

LEADERSHIP: TEAMS AND TIMES OF CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY



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Abstract

The world is in a state of flux, with uncertainty and change a daily undercurrent in the lives of many. This follows a shift in Educational Psychologist (EP) service delivery and role throughout services in the UK and Ireland over the last number of years. Educational Psychology services are in the process of responding and seeking opportunities in the face of these changes while managing and sustaining cohesive and high performing teams. This poses the question as to how a leader can develop and maintain supportive teams who are focused on delivering a high quality service, and how a leader can deliver change. This paper considers theory, practice, professional and evidence based perspectives regarding leadership with particular regard for change and team leadership and endeavours to investigate and amalgamate the areas for current and aspiring leaders in the world of educational psychology and beyond.

Keywords: Leadership, change, teams, educational, psychology

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1. Introduction

This paper explores academic and evidence informed perspectives on leadership relevant to leadership of psychology services in education. It will focus on leadership with particular regard to its impact on teams and effecting change at organisational and team level. It briefly explores definitions of leadership and the dynamic between leadership and management. It subsequently outlines broader theories of leadership, professional reflections and leadership competencies with reference to the UK Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010) and utilises theory and research to consider the following question:

1. How does leadership theory, professional literature and research inform practice, influence change and impact the operation of teams?

In reviewing theory, professional literature and empirical studies relating to leadership, the article seeks to offer an academic foundation for those considering or providing leadership in the area of educational psychology. Much of the skill and knowledge in relation to leadership is transferable across contexts and this paper therefore also offers an academic foundation for current and aspiring leaders in the areas of education and psychology.

1.1. Definition of Leadership and Management

Small and Rentsch (2010) describe traditional leadership definitions as focusing on the combination of influencing others, facilitating goal-related efforts and vertical leadership where one person exerts downward authority on others. Day (2000) refers to traditional models which view leaders as individuals who have a set of skills, knowledge and abilities and who have a set of followers. He contests that this does not reflect recent research which indicates leaders are part of a complex interaction with their social and environmental context. In contrast to leadership, Day (2000) refers to management as implementing procedures and protocols relevant to organisations. Kent (2005) summarises a perspective on leadership and management in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of leadership and management (Hardy, Hobbs & Bham, 2020, p.10)

Characteristics of Managers	Characteristics of Leaders
Managers do things right	Leaders do the right things
Managing is an authority relationship	Leading is an influential relationship
Managing creates stability	Leading creates change

However, as Booker (2013) contends “any individual in a role of formal management authority is both a manager and a leader” (p. 198) and within the context of educational psychology many leaders also fulfil management functions. Therefore, while Kent (2005) dichotomises neatly they are more intertwined than divided in nature.

2. Theories of Leadership

This section will not seek to consider the evidence for different leadership theories as the effectiveness of different theories is difficult to establish due in part to differing aims and objectives of

organisations. It will instead outline tenets of the major theories considering the skills and styles which one may seek to develop or utilise as an approach in seeking team effectiveness or effecting change.

Hawkins (2009) outlines three theories including transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), business leadership (Drucker, 2009) and servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) in relation to the skills required by community college executives. Hawkins (2009) compares the theories with regard to leadership skills emphasised and concludes that transformational leadership contains more competencies than the other two. Hawkins (2009) suggest the skills and focus of business model leaders include being globally aware, being an efficient time manager, decision maker, systems thinker and resource manager. The servant-leader is regarded as being an active visionary who is goal directed and who is also an empathetic, trustworthy listener and communicator. The transformational leader possesses all of those noted within the servant-leader set along with being a motivator who is an ethically minded and politically aware advocate combined with being a systems thinker. Transformational and business leaders are concerned with their vision of the future for the organisation and how to ensure that others commit to this vision. With that, transformational leaders also seek to change the organisation from within and externally to fit with their vision and in response to global, social and political awareness. Servant-leaders are more concerned with the needs of their followers rather than their own vision for the organisation. The servant-leader model is comparable to the theory of caritative leadership (Bondas, 2003) derived from caring science as it essentially posits the leader's role as one of serving one's followers. The aim of the caritative leader is to promote life and health through ethics and values, and in turn to have the courage to engage in conflict for the good of the individual. The caritative leader is also concerned with the structural aspects of organisations including planning, organising, directing, staffing and budgeting in accordance with the aim of the organisation. In comparison to business leader models the caritative leader recognises the "difference between measuring objectives and finding meaning in subjectives" (Nasman, 2018, p. 520) such as the experiences of people who use the service.

