

Organizational Success, Leaders and Leadership Styles: Critical Analysis of Leadership Theories to develop an understanding about Future Leaders Traits proposing Personal Leadership Philosophy



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Abstract: *Leadership is a vital management function that helps to maximize the efficiency and to achieve the goals of an organization through utilization of available resources in the best direction. Leadership is a quality which is exhibited by a person who successfully marshals his human collaborators to achieve particular ends. Leader influences his team members through his integrity, creates positives work environment, encourages innovation and creativity and promotes the development of positive character traits in individuals. Leader and leadership skills collectively lead an organization to success. Great leaders are strategists and role models for their fellows and act as solid, dependable and inspirational figurehead. This theoretical analysis about leadership was conducted by the principal author during her postgraduate degree to analyze various leadership theories and leadership styles to develop an understanding about the traits and leadership styles necessary for the leader at present and for the future, keeping in view the transitional and reformative changes at organizational level, the rapid globalization with technological advancement and cross-boundary organizational linkages. At the end, the personal philosophy about the leadership has also been suggested. This research is qualitative in nature and is providing a deep and valuable insight about the subject matter after critical analysis of a huge literature, which will be significant not only to indentify a leader within ourselves but also to search the one amongst us who may lead us to our secure and successful future.*

Keywords: Leader, Leadership, Leadership Styles, Leadership Philosophy, Future Leaders

Introduction

Concepts of leader and leadership have been evolving and developing since generations according to the situations and circumstances and vary from place to place and person to person. According to (Cunningham, 1985) these terms have been under discussion by the historians, biographers and social scientists, since centuries. (Stogdill, 1974) states that the leadership can be defined in as many different ways as the number of individuals because everyone has his own definition on the basis of his own perception, experience and characteristics. A *leader* is a human capital

enriched with interpersonal skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivation whereas *leadership* is considered as social capital and interpersonal relationship in an organizational environment, as distinguished by (Day, 2001).

It has been observed by (Kruse, 2013) that leadership has nothing to do with titles, position in the hierarchy, personal attributes or management. Peter Drucker defines leader as “*the person who has followers and the leadership as lifting man’s vision to the highest sight*” (Cohen, 2019). According to this concept an army captain with troop of 200 soldiers can be a commander but not a leader for the reason

of his being present in his office and issuing commands only (Kruse, 2013). According to (Bennis & Thomas, 2002), “*leadership is the quality of translating vision into reality*”. A builder thinks to construct a house with a vision to convert it into reality after construction, but he is not a leader. Therefore, this definition is also not covering the subject.

Bill Gates sees leaders as the “*people who empower others*” (Financhill, 2022). The extent and area of empowerment is not covered by this definition as well leaving lacunas. John Maxwell takes the leadership as an “*influence*” (Manage Magazine, 2018). A robber has a strong influence over others, but cannot be taken as a leader. However, influence is often attributed to a leader and leadership according to (Northouse, 2016) when it is taken as affecting individuals and groups by enhancing their behavior, perception, cognition, and motivational tendency for their goals achievement (Yukl, 1981).

Leadership can be better understood as the process of social influence maximizing the efforts of others for achieving goals, according to (Kruse, 2013). On the other hand, (Balcerzyk, 2021) views leadership not only as a process but also as a quality. It is meant to achieve goals through the direction of human support (Prentice, 2004). According to (Rost, 1991), leadership is basically a relationship of influence among leaders and followers who want real changes for their mutual interest.

According to (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991) there are certain traits enriching people with specific leadership skills and helping them in develop their visions for themselves and others and implementing it e.g. determination, motivation, honesty, cognition, confidence, business knowledge etc. Charisma, creativity, originality and flexibility are other attributes of a leader but are less distinct in character (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Analysis of theoretical evolution about Leadership

A deep insight into the literature available on leadership reveals diversity of theoretical perspectives on leadership which have been

refined and modified with the passage of time and no theory can be found irrelevant as their relevancy completely depends on the context in which it is applied (Khan et al., 2016). The type of leadership requiring high level of competencies, care, sensitivity, precision and technical expertise may not be fit for simple management-oriented environment (Dess & Picken, 2000). Leadership theories and concepts evolve on the basis of changing situations, cultural diversity, workplace environment, changing laws and regulations, information encumbrance, organizational complexities and socio-psycho developments which act as dynamics for new paradigms (Amabile et al., 2004).

