. 1840. *On heroes, hero worship and the heroic in history*. London: Chapman & Hall Ltd.
- Conger J.A., & Kanungo R.N. 1998. *Charismatic leadership in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Cross R. & Parker, A. 2004. *The hidden power of social networks*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Uhl-Bien, M. 2012. Organizational discourse analysis (ODA): Examining leadership as a relational process. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(6): 1043–1062.
- Fiedler, F. E. 1967. *A theory of leadership effectiveness*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Froggatt, C.C. 2001. *Work naked*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Galton, F., & Eysenck, H.J. 1869. *Hereditary genius*. London: Macmillan.
- Haslam S.A, Reicher S.D., & Platow, M.J. 2010. *The New psychology of leadership; identity, influence and power*. London: Psychology Press.
- Heifetz, R., Kania, J., & Kramer, M. 2004. Leading boldly, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2004.
- Hoffman, B. J., Woehr, D. J., Maldagen-Youngjohn, R., & Lyons, B. D. 2011. Great man or great myth? A quantitative review of the relationship between individual differences and leader effectiveness. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84(2): 347-381.
- Jiang, H., Luo, Y., & Kulemeka, O. 2017. Strategic social media use in public relations: Professionals' perceived social media impact, leadership behaviors, and work-life conflict. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 11: 18-41.
- Johnson, G. M. 2008. Cognitive processing differences between frequent and infrequent Internet users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(5): 2094-2106.

- Joo, T. M., & Teng, C. E. 2017. Impacts of social media (Facebook) on human communication and relationships. *International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology*, 7(4): 27-50.
- Judge T., & Piccolo R. 2004. Transformational and transactional leadership; A meta-analysis of their relative validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, (89)4: 755–768.
- Kelley, R. 1992. *The power of followership*. New York: Doubleday.
- Kelley, R.E. 1988. In praise of followers. *Harvard Business Review*, 66: 142-148.
- Luo, Y., Jiang, H., & Kulemeka, O. 2015 Strategic social media management and public relations leadership: Insights from industry leaders. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 9: 167-197.
- Manning A., & Robertson R. 2016. A three factor model of followership. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 48(6): 277-283.
- Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Porter, L.V., Sweetser, K.D., Chung, D., & Kim, E. 2007. Blog power: Examining the effects of practitioner blog use on power in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 33(1): 92-95.
- Power, D. J., & Phillips-Wren, G. 2011. Impact of social media and Web 2.0 on decision-making. *Journal of Decision Systems*, 20(3): 249-261.
- Stodgill, R. M. 1948. Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *The Journal of Psychology*, 25:1, 35-71.
- Stodgill, R. M., & Coons, A. E. (Eds.). 1957. *Leader behavior: Its description and measurement*. Oxford, England: Ohio State University, Bureau of Business.
- Strebler, P. 1996. Why do employees resist change? *Harvard Business Review*, 74(3): 86-92.
- Turner, R. A. 2014. *The virtualization of free space and action: advancing a modernized model of power inequity attenuation and the Free Space Index (FSIx)*. Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia, Canada.
- Turner, R. A., & Seidel, M. D. L. 2012. *Predicting social action*. Administrative Sciences Association of Canada Organizational Theory Division Conference Proceedings, 33(1).
- Urban, G. L., Amyx, C., & Lorenzon, A. 2009. Online trust: state of the art, new frontiers, and research potential. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23(2): 179-190.
- Wilson, J. M., Straus, S. G., & McEvily, B. 2006. All in due time: The development of trust in computer-mediated and face-to-face teams. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 99(1): 16-33.
- Yukl G., Gordon A., & Taber T. 2002. A hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior: Integrating a half century of behavioral research. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9(1): 15–30.

