

A REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL APPROACHES OF STUDYING LEADERSHIP STYLES

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Abstract

This article is going to present a review of the most influential and mainstream theories about leadership, which are of significant meaning for a successful manager. The author will focus on some leadership theories by giving a more detailed image of the characteristics and attributes that an effective manager should have. The principal message of this article is that it is important to reflect the type of leader that a manager wants to be so that he remains loyal to his principles. In conclusion, the author leads to the fact that the traditional theories of leadership have not provided a completely satisfactory framework for leadership effectiveness. The modern theory emphasizes the image of an effective manager as an organizational reality.

Keywords: leadership theory; entrepreneurship; leader behaviour; relational leadership; transactional

JEL Codes: O15, L26, M12

1. Introduction

There has been a great controversy amongst academics regarding the concept of the leader. Discussions about leadership have existed since the first scientific studies of economics. However, leadership is hardly a topic that originates with the advent of the academic study of businesses. The first and oldest text about leadership that has been translated by Battiscombe (1909) was the Teachings of Ptah-Hotep which was written for Pharaoh Isesi's son of the fifth dynasty. This text was a treatise that depicts the ways of being an effective Pharaoh or a nation's leader. Although it's relatively easy to look at how effective an organizational leader was based on her or his accomplishments, the fact of determining whether or not someone will be an effective leader before his ascension is a difficult task. Numerous scholars have developed a variety of methods and theories in order to describe and explain leadership which was an auxiliary tool for businesses to select the most capable leader.

Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson have developed five primary approaches to understanding and explaining leadership (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). These are a) the Traits approach b) the Situational approach c) the Functional approach d) the

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Relational approach and e) the Transformational approach. These approaches are going to be analyzed in the following sub-sections.

2. Literature Review of the traditional approaches to studying Leadership styles

2.1. Trait Approach

The most basic approach is most well known as the trait approach. According to this approach, effective leaders should exhibit a variety of physical, mental, or personality traits, while non-leaders, or even ineffective leaders, do not. It's the oldest of all the approaches that researchers have analyzed. According to the predominant literature review that has been published till the previous year and is presented as a summarized table in the section of the appendix (Table 1: Traits associated with the leadership), there are basic traits that are associated with leadership. In Stodgill's handbook (1970), the traits are divided into six sub-categories that are closely related to the personal characteristics of the leader which are physical, social background, intelligence, personality, task-related and social.

Secondly, according to Mann (1959), which is presented in Table 1 the main idea of his text is that a strong relationship is being displayed between the personality of the individual employee and his or her performance. This also strengthens the trait theory. Furthermore, Kirkpatrick (1991) analyzes the appropriate characteristics that an executive should have and these are also presented in Table 1.

Finally, Lussier and Achua (2007) refer in their analysis to the traits that a successful leader should have to develop his skills and make the right decisions about the welfare of his firm (presented in Table 1).

Table 1. Traits Associated with Leadership

<p><i>Stodgill (1990)</i></p>	<p>Adaptability Adjustment Assertiveness Alertness Creativity, Originality Diplomacy Dominance Emotional Balance Enthusiasm Extraversion Independence, Nonconformity Objective, Tough-mindedness Resourcefulness Self-confidence Sociability, Interpersonal Skills Strength of Conviction</p>
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	Tolerance of Stress
<i>Mann (1959)</i>	Adjustment Conservatism Dominance Extroversion Intelligence Masculinity
<i>Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991)</i>	Cognitive ability Integrity Motivation Task knowledge
<i>Lussier and Achua (2007)</i>	Dominance Emotional Intelligence Flexibility High energy Integrity Intelligence Confidence Drive Internal Locus-of-control Self-confidence Sensitivity to others Stability

Source: Bass & Stodgill, 1990

These studies have come to a variety of different traits over the years. Although there is some overlap, each list is unique. One of the most fundamental problems with the trait approach is that recent scientific research has provided an ever-ending list of personality traits that are closely connected to leadership. In conclusion, no clear or replicable list of traits exists.