Theories of leadership noted have focused mainly on leaders' traits and functions. Stogdill and Shartle (1948) in Lord et al. (2017) proposed a shift from the notion of leadership as one person to "a process of interaction between persons who are participating in goal oriented group activities" (p. 435). One such theory is Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) derived from Vertical Dyad Linkage (Dansereau et al., 1975) with its growth as LMX traced within Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). LMX places the leader follower relationship at the core rather than focusing on the qualities and action of a leader. Similarly, Situational Leadership (Hersey et al., 2001) considers the interactions of leaders and followers through task (directive) and relationship (supportive) behaviour operating relative to four styles including 1) leader providing direction and close supervision, 2) coaching, 3) participating where the leader provides more support than direction and 4) empowering. Further theory which moves away from the notion of 'trait' leadership and/or emphasis on leader follower interaction is shared leadership or distributed leadership. Shared leadership refers to the notion of leadership roles being shared over time within teams. This sharing and exchange of the leader and follower roles over time is proposed to "lead each other toward goal achievement" (Wang et al., 2014, p. 181). Distributed leadership is considered to derive from "understanding leadership as a process of influence that can be exercised by any member of a group, regardless of formal position of authority" (Booker, 2013, p. 200). Pendleton and Furnham (2016) suggest four types of plural leadership including "teams who share leadership roles and responsibilities; top teams

who pool leadership functions; leadership that, like a relay, is spread across boundaries over time; and finally leadership that is non-hierarchical and appears more like a web of decision making” (p. 28).

The perspectives on leadership noted all have merits and disadvantages relative to the organisation and situation, however the focus on leadership as a process between leaders and followers or one which can be shared, encourages different ways of structuring teams, goals and envisioning leaders and leadership as a dynamic entity rather than a static gift that one is born with.

Further perspectives on leadership which move away from the focus on leader traits, leader follower interaction or shared leadership include identity based leadership and leadership as a social construction. Identity based leadership proposes that if followers feel a sense of shared identity with the leader, it will ultimately enhance their motivation, commitment and intention to work toward a common goal with the leader. Across all of the leadership theories there is a suggestion that these are ‘realist’ theories. There is little acknowledgement of the ebb and flow of leaders’ rise and fall which can be dependent on context. There is also little acknowledgement of social construction within the leadership theories noted above. Social constructionist perspectives suggest that followers respond to the perceived actions of the leader rather than having ‘true’ knowledge of the leader (Booker 2013; Meindl, 1995). In an age dominated by marketing, spin doctors, social media and dissemination of real and false information the importance of socially constructed leadership is not to be underestimated and an understanding and appreciation of all theories of leadership is important to be able to adapt to changing or static times depending on the organisation and context of leadership.

3. Leadership and Psychological Services

The following subsections consider leadership from both a reflective and competency based perspective including models and processes useful to leadership within psychological services and beyond.

3.1. Reflections on Leadership in Psychological Services

Booker (2013) asserts a systemic view on leadership within organisations and eschews the traditional and dominant view of a charismatic leader at the top. Booker (2013) considers that leaders need to have a specific vision, define the organisations culture, problem solve, make decisions in times of crisis and enable others to act. Leaders also require an understanding of strategy and the negotiation and persuasion skills to carry strategy forward. This systemic view is captured within the ‘primary colours model of leadership’ (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016), summarised in Table 2, which represents leadership as embracing three domains: strategic, operational and interpersonal. The strategic domain encompasses the areas of setting direction, creating alignment and planning and organising. The operational domain relates to planning and organising, delivering results and team working. The interpersonal domain includes building and sustaining relationships, creating alignment and team working.

