

Encouraging leaders' adaptation to new leadership styles using gaming benefits

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Dear readers of Simulation and Gaming,

The changing leadership styles of our international leaders have long been a topic of interest for many (Adler, 1986). From traditional hierarchical approaches to more collaborative and adaptive models, the landscape of leadership has witnessed significant transformations over time, as time itself has changed many landscapes in politics, medicine, and industry (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). It is becoming more and more clear that leaders benefit from adopting creative tactics -as societies evolve into more complicated structures and are also interdependent. Hence, these days, it is both useful and challenging to take a deep dive exploring similarities and differences between traditional and modern leadership styles. And of course, to search for a fitting application involving the proposed benefits of gaming theory to contemporary leadership.

In the past, authoritarian and directive styles of leadership were very common, allowing leaders to use their power and authority with little or no input from their constituents (Kolb, 1984). However, with the rise of participatory democracies and the spread of digital technologies the paradigm of leadership has much changed. To lead successfully without enforcing within a democracy, one needs not only to emphasize with those governed, but also actively embrace inclusivity, practice openness, responsiveness, and adaptation to sometimes rapidly changing circumstances (Northouse, 2019). The emphasis of contemporary leadership models is thus on teamwork, empathy, and the capacity to successfully negotiate ambiguity and uncertainty (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004).

Gaming theory offers valuable insights into understanding, supporting, and building modern leadership skills (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Leaders of very different social

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systems can enhance their ability to think strategically, make decisions under duress, and promote collaboration and teamwork using simulation and gaming (Johnson, 2006). Additionally, gaming offers a risk-free setting for trying out various leadership styles and philosophies in different situations, enabling leaders to gain knowledge from both achievements and setbacks -without facing possible repercussions as would happen in the real world (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Multiplayer strategy games may imitate intricate geopolitical scenarios in which participants are challenged to bargain, plan, and adjust to ever-changing conditions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). By playing, leaders can improve their crisis management, negotiation, and diplomatic skills by playing these kinds of games (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Serious games created especially for leadership development also provide customized experiences that mimic real-world difficulties, offering priceless chances for skill growth and personal introspection (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Indeed, the application of gaming theory to leadership development offers a viable path toward the creation of more capable and flexible global leaders in different settings and across situations (Ancona et al., 2007). By embracing new leadership styles informed by collaborative and interactive approaches derived from gaming, leaders can navigate the complexities of the modern world more adeptly (Dweck, 2006). And in turn, create the new leaders of the world. And isn't that just what we all -and so very much- need?

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