The efforts for exploration of leadership traits are expanded over centuries referring initially to the heroic character of a person praising their success and justifying their failures. In 1847 Thomas Carlyle proposed “*Great Man Theory*” and opined that the great men are born, not made (Spector, 2015). Carlyle further emphasized that the great men are even-makers who influence the course of events which could be much different if he had not been involved. After witnessing the consequences of heroism of Hitler and Napoleon, the Great Man theory seems flawless (Burns, 2003).

With the passage of time the concept of ‘great man with power trait’ shifted to the ‘great man with brilliance and foresightedness’ to use his dictatorial powers as a leader for the growth of an organization changing the concept of born leader or destined by nature to reflection of certain traits envisaging potential for leadership (Khan et al., 2016). It was opined by the early theorists that the leaders are born with certain physical and personality traits which differentiate them from non-leaders which was denied by the *trait theory*. Jenkins categorized leadership traits into two types: *emergent traits* which are genetic including height, intelligence, attractiveness etc. and *effectiveness* traits which are based on experience or learning including charisma as the most important leadership component (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). Max Weber identifies charisma as the major revolutionary force capable of bringing dynamic

changes through followers and is enriched with supernatural and superhuman powers and tendencies (Khan et al., 2016).

In 1940s the theorists observed from their studies on military and non-military leaders that the leaders with certain traits behave differently in different situations (Khan et al., 2016). The *contingency theory* provides that no leadership style can only be taken as a single leadership style as it completely relies on the situations, followers and variable circumstances including environmental contingencies and internal contingencies (Monizjr, 2010). This theory implies that good leadership style is the one which adopts variability of the situation and tries to maintain balance between individual's preference and situational factors (Halaychik, 2016). *Situational leadership* involves the ability of a leader to act according to the situation for productivity of the organization (Constantinescu & Cirstea, 2012).

The style and behavioral theory signifies certain necessary leadership skills towards organizational performance, accomplishment of goals and participation of subordinates (Khan et al., 2016). Consideration and commencing structure are two leadership aspects which focus on effectiveness (Fielder & House, 1994). The behavioral theorists differentiate leaderships into three types on the basis of participatory role of subordinates towards organizational growth, profit and success including: *autocratic leadership*, in which the leader makes decisions and gives orders without involving subordinates (Joseph, 2018), *democratic/ participative leadership* relies on the inclusion, collaboration and involvement of subordinates in decision-making (STU Online, 2014) and *laissez-faire leadership*, where the leader respects the autonomy of subordinates allowing them to take decisions by themselves (Entrepreneur, 2023).

Process leadership theory suggests that the work of a leader is to contribute towards the well-being of others focusing on their social responsibility. It involves *servant leadership* where the leader considers himself servant by nature, and responsible for focusing on the anxieties of the followers and helping them in becoming more autonomous and knowledgeable

(Greenleaf, 1996). *Servant leadership* engages others in decision-making exhibiting caring and ethical behavior and enhancing employee growth through awareness and quality of organizational life (Spears, 2010). *Charismatic leadership* is also related to processing involving inspirational and motivational tendencies exhibited by an enthusiastic and energetic leader (Nadler & Tushman, 1990). It was a complete transformation of definition of leadership from inherited leadership traits to acquired traits, then to situational leadership, further moving towards the process of inclusion through subordinates' participation and currently to the interaction of group members emphasizing on personal and organizational improvements (Yammarino, 1999).

Avery's proposal (2009) has identified various approaches to leadership style: *classical leadership*- which is based on the dominating character of the leader due to respect and power to command and control, *transactional leadership*- is related to the influence exerted by the leader on group members, *visionary leadership*- involves emotions and inspirational behavior of leader towards its group members and *organic leadership*- basing on the shared understanding of the group environment with the emergence of leader without formally being designated (Balcerzyk, 2021). Relationship management is the key element of modern leadership which is adopted by the leaders to inspire and motivate employees to work effectively as identified by (Balcerzyk, 2021).

During late 1970s and early 1980 a unique relationship of leader-follower association was introduced through *transactional theory* basing on the reciprocity of influence between the two, building contingent-rewards relationship for achieving objectives (Bass & Avolio, 1997). *Transformational theory* is different from old contemporary theories in the aspect that it focuses on the participation of the subordinates or followers due to their personal factors, deriving motivation from their transformational leader to achieve the targets (Bass & Avolio, 1997). *Transformational leadership* involves transformation of others by inspiration nurturing them for their growth and success (Tucker &

Russell, 2004).

