Module 1: Researching Rhetorically Source Profile

Katty

[Name of the Institution]

Module 1: Researching Rhetorically Source Profile

**Introduction**

At all stages of history, leaders have been witnessed giving eloquent and moving speeches employing skillful use of rhetoric. For leaders, rhetoric is an indispensable component of leadership development which aids their ability to provide direction, purpose, motivation as well as mentorship, teaching, guidance and coaching to achieve a shared mission. In the paper, an article *The rhetoric of charismatic leadership: A theoretical extension, a case study, and implications for research* that explores the connection between rhetoric and charismatic leadership, will be analyzed and evaluated in terms of its purpose, context, and credibility.

**Summary**

It is commonly believed that rhetoric plays an essential role in giving an impression of charisma in leaders to their followers and observers, which helps them recruit more public to their cause and aid them in identifying with the leader and his/her mission1. To achieve that charismatic effect, leaders involve a variety of tactics that involves evoking the self-concept of their followers, which include self-esteem, self-expression self-worth, and self-consistency as its subset. Certain content strategies are found within the speeches of charismatic leaders that emphasize these characteristics, that has been confirmed from the study. However, more systematic research efforts are required to recognize specific rhetorical factors which create the charismatic effect in both the short and long-term among observers.

**Analysis**

Rhetorical Context

The article was written by Boas Shamir who works in the department of anthropology and sociology in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, in collaboration with Michael B. Arthur and Robert J. House. Each author's works have been cited thousands of times in other studies. The current article was published in 1994 in a peer-reviewed social-science Journal, the leadership quarterly, which seeks to understand the characteristics and features of the phenomena of leadership from different spheres of life. The primary purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between charismatic leadership and rhetorical behavior since no adequate explanation existed regarding how rhetoric in a leader’s speech could be related to charisma1. The article addresses other researchers, in particular, to guide future research on this subject, after providing evidence that links a leader's rhetoric to strong motivational and emotional effects on their followers.

Evaluation and Credibility of Research

The article provides evidence that the way leaders motivate their followers is not through changing their reward cognitions but by evoking their self-concepts. The authors base their hypothesis on the underlying assumptions that: human beings are not just goal-oriented and pragmatic but self-expressive as well; thus they remain motivated to enhance and maintain their self-worth, self-esteem, and to increase and retain their self-consistency. Moreover, human behavior reflects identity-salience, and faith and hope in a better future intrinsically satisfies them. After outlining these features, the authors use evidence-based research to propose 5 ways through which the motivational effect is achieved by the rhetoric employed by charismatic leaders. These include: increasing the value of their efforts to achieve an objective, enhancing their perception of collective and self-efficacy, instilling in them a faith that promises a better future, enhancing the value of the goal, and by increasing their commitment to that goal.

After presenting the grounds for the theory, the authors derive two principal methods through which leaders are able to engage their follower’s self-concept; frame alignment and role modeling. Both concepts find their origins in previous empirical research, following which the authors test the theory against the speeches of the charismatic leader, Jesse Jackson, by carrying out a content analysis of its text1. Although the study provides an adequate empirical investigation which is then followed by a content analysis of a speech to test its validity, the study focusses only on the framing component of the speech it analyzes while ignoring the aspect of message delivery. Moreover, only a single well-known speech is run through a thematic content analysis to exemplify the theory, which although provides a detailed example of how theoretical constructs play out in an actual speech, it cannot be generalized unless further systematic studies confirm the proposition. Nonetheless, the authors recognize this limitation and further propose seven ways in which future studies can test their proposition and find out how the rhetorical content of speeches differentiates charismatic leaders from non-charismatic ones.

Generally, thematic analysis is used on qualitative research that is known to produce insightful and trustworthy findings across various epistemologies. Thus the thematic content analysis was correctly used to identify the rhetorical content of the speech as it has the ability to extract attitudes, assumptions, and biases from language's text. The same methods were used in by Heracleous and Klaering2 in another study that tested the link between rhetorical competence and charismatic leadership. The researchers conducted a detailed rhetorical analysis of the speeches of Charismatic leader Steve Jobs through thematically analyzing their content under different rhetorical contexts, situations, and audiences.

In this research, speeches given at different instances in different situations were analyzed that allowed the researchers to identify rhetorical patterns across each. The more in-depth nature of the study leads to more conclusive results, as the authors found that the attribution of ethos, logos, and pathos can change according to the context, and that a charismatic leader, like Steve Jobs, is able to customize aspects of the rhetoric accordingly2. Moreover, the root metaphors and content of multiple speeches were analyzed through the thematic content analysis method, which was appropriate for the nature of the theoretical nature of the research. However, like the earlier study, generalizability is limited owing to the pattern-seeking, hermeneutic nature of the exploration involved. The hermeneutic method employed in this study enhances its overall validity compared to the research from Shamir and colleagues1, but there is still difficulty in replicating its results. However, it extends the understanding provided by Shamir and colleagues1 by not only providing links between rhetoric and charisma but of the possibility of dynamic rhetoric customization by charismatic leaders through providing further empirical evidence.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, it is confirmed from empirical literature that transformational and charismatic leadership requires careful rhetorical crafting of a speech in order to generate profound motivational effects on observers and followers. This is done through engaging the self-concepts of the followers as well as modifying the rhetorical features of the speech according to the situation. Evidence-based research was used by researchers to hypothesize a model based on research-backed assumptions, which was then exemplified through a thematic content analysis of the texts of the speeches of Jesse Jackson and Steve Jobs. The findings based upon the model were successfully tested in two different studies reflecting its overall validity and reliability.

# Endnotes

1. Heracleous, L., & Klaering, L. A. Charismatic Leadership and Rhetorical Competence: An Analysis of Steve Job's Rhetoric. Group & Organization Management, 2014;39(2):131-161. doi:10.1177%2F1059601114525436

2. Shamir, B., Arthur, M. B., & House, R. J. The rhetoric of charismatic leadership: A theoretical extension, a case study, and implications for research. The Leadership Quarterly, 1994;5(1):25-42. doi:10.1016/1048-9843(94)90004-3