Appendices - Tables

Table 1

Correlations between platform choice, effective leadership attributes and their use of social media in leadership

		Correlations
		Count of Social Media Use
Count of Social Media Use	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	79
Media Ability - Change	Pearson Correlation	.238*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036
	N	78
Media Ability - Relational	Pearson Correlation	.240*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034
	N	78
Media Ability - Task	Pearson Correlation	.209
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.066
	N	78

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2
Social media confidence

Descriptive Statistics				
	LinkedIn Most Used	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Media Ability - Change	0	4.234	1.5564	47
	1	3.983	1.8002	29
	Total	4.138	1.6464	76
Media Ability - Relational	0	4.426	1.6875	47
	1	3.793	1.8970	29
	Total	4.184	1.7848	76
Media Ability - Task	0	3.447	1.6947	47
	1	2.879	1.6885	29
	Total	3.230	1.7038	76

Multivariate Tests ^a									
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^c
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.861	148.353 ^b	3.000	72.000	.000	.861	445.060	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.139	148.353 ^b	3.000	72.000	.000	.861	445.060	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	6.181	148.353 ^b	3.000	72.000	.000	.861	445.060	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	6.181	148.353 ^b	3.000	72.000	.000	.861	445.060	1.000
Q8Link	Pillai's Trace	.061	1.548 ^b	3.000	72.000	.210	.061	4.643	.392
	Wilks' Lambda	.939	1.548 ^b	3.000	72.000	.210	.061	4.643	.392
	Hotelling's Trace	.064	1.548 ^b	3.000	72.000	.210	.061	4.643	.392
	Roy's Largest Root	.064	1.548 ^b	3.000	72.000	.210	.061	4.643	.392

a. Design: Intercept + Q8Link

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 2a
Social Media usage

Descriptive Statistics				
	LinkedIn Most Used	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Social Media - Change	0	2.533	1.5613	46
	1	2.103	1.1906	29
	Total	2.367	1.4363	75
Social Media - Relational	0	2.489	1.5652	46
	1	1.914	1.0443	29
	Total	2.267	1.4078	75
Social Media - Task	0	1.924	1.4258	46
	1	1.345	.7689	29
	Total	1.700	1.2412	75

Multivariate Tests ^a									
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^c
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.745	69.197 ^b	3.000	71.000	.000	.745	207.591	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.255	69.197 ^b	3.000	71.000	.000	.745	207.591	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	2.924	69.197 ^b	3.000	71.000	.000	.745	207.591	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	2.924	69.197 ^b	3.000	71.000	.000	.745	207.591	1.000
Q8Link	Pillai's Trace	.067	1.700 ^b	3.000	71.000	.175	.067	5.100	.427
	Wilks' Lambda	.933	1.700 ^b	3.000	71.000	.175	.067	5.100	.427
	Hotelling's Trace	.072	1.700 ^b	3.000	71.000	.175	.067	5.100	.427
	Roy's Largest Root	.072	1.700 ^b	3.000	71.000	.175	.067	5.100	.427

- a. Design: Intercept + Q8Link
- b. Exact statistic
- c. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 3
Correlations between age and leadership dimensions

		Age
Age	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	98
Effective Leadership - Change	Pearson Correlation	.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.389
	N	86
Effective Leadership - Relational	Pearson Correlation	-.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.638
	N	86
Effective Leadership - Task	Pearson Correlation	-.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.552
	N	86
Social Media - Change	Pearson Correlation	.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.258
	N	78
Social Media - Relational	Pearson Correlation	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.791
	N	78
Social Media - Task	Pearson Correlation	-.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.649
	N	78
Media Ability - Change	Pearson Correlation	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.846
	N	79
Media Ability - Relational	Pearson Correlation	-.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.343
	N	79
Media Ability - Task	Pearson Correlation	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.996
	N	78

Table 4
Leadership attributes factors relationships

Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.493	41.542	41.542	2.493	41.542	41.542
2	1.142	19.038	60.580	1.142	19.038	60.580
3	.865	14.409	74.989			
4	.723	12.044	87.033			
5	.476	7.935	94.967			
6	.302	5.033	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix^a

	Component	
	1	2
Effective Leadership - Inspiring and communicating a shared vision	.647	-.433
Effective Leadership - Encouraging, recognising and rewarding the contributions of others	.616	.482
Effective Leadership - Developing others and empowering them to act	.445	.592
Effective Leadership - Challenging the status quo, and taking risks	.538	.400
Effective Leadership - Clarifying roles and responsibilities	.805	-.266
Effective Leadership - Target setting and monitoring performance	.748	-.377

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted.

