THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO LEAD

The Charismatic, Ideological, and Pragmatic (CIP) Theory of Leadership

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Abstract: The charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic (CIP) theory of leadership has emerged as a novel framework for thinking about the varying ways leaders can influence followers. The theory is based on the principle of equifinality or the notion that there are multiple pathways to the same outcome. Researchers of the CIP theory have proposed that leaders are effective by engaging in one, or a mix, of the three leader pathways: the charismatic approach focused on an emotionally evocative vision, an ideological approach focused on core beliefs and values, or a pragmatic approach focused on an appeal of rationality and problem-solving. Formation of pathways and unique follower responses are described. The more than fifteen years of empirical work investigating the theory are summarized, and the theory is compared and contrasted to other commonly studied and popular frameworks of leadership. Strengths, weaknesses, and avenues for future investigation of the CIP theory are discussed.

Keywords: Leadership, Charismatic, Ideological, Pragmatic, CIP, Pathways, Equifinality

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