Table 2. The Primary Colours Model of Leadership (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016)

Leading		
Strategic	Operational	Interpersonal
Setting direction	Delivering results	Building and sustaining relationships
Creating alignment	Team working	Creating alignment
Planning and organising	Planning and organising	Team Working

The primary colours model of leadership (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016) suggests the overlap and intertwining of areas such as ‘team working’ which is deemed a necessary facet of both operational and interpersonal domains. A foundational element of team leadership is reflected in the interpersonal domain with setting strategic direction reflecting leading change. In this model, one operates in tandem with the other and current and aspiring leaders are encouraged to reflect on areas to deliver the desired operational results.

With regard to leadership and change Crawford (2020) outlines the Theory of Change process described by Taplin and Clark (2012) which involves five steps including:

- 1) Identify the goal
- 2) Clarify what needs to be in place to achieve this
- 3) Prioritise the interventions needed to do this
- 4) Identify indicators to be used to measure progress toward the goal
- 5) Write a narrative account to explain the logic

This approach to change presupposes that change is logical and that one knows what the goal is, which can sometimes be the complex part of change. Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivasta, as cited in Hardy et al., 2020) offers a further tool to envision and arrive at change in a dynamic and collaborative fashion utilising constructionist, positive, poetic, simultaneity and anticipatory principles (Hardy et al., 2020). Ludema and Fry’s (2008) model of Appreciative Inquiry contains 4 D’s:

- Discovery: This collaborative potentially team based process seeks to elicit and value what is working well in the chosen topic
- Dream: Envisioning what could be
- Design: Operational aspects of the ‘dream’ working well
- Destiny: Actions for implementation

Both the Theory of Change and Appreciative Inquiry models are tools which fit well with the strategic aspect of the primary colours model of leadership (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016). Both also include indicators for measurement and progress and could be further expanded upon to consider the operational aspect of the primary colours model of leadership.

With regard to leadership and teams, Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) offers an important framework for understanding motivation with the essential elements including autonomy, relatedness and competence. Autonomy refers to an “endorsement of what needs to be done, an understanding of the rationale in order to work effectively” (Hardy et al., 2020, p.58). Competence refers to the ensuring that individuals have the knowledge and skills required for the organisation to thrive. Relatedness refers to the need for individuals within the organisation to feel connected and their views valued. Cotton (2014) also notes autonomy and flexibility as practitioners to be an important aspect of a positive team ethos. Coupled with that, striving to create positive, trusting and supportive relationships with team members and within the leadership team are key aspects which would fall within the interpersonal domain of the primary colours model of leadership (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016).

Changes in the delivery of UK based educational psychology services to encompass traded services are likely to have placed strain on team working and building/sustaining relationships due to the potentially anxiety provoking changes required of staff and the seeming juxtaposition of a caring profession and market driven provision. The global pandemic also a momentous change places great strain on educational

psychology leaders. In such times of change a leader or leaders have a choice of actions which have potentially profound effects on their human resources and/or on their results. Using theories and models such as Appreciative Inquiry (Ludema & Fry, 2008) and Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) encourages ownership of ideas and motivation to change or work together from the 'ground up' thereby obtaining greater likelihood of change happening while still maintaining relatively satisfied individuals and ultimately teams.

3.2. Leadership Development Framework

This section outlines reference documentation found pertaining to leadership competencies in psychology. It outlines the skills brought as a clinical psychologist at all career stages and considers how these skills can be further developed with regard to leadership. There does not appear to be an equivalent document for educational psychologists. The Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010) was developed by an expert group evidenced through a range of documents produced by the British Psychological Society, particularly the Division of Clinical Psychology along with the Department of Health and the NHS. The core competencies within the Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010) document are set out below in Table 3:

Table 3. Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010)

Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework
Demonstrating Personal Qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing self-awareness• Managing yourself• Continuing professional development• Acting with integrity
Working with Others <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing networks• Building and maintaining relationships• Encouraging contribution• Working within teams
Managing Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning• Managing resources• Managing people• Managing performance
Improving Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring patient safety• Critically evaluating• Encouraging improvement and innovation• Facilitating transformation
Setting Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying the contexts for change• Applying knowledge and evidence• Making decisions• Evaluating impact

The core competencies described provide a helpful breakdown and overview of skills involved in leading a psychological service. However, it does not capture the distinctive nature of a leader's leadership perspective which essentially impacts how these skills are practiced. Nevertheless, these competencies can be used to compare with theoretical perspectives and evidence found and their application below.

