Leadership, Communication and Change Management

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Analyses and origin of Trait theory of leadership, its strengths and weaknesses and the pre-conditions for its effective use

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# DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

are many definitions of leadership given by different research persons or scholars. Some of them are given below:

1. It can be defined as the activity of doing the tasks of a systematic/organised group in a manner that it move towards setting and achieving the goals. (Stogdill, 1950, p. 3)

. Leadership can be defined as a process of impact and interaction among the leader and followers. (Hollander, 1978, p. 1)

. Leadership is said to be a process in which the activities or tasks of a group is influenced towards attaining the desired goal. (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p. 46)

. According to Bass, leadership is defined as the cooperation and communication among two or more than two group members that are mostly involved in making and changing the situations and ideas of group members. It arises when one member of the group corrects the ambition, inspiration and skills of other members of the group. Any group member can show the leadership qualities… (Bass, 1990, pp. 19-20)

. Leadership is the method of controlling and influencing the members of the group to deliver their best performance/ output in completing aims, activities, and projects. (Cohen, 1990, p. 9)' (1989 & 1990) leadership theory tells that there are three methods to define how ordinary people acquire leadership qualities and become leaders. These methods are given below:

 Peoples are naturally triggered into leadership behaviour by few personality traits or qualities. This is known as Trait theory.

 Sometimes, events or circumstances lead a person to exhibit special and incredible leadership qualities. This is known as Great Events Theory.

 People can select to be a leader. They learn and acquire skills of leadership. This is known as Transformational Leadership Theory. This theory of leadership is most accepted theory now a days (Khan, 2014, p. 1).time different leadership theories are given, including:

. Great Man Theory 2. Trait Theory

. Behavioural Theory 4. Participative theory

. Situational Theory 6. Contingency Theory

. Transactional Theory 8. Transformational Theory

(Khan, 2014, p. 1).

THEORY

leadership theory follower characteristic

According to this theory, people have some inborn leadership characteristics. In this theory, leaders are also called as born leaders. Strong leaders exhibit the natural qualities and traits. This theory says that, if you find people with right characteristics, you are capable to find leaders. Addition in this theory, it is found from the research that, trait or characteristics can be learned also (Northouse, 2007, pp. 19-23).

How this theory works?

theory of leadership concentrates on leader, not essentially on the conditions or followers. A successful leader shows some specific characteristics and traits. This theory of leadership is suitable for companies that have managers who are in leadership positions and have certain qualities. Choosing “right” person for the organisation increases the organisations performance and capabilities. If the managers don’t have those traits, they go outside and look for people who have the required traits and get them. They want those traits immediately in the people; they are not keen in developing them. The manager can figure out their strengths and weaknesses if it scrutinizes his traits. The person with the required qualities matches the requirement of the companies. Or, there will be chances that organisation helps the individuals in developing certain traits, if they have time. For example, School. This theory grants leaders to understand the situation or problems and take the right actions to make the situations favourable (Hazem Abolrous, 2014, n.p.g.).

AND ANALYSIS AND PRE -CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF TRAIT THEORY

survey or research about leadership is done in 20th century that concentrates on what makes people “great leaders”. After determining the inherent characteristics or qualities of “Great Man” theory such as Gandhi, Napoleon, Nelson Mandela, etc. After this, the research is concentrated on finding the inborn traits of the people (Khan, 2014, p. 1).research related to study Trait theory of leadership began in 1910. A challenge is given to the theory in the mid of 20th century that “no specific traits or qualities separate leaders from other individuals. A person can be leader in one condition but it’s not necessary that the same person is leader in second or another situation (Hazem Abolrous, 2014, n.p.g.).

 The Trait theory of leadership insists on traits and nature of leader.

 In current years, it was found by Alliger, 1986 and Lord DeVader 1986 that personality traits are linked with person’s idea of leadership.

 It was stated by Locke and Kirkpatrick, 1991, that effectual and successful leaders are different types of people in various respects.

 It begins with putting focus on qualities/ traits, switched the focus on circumstances, then again moved back to qualities and traits.

 2 surveys gave better outline of Trait theory. They are given below (Hazem Abolrous, 2014, n.p.g.).

 Stogdill survey, 1948:

traits are scrutinized in this survey. By owning or having merely these traits does not make an individual leader. The traits, the leader have should be according to the circumstances in which the leader works. The traits that differentiate a leader from other leaders or individuals are given below (Northouse, 2007, p. 20).

 Alertness  Initiative

 Insight  Intelligence

 Persistence  Responsibility

 Sociability  Self-confidence

 Stogdill survey 1974:1974, second survey of Stogdill is published. 163 traits are scrutinized in this survey. He compared the findings of both studies and from the conclusion; he found that the 1974 survey was more balanced. This survey argues that both Situational factors and Personality factors are important for determining the leadership capabilities. Also Stogdill, 1974 survey was better balanced than the previous one (Northouse, 2007, p. 21).given traits separate leaders from others:

 Achievement  Insight

 Initiative  Self-confidence

 Persistence  Responsibility

 Cooperativeness  Influence

 Tolerance  Sociability

 Mann’s survey 1959:study similar to previous one is carried out by Mann, 1959 in which 1,400 traits are analyzed. In his survey, he put less stress on situational factors that how they affect leadership. He found that leaders have strength and efficacy in following 6 traits (Northouse, 2007, p. 21).