After theoretical analysis of various leadership paradigms, the framework of leadership can be further extended to *strategic leadership*-focusing on the overall responsibilities of an executive for an organization (Jansen et al., 2009), *innovative leadership*-involving multitude of roles of a leader facilitating innovation and creativity (Alsolami et al., 2016) and (Kopertynska & Kmietek, 2015) discusses the conditions of turbulent environment of organizations due to technological advancements and innovations and the mutual expectations of the employer and employees in presence of generation-Y in the labour market. The *managerial leaders* are receiving challenge of human resource management by inducting young employees and facing their organizational conflicts with the traditional leadership style impacting working conditions, employee satisfaction and their retention. *Allostatic leaders* have the flexibility and adaptability of learning, changing and growing with experience (Yarnell, 2017). *Bureaucratic leadership* is guided by established rules and procedures for their actions with clear chain of command transcending down the hierarchy (AIHR, 2022).

History is full of renowned leaders with their distinctive leadership styles mostly using power to expand their dynasty and to rule whether in a courageous and inspirational manner or tyrannical. Hammurabi of Babylonia (1810-1750 B.C.E), Persian ruler Cyrus the Great (600-560 B.C.E), Greek ruler Pericles (495-429 B.C.E), Alexander the Great of Macedonia (365-323 B.C.E), Roman emperor Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.E), and Suleiman the Magnificent (1494-1566) the emperor of the great Ottoman empire are known for their bravery, wisdom, expansion of reign, military tactics and inspirational leadership who transformed their dynasties progressively (Mamchii, 2023).

On the other hand, Mangol emperor Genghis Khan (1162-1227) and his grandson Kublai Khan (1215-1294) and German Adolf Hitler (1885-1945) are remembered as a sign of terror and brutality due to their ruthless and tyrannical leadership style (Mamchii, 2023). Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603), Russian

emperor Catherine the Great (1729-1796), and Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom (1819-1901) are the most inspiring female leaders of the history who ruled in a transformational and visionary styles (Mamchii, 2023).

Authoritarian leadership has always been rewarded in history being inspirational and influential either due to power, charismatic personalities or intelligence of leader, with a perception that the leaders are emerged organically possessing “well-timed unreasonableness” insisted on adapting the world to an ideal rather than fitting themselves to the world (John Mattone Global, 2022). Abraham Lincoln’ leadership had the biggest impact on the US history ever due to his empathetic behavior, exceptional social skill, persuasive abilities, emotional intelligence and courage to take responsibility by admitting mistakes (Coutu, 2009).

Nelson Mandela is known as “larger-than-life leader” due to his passion, patience, endurance, courage and humility (Business & Leadership, 2023). Mahatma Gandhi, is respected for his peaceful inspirational leadership style embedded with simplicity and intelligence, modeling discipline to the followers (Nanda, 2024). Martin Luther is recognized as the iconic representative of the civil rights movement with intelligence, creativity, focus and positivity reflecting from his inspirational public speaking and communication skills (PennState, 2016). Winston Churchill is arguably the most successful wartime leader and master communicator as well as motivator but he was not a natural speaker rather he learned all the skills with determination and earned his place in history by inspiring his followers (Brain, 2021).

Other than the political leaders, a person can be a leader on the basis of his excellence and achievements in any field or profession where he excels and is recognized as competent by other people with similar interest e.g. the leading artists Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali, the leading musicians Ludwig van Beethoven and John Lennon and the famous physicians Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2014) are also being followed by the people of their fields.

It is important to develop leaders by educating them about the goals, characteristics and context of the leaders, to achieve better outcomes. The most important role of a leader is to work as a mentor and strategist (Balcerzyk, 2021). Management can be best learnt by observing the managerial and leadership styles of the world's great leaders and then identifying the personal traits to work upon for proving own leadership abilities (amberblog, 2023).

Present Era Leaders and their Leadership Tendencies

Analysis of the leadership tendencies and traits of modern leaders provides us guidelines about how to behave as a successful leader in recent times. Falguni Nayar, a self made billionaire, and CEO of Nykaa achieved her goals with her entrepreneurial spirit and commendable risk-taking abilities as a transformational leader (Chegg, 2023). Jacinda Arden, ex-prime minister of New Zealand is known for her selfless humanitarian work as an empathetic leader, empowering the vulnerable with an attitude towards positive change and inclusivity and leaving the legacy of resilience for future leaders (Hughes, 2023). Dan Schulman, president of the Paypal, is considered a purpose driven leader due to his clarity and strong determination for purpose oriented goals bringing the revolution in financial world and envisioning the Paypal to be a leading finance product for business and customers transactions globally (World Economic Forum).