4. Empirical Research Summary in Relation to Leadership, its Influence on Change and the Operation of Teams

A review of research in relation to leadership and change, and leadership and teams sought to utilise empirical studies with specific relevance to educational psychology and psychology services. However, searches failed to find relevant empirical studies and therefore the studies chosen focused on leadership and change in schools and leadership of teams including a broad range of leadership approaches.

The following brief summary of findings considers the research question outlined above. Male and Palaiologou (2017) indicate key factors with regard to leadership and change to include headteacher vision, the importance of maintaining a visible presence, and building a sense of identity and belonging. Swann et al. (2003) also found vision to be a key component across the case studies reviewed and also indicated the need to carefully choose staff and build the capacity of staff through a variety of styles including directing, coaching, participative and delegating. Leithwood and Strauss (2008) concurred with Swann et al. (2003) and Male and Palaiologou (2017) with direction setting and developing people as key factors in implementing change. Leithwood and Strauss (2008) also refer to two other key factors including redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme. Similar to Male and Palaiologou (2017), Leithwood and Strauss (2008) found that implementing change required one leader or a team of leaders while at crisis point and subsequently distributed leadership was used once moved into a developing phase. Chow (2013) discussed the impact of directive vs. empowering leadership with school change implemented through both approaches with differing impact on staff. 'Directive' leadership was considered positively as a way of managing accountability and quality assurance along with reducing the workload for teachers through standardisation and efficiency. Empowerment leadership style supported teachers to make curricular and pedagogical decisions and enabled professional growth and development of leadership skills. However, difficulties arose where teachers left shortly afterwards along with the requisite knowledge and structures. There are benefits and disadvantages involved with both styles and Chow (2013) proposes the skill for the leader is in knowing when to choose which approach.

In relation to the operation of teams, Small and Rentsch (2010) proposed that intra-group trust and team collectivism are antecedents of shared leadership. Therefore, a shared leadership approach may not work where trust and collectivism is not inherent in the group and/or raises the question as to how to engender such trust and collectivism should a shared leadership model be in operation. Pearce and Sims (2002) found that in relatively autonomous teams performing complex tasks vertical and shared transformational and empowering leadership may yield the highest levels of team effectiveness with effectiveness covering output, quality, change, organising, interpersonal, values and overall effectiveness. Choi et al. (2017) found that transformational leadership was positively related to team output effectiveness with shared leadership positively related to team organisation and planning. Truijen et al. (2013) indicated the following factors as relevant to effective team working including smaller teams, homogeneity of

educational view, relatively equal distribution of gender and age, good working relations and an informal leader to drive productivity.

5. Implications for Practice

The question ‘how does leadership theory, professional literature and research inform practice, influence change and impact the operation of teams?’ will be considered in section 5 with particular regard to leadership in educational psychology and psychology and education services.

5.1. Leadership and Change

The Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010) contains a number of domains and elements which are notable regarding leadership and change. These include being aware of the political, economic, organisational and professional environment in order to shape strategic decisions regarding the future direction. Relevant domains also include applying knowledge, evidence and evaluating outcomes in terms of steering and evaluating the change. Three other domains are considered particularly relevant for leadership and change including encouraging improvement and innovation, facilitating transformation and having the capacity to motivate and manage people to move with the change. The Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010) shares many of its domains with the research outcomes of Leithwood and Strauss (2008) which indicate four core categories include 1) direction setting, 2) developing people, 3) redesigning the organisation and 4) managing the instructional programme as pivotal in leadership and managing change. The study also appears to be the most reliable in terms of evidence upon which to base practice. Therefore, the competencies and research outcomes can be merged to consider with regard to educational psychology.