 Adjustment  Conservatism

 Dominance  Extraversion

 Intelligence  Masculinity

 Lord, DeVader and Allinger survey 1986:’s findings are re-evaluated by Lord et al, 1986 by using meta-analysis procedure. They found three traits that are associated with how individuals are seen as leaders. The three traits are given below (Northouse, 2007, pp. 21-22).

 Intelligence  Masculinity

 Dominance

 Kirkpatrick and Locke survey 1991:was stated by Locke and Kirkpatrick, 1991 that “Leaders are different from others”. The Trait theory of leadership and the long time research that is conducted on Trait theory gives a list of traits to leaders that they can acquire or develop. They suggested that there are 6 traits that differentiate leaders from others and they are the following (Northouse, 2007, p. 22).

 Cognitive Ability  Drive

 Motivation  Task knowledge

 Integrity  Confidence

: Adapted from Northouse, 2007; p. 23

1. Illustrates “different surveys conducted by different researchers”.traits that are common in all surveys are:

. Intelligence: The leader should have affective capability, strong lexical capability and reasoning. Surveys and research shows that intellectual ability of leader should not be very high from its team members. If it is high between leaders and, it will have negative impact (Northouse, 2007, pp. 23-24).

. Self-confidence: Capability to have sure about one’s talent, expertise and proficiency. It contains dignity, self-respect, pride and faith that can differentiate one from others. It is very necessary for influencing others (Northouse, 2007, p. 24).

. Determination: Eagerness to get the work complete. It consists of endurance, enthusiasm, action, and supremacy. Leaders who show determination are enthusiastic and have the capability to persist against hurdles (Northouse, 2007, p. 25).

. Integrity: It is a combination of truthfulness and faithfulness. These leaders follow strongly the rules and take accountability for their behaviour. Leaders who have integrity, they stimulate morale in others. They do what they said (Northouse, 2007, p. 25).

. Sociability: It is leader’s capability to look for good social connections or interactions with different kinds of people. These leaders are communicative, cordial, civil, strategic, gentle, and careful. They are concerned about others health, happiness and requirements (Northouse, 2007, p. 26).pre-conditions for effective use of Trait theory varies according to conditions. The leader should be honest and communicative, so that he/she can work effectively with the members or followers. Effective communication with team helps a leader to attain the targets and goals. Leader should be flexible enough so that he can adopt new ideas and changes for better performance and success. Leaders should be consistent, as leaders who are consistent get respect. They are considered to be fair by the followers. Leader should have good vision, so that he/she can make the plans according to that for better performance and output. Leader should be intelligent, so that he can do better judgements regarding decisions and can introduce creative work. The leader should be supportive in nature, so that he can help the followers whenever there is problem or complexity in situations. The leader should be interested in feedbacks so that he can improve his behaviour or areas that need improvement to become a better leader. The leader should be opportunity-driven and strategic for better plans and ideas to implement in the organisation (Khan, 2014, p. 1)

 The leaders are seen as people with gifted traits.

 This theory has given criteria that if we want to be a leader what traits we need to develop or attain.

 The trait theory can be applied to different types of people who are working at different levels.

 A leader can use this theory to get to know about their strengths and weakness.

 This theory says that leaders are those persons who exhibit extra-ordinary characteristics and qualities.

 Only trait theory of leadership can make claim to provide satisfactoriness.

 Trait theory of leadership is suitable for both groups and individuals.’

 It provides detailed information about leaders.

 This theory of leadership is valid as long time research is done on this theory.

 Lots of research has been done for proposing this theory (Hazem Abolrous, 2014, n.p.g.).

 Some traits are not by birth but can be developed by training.

 Trait theory of leadership is not effective for training and development of leaders as most of the traits in leader are born traits.

 The characteristics that are necessary for developing leadership may not be similar to those traits that are essential for a leadership to maintain.

 Trait theory of leadership is very complicated.

 It does not consider the situations.

 The number of traits in an effective leader is large in count.

 Trait theory of leadership does not prioritize the traits and does not tells which trait is more important and why?

 Most of the modern theories of leadership consider trait theory of leadership out-dated (Hazem Abolrous, 2014, n.p.g.).

CONCLUSION

trait theory of leadership was among the initial analytical efforts that were used to study leadership. This theory tells that leadership traits are inherited and connected to personal characteristics. In spite of the weaknesses, this theory gives a lot of information regarding leaders and leadership. Trait theory of leadership can be used at different levels including individual, organisational, etc. For example, by giving various exams and tests, people can identify their qualities, strengths, weaknesses and their place in the organisation. Managers can also use this theory to identify their position in the company and ways to improve their strength and qualities. Trait theory of leadership provided a touchstone that what we need to acquire if we want to be a leader. (Northouse, 2007, pp. 21-25)., trait theory of leadership gets a high number of interests by people. Many research people strived to describe how leadership is affected by these traits. It has been seen from study that, trait theory of leadership started by focusing on finding traits of great people, then it switched to situations and later on again it moved back towards traits .(Northouse, 2007, p. 16).

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