CEO of Apple, Tim Cook, being a democratic leader and believing in transparency and teamwork, gives credit of his success to the collaborative efforts of his every team member who contributed through their brilliant ideas, strong decision-making abilities, problem solving skills and active participation (Financill, 2024). Jack Ma is famous for his different leadership style i.e. laissez-faire, believing in the abilities of his team members and letting them to do their best without involving himself in micromanagement (Founders Today, 2023).

Consistency in performance and the ability of prioritizing the things are the key features of leader's behavior (Balcerzyk, 2021). For being a

successful leader, one must be trusting and trustworthy with strong emotional connection to the work and vision, capable of working with flexible and sensitive approach and creative mind, ready to accept failures without quitting, early adopter of modern trends having 10X thinking potential along with building diverse network (Marr, 2021).

Personal Leadership Philosophy

In this age of awareness, digitalization, modernity, innovations, competition and cross-boundary associations, to be a leader is a challenging task. The research was focused on different leadership styles and types of leaders who earned success by chasing their goals of their own interest whether of political, professional, artistic or vanquish in nature (Mamchii, 2023). My leadership philosophy is that a leader should be a blend of various leadership styles because today's leadership is not only a leadership but also a mixture of leadership and management to deal with the challenges (Tenny, 2024) whether in an organizational environment or in some social, political, religious, political or business set-up.

After detailed study of different theories about leadership, as discussed above, I can suggest my own personal leadership philosophy basing on comparative analysis of leaders and their leadership styles during different eras and in variable circumstances. Although every leader is a Great Man due to certain distinctive traits but the concept of historical Great Man as a leader cannot be better fit in the recent times as the followers are more educated, liberal and independent who can be no more influenced with power and wealth. Now, people want to be the followers with their freedom and without any mental and physical suppression. Imposed leadership is no more appreciated in this modern world but participative leadership is.

Discussion above is evident that in recent times, being a leader is not so easy as leadership cannot be done on the basis of few traits only. Today's leader is required to be more divergent, vibrant, visionary, and emotionally strong (Tenny, 2024). The leader must be empathetic and concerned towards his subordinates to a certain

extent treating them on humanitarian grounds but keeping an eye open for the opportunists (Coutu, 2009). He must be motivational and encouraging for his followers supporting them to enhance their personal skills in the better interest of them as well as the organization (Tucker & Russell, 2004). He must have strong interpersonal and communication skills to lead his team and to convince them with his strong public speaking power (PennState, 2016). To compete with the emerging advancements and technological developments (Kopertynska & Kmiotek, 2015), a leader must adopt the style of innovative (Alsolami., 2016), strategic (Jansen., 2009), and visionary leadership in a democratic and flexible manner (Yarnell, 2017) but with strong situational and decision-making power.

In my opinion, a successful leader is that who rules over the hearts and minds of the followers due to his compassionate behavior and visionary approach, who is appreciated due to his outstanding capabilities and skills, who is admired due to his approach towards his goal-orientation as well as his behavior with his subordinates respecting the humanity and focusing on their improvement and well being, who is well-informed, cognitive, risk-taker, transparent, adaptor and emotionally intelligent, trusting them and allowing them to contribute through their own capabilities. Transformational leadership is best suited here aided other types of leadership styles when and where needed.

Conclusion

Detailed study and analysis of different leadership paradigms and the leadership styles of the world's renowned leaders from every wake of life reveals that the leadership style cannot be considered as a static trait whether by birth or acquired. Leadership is basically a process through which a leader is emerged after going through multiple stages of learning, capacity building, personality grooming, visions setting and strategy development finally realizing and acquiring the attributes of excellence in wisdom, decision-making, goals orientation, inclusion of followers, team-working, along with motivational and inspirations qualities.

In current era, organizational environment, both internal and external, is very complex for the reason of being impacted due to high competition, globalization, innovation, economic situations and employee satisfaction with retention, and technological advancement. Generation gap is also a major issue for the organizations where the leader is from old school of thought with the subordinates from generation-Y. In 2023, the most relevant features for a leader are his being charismatic, motivational, and situational with divergent, visionary, innovative, trendy, cognitive, flexible and associative behavior, trusting on the abilities of the employee and encouraging them to work to their maximum for the benefit of organization.

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