5.2. Direction Setting

Across the studies reviewed, the concept of vision was a stable requisite, therefore one must consider and define what is the vision and future for the profession. Factors which need to be considered in doing this include the level and type of service demand, competing services, the gaps in service provision at present and most importantly what does the profession want to be able to provide. This of course may differ across jurisdictions. Therefore, posing the question as to whose vision and whose direction is it? This is defined in part through the structures already in place, however vertical leadership would suggest that it is the vision of the ‘leader’. Vertical collaborative leadership approaches would support the creation of a shared vision, and a shared vision approach suggests the direction set by all, however this may prove difficult to enact. In orchestrating change toward a direction or vision the impact of leader behaviours is pivotal and it is important to consider the effects that a different style will have which can be culture specific. This was illustrated through the contrast between a directive and empowering style as per Chow (2013). Vertical collaborative approaches may work best to involve EPs in creating and contributing to the vision as one can enhance and homogenise the identity of the group which can be used to motivate the change. The use of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivasta, as cited in Hardy et al., 2020) would also help to facilitate the development of a shared vision which will help motivate and support the desired change as it involves those who need to facilitate the change in the design of it. At a later stage of change implementation, shared leadership approaches may promote adaptive behaviour and drive the change in

and of itself. The same concepts apply to change and direction setting within a team, however depending on the requirement to change and the personnel within the team leadership behaviours ranging from transformational to transactional may need consideration. However, what is clear is that the level of balance and interaction between strategic and interpersonal domains is fundamental to the short and long term success or failure in the operational domain outlined within the primary colours model of leadership (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016).

5.3. Developing People

To support change implementation, consideration needs to be given to the continuing professional development and supervision needs of EPs to ensure a match with the direction set. This includes the provision of opportunities for informal and formal leadership roles to build these skills within personnel and to nurture the confidence, initiative and strategic thinking engendered by such a climate. Building/maintaining relationships and encouraging contribution through visibility and integrity is also key to motivating, supporting and encouraging psychologists through the change process in a relatively fluid manner. Change can be driven through with directive and transactional leadership behaviour, however it is unlikely to build loyalty, trust and a sense of ownership and faith in the change perhaps needed to sustain and build on it.

5.4. Redesigning the Organisation and Managing the Instructional Programme

With the emergence of many competing organisations which may be considerably cheaper to staff, the vision for educational psychology has never been more necessary. Vertical or shared leadership models need to be cognisant of designing a service which seeks to meet the need and anticipate the needs of its clients, inherent to this is gauging the politico social landscape and identifying the gaps. In redesigning the organisation, it is important to ensure that the practical operation of the tenets of Self Determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) including autonomy, competence and relatedness be considered as to their organisational fit given its relevance to individual and collective motivation. Managing the instructional programme is not relevant in the context of psychological services, however considering what services are being delivered and using evidence to decide what are strengths and weaknesses in order to improve or develop service provision is pivotal. The Theory of Change process (Taplin & Clark, 2012) is a useful tool to look at a structured way to consider and develop service provision.

5.5. Leadership and its Impact on Teams

Within the Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework, important aspects of team leadership crosses a number of domains and elements including organising and managing oneself while taking account of the needs of others, acting with integrity and continuing professional development. A second domain is being able to work with others through developing networks, listening, supporting others, gaining trust and showing understanding, encouraging contribution and improving services. Team development is also influenced by a leaders ability to manage people including providing direction, reviewing performance and motivating others. The leader must be able to apply knowledge and evidence

in setting the goals and directions of the team. They must also be able to continually improve the service through critical evaluation.