Table 4a
Individual questions correlations

		Correlations								
		Effective Leadership - Change	Effective Leadership - Relational	Effective Leadership - Task	Social Media - Change	Social Media - Relational	Social Media - Task	Media Ability - Change	Media Ability - Relational	Media Ability - Task
Effective Leadership - Change	Pearson Correlation	1	.377**	.516**	.309**	.352**	.212	.310**	.340**	.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.006	.001	.062	.005	.002	.001
	N	87	86	86	79	79	78	79	79	78
Effective Leadership - Relational	Pearson Correlation	.377**	1	.296**	.076	.107	.046	.100	.176	.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.006	.507	.350	.692	.380	.122	.443
	N	86	86	86	78	78	78	79	79	78
Effective Leadership - Task	Pearson Correlation	.516**	.296**	1	.100	.051	.114	.008	.102	.230*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.006		.386	.659	.320	.942	.371	.043
	N	86	86	86	78	78	78	79	79	78
Social Media - Change	Pearson Correlation	.309**	.076	.100	1	.724**	.660**	.540**	.391**	.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.507	.386		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	79	78	78	79	79	78	78	78	77
Social Media - Relational	Pearson Correlation	.352**	.107	.051	.724**	1	.571**	.436**	.469**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.350	.659	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	79	78	78	79	79	78	78	78	77
Social Media - Task	Pearson Correlation	.212	.046	.114	.660**	.571**	1	.304**	.271*	.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.692	.320	.000	.000		.007	.016	.000
	N	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	77
Media Ability - Change	Pearson Correlation	.310**	.100	.008	.540**	.436**	.304**	1	.848**	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.380	.942	.000	.000	.007		.000	.000
	N	79	79	79	78	78	78	79	79	78
Media Ability - Relational	Pearson Correlation	.340**	.176	.102	.391**	.469**	.271*	.848**	1	.708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.122	.371	.000	.000	.016	.000		.000
	N	79	79	79	78	78	78	79	79	78
Media Ability - Task	Pearson Correlation	.355**	.088	.230*	.539**	.498**	.475**	.745**	.708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.443	.043	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	78	78	78	77	77	77	78	78	78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5
Social media and effective leadership

Descriptive Statistics				
	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Effective Leadership - Change	Con	6.159	.6359	44
	Lead	6.107	.5580	42
	Total	6.134	.5962	86
Effective Leadership - Relational	Con	6.455	.6363	44
	Lead	6.381	.5610	42
	Total	6.419	.5983	86
Effective Leadership - Task	Con	5.455	1.0773	44
	Lead	5.798	.8629	42
	Total	5.622	.9880	86

Multivariate Tests ^a									
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^c
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.994	4467.663 ^b	3.000	82.000	.000	.994	13402.988	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.006	4467.663 ^b	3.000	82.000	.000	.994	13402.988	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	163.451	4467.663 ^b	3.000	82.000	.000	.994	13402.988	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	163.451	4467.663 ^b	3.000	82.000	.000	.994	13402.988	1.000
Group	Pillai's Trace	.061	1.781 ^b	3.000	82.000	.157	.061	5.342	.448
	Wilks' Lambda	.939	1.781 ^b	3.000	82.000	.157	.061	5.342	.448
	Hotelling's Trace	.065	1.781 ^b	3.000	82.000	.157	.061	5.342	.448
	Roy's Largest Root	.065	1.781 ^b	3.000	82.000	.157	.061	5.342	.448

a. Design: Intercept + Group

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05