Review of the literature indicates shared leadership and empowering vertical leadership to be important in team effectiveness (Pearce & Sims, 2002) with transformational leadership being positively associated with team output effectiveness and shared leadership related to team organisation and planning (Choi et al., 2017). Definitions of team effectiveness will vary, however the factors utilised by Pearce and Sims (2002) are useful benchmarks including a) output effectiveness, b) quality effectiveness, c) change effectiveness, d) organising and planning effectiveness, e) interpersonal effectiveness, f) values effectiveness and g) overall effectiveness. Small and Rentsch (2010) propose intra-group trust and collectivism are antecedents of shared leadership and therefore a leader must consider whether such trust and collectivism can be developed or may be possible when putting together a new team or when considering the type to leadership to implement. In terms of team effectiveness, Truijen et al. (2013) describe smaller teams with relatively homogenous educational views, who have good working relationships, a common goal, having an informal leader along with being relatively self-managing were considered to be effective teams.

In relation to team effectiveness, the Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework (DCP, 2010) is compatible with collaborative, authentic, servant and transformative leadership theories given its emphasis on listening, supporting others, gaining trust and showing understanding along with creating an environment where others have the opportunity to contribute along with facilitating improvement, innovation and transformation to provide effective output for clients. Transformational leadership of teams is desirable, however there are many aspects from differing leadership theories which would be useful in building an effective team. Situational approaches would be beneficial with a team who are at differing stages in their career where staff members may need a more directive or coaching approach versus those who have proven their output and quality and need a more autonomous approach. A balanced processing of information in a dispassionate manner such as that within authentic leadership may be appropriate to promote a sense of fairness across a team and strategically and systematically assess decisions which need to be taken. Transactional and directive approaches may need to be utilised where a team member is not reaching their potential or where the need for homogeneity of output is required. Empowering transformational leadership and shared leadership were similar in terms of their impact on team effectiveness according to Pearce and Sims (2002). Truijen et al. (2013) also reflected the need to have an informal leader in relatively self-managing teams to drive productivity.

Theory, research and competence frameworks outlined indicate that different leadership approaches yield different outcomes. Therefore, team leaders may achieve best team output effectiveness with transformational leadership and best team organisation and planning with shared leadership. Situational leadership approaches (Hersey et al., 2001) moving from highly directive to relatively autonomous may best suit to work with psychologists' range of skills and experience. Consideration could be given to smaller teams with relatively homogenous educational views, who have good working relationships, a common goal and who have an informal leader. Finally, of paramount importance is the capacity of the leader to analyse evidence and the political, economic, social and technical (PEST),

(Pendleton & Furnham, 2016) climate systemically and strategically to make decisions which serve to drive team effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

Knowledge of professional development frameworks ensures leaders have an overview of the range of skills and factors involved and facilitates focus across all areas. Knowledge of leadership theory encourages leaders to consider the approach they may use and the effect it may have on those involved such as the difference between enforcing change which may alienate people or inspiring change which may motivate people. Leadership theory can also encourage leaders to consider different ways of leading such as through shared leadership or cultivating identity based leadership. Empirical literature offers a proven foundation as to what are important areas for leaders to focus on in building teams and driving change such as the positive relationship between transformational leadership and team output effectiveness, or shared leadership and team organisation and planning. Models and processes contained within professional literature such as the 'primary colours model of leadership' (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016) outline factors pivotal in leading times and during times of change. Amalgam of the areas of professional, theoretical and empirical literature offer leaders or future leaders the opportunity to consider their intent to unite or divide, inspire or oppress, produce or reduce, calm or fuel chaos and to harness or stifle growth in teams and times of change.

Review of the literature suggests a lack of empirical work in relation to leadership in educational psychology services and indicates the need for further research in this area. The Clinical Psychology Leadership Development Framework is also recognised as an important guide, however the paper advocates the need for an Educational Psychology Leadership Development Framework.

A focus on leadership during training along with continuing professional development opportunities for coaching and mentoring in leadership along with a culture of distributed leadership in psychology practices is necessary to strengthen professional and service capacity in times of crisis and equilibrium.

The Ubuntu term from the Bantu languages of Southern Africa referenced by Hardy, Hobbs and Bham (2020) will act as the 'North Star' in many leadership journeys and gives a salutary lesson in reminding one that strategic, operational and interpersonal pillars of leadership pivot on the same axis.

'I am because of you, or I am because you are'

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