The authentic perception that leaders were created through a magic checklist of personality traits has fallen out of favor in the leadership community (Dinh & Lord, 2012). However, in modern leadership theory personal traits have been reintegrated as important aspects of the process of leadership. In Scott Shane's book *Born Entrepreneurs* (2010), the writer argues that even the genetic characteristics may not cause people to become leaders or entrepreneurs, the personal genetic makeup of each individual probably strengthens the likelihood that he would succeed in becoming a leader or entrepreneur. In this respect, Zaccaro (2007) have argued that personality traits of leaders should be assessed within the framework of specific leadership events and not by taking as considered fundamental aspects of a concrete phenomenon called 'leadership'. More effectively, Dinh and Lord (2012) argue that an individual's traits

may impact how they behave within a specific leadership situation but those specific personality traits may not be seen across all leaders in all leadership contexts.

2.2. Situational Approach

As trait approaches became out of date, recent approaches to leadership began emerging in which leadership depended on a variety of situational factors such as a task to be completed, leader-follower relationships or interactions, follower motivation, and commitment. These modern leadership theories are commonly known as situational approaches. While many leadership theorists fall into the situational approach, two of them are most widely known and are going to be described here: a) the Contingency theory of Fried Fiedler (1967) and b) the situational leadership theory of Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1969).

Fiedler started analyzing his theory to explain the concept of leadership in the 1950s and '60s. Through his presentation, Fiedler (1967) resulted in his theory which is recorded as the “Contingency Theory of Leader Effectiveness”. Based on this particular theory, Fiedler (1967) asserted that leadership is a detailed reflection of both a leader’s personality and behavior. Fiedler argued that leaders are stable in their leading way, but as the circumstances change, leaders need to adjust their strategies. The fundamental starting point of Fiedler’s Contingency theory was the concept that leaders are often task or relationship-oriented (Fiedler, 1967). The organizational leaders were interested more in tasks and thus, organizational goals getting achieved. On the other hand, relationship-oriented leaders focused on building positive relationships based on mutual trust and respect. In order to determine a leader's preference for tasks or relationships, leaders are asked to evaluate all employees with whom they have cooperated and select the employee that they have had the opportunity to confront difficult circumstances (Fiedler, 1967). When you think of the follower that the leader had the most trouble with, it’s usually very easy to determine whether the leader is more task or relationship-oriented because that follower is generally the opposite (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedler termed this follower in his Contingency Theory the leader’s least preferred co-worker (LPC) (Fiedler, 1967).

The basic model proposed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1969) is also divided into the task (leader directive behavior) and relational (leader supportive behavior) dimensions. However, Hersey and Blanchard’s theory of leadership starts with the basic notion that all the followers don’t need the same task or relationship-based leadership. This means that the type of leadership a leader should utilize with a follower depends on the follower’s readiness.

2.3. Functional Approach

With respect to the trait and situational approaches to leadership, the basic outcome called “leadership” is a chain of traits that are going to fabricate the concept. According to the theory of the functional approach, on the other hand, the researchers

admit that a leader is someone who looks, acts as a leader, and communicates like a leader. To understand the functional approach to leadership, there have been briefly analyzed two different sets of researchers commonly associated with this approach: Chester Barnard's *Functions of the Executive* (Barnard, 1938) and Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' *Classification of Functional Roles in Groups* (Benne & Sheats, 2007).

The first great functional theorist was an organizational scientist named Chester Barnard who published a seminal book in 1938 entitled "The Functions of the Executive" (Barnard, 1938). The title of this particular book resulted in giving the name in the concept of Functional Approach to Leadership. Barnard argues in his book that executives have three basic functional roles (Barnard, 1938). The first function that a leader should have is the formulation of the organization's basic purpose and objectives. The second function of a leader according to this framework was securing essential services from other members. According to Barnard's framework, the primary function of an executive should be to establish and maintain a system of communication. In this respect, leaders have a fundamental task in creating and controlling the formal and informal communication systems within the organization (Barnard, 1938). Barnard was one of the first researchers to extol the importance of understanding both formal and informal communication within an organization.

Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' set out to develop a helpful tool for analyzing and understanding the functional aspects of leadership. Their article titled "Functional Roles of Group Members" (Benne & Sheats, 2007) was designed to analyze how people interact and behave within a small group or team. The basic premise of Benne and Sheats' (2007) theory was that different people in different group situations will assume a variety of roles within a group. Some of these roles will be prosocial and will help the group achieve its basic goals, while other roles are antisocial and can negatively impact a group's ability to achieve its basic goals.

2.4. Relational Approach

The next approach is called the relational approach because it doesn't focus on traits, characteristics, or functions of leaders and followers, but instead, this approach focuses on the types of relationships that are being developed between leaders and followers. The author of this article gives a brief image about the Relational Approach by describing two different perspectives on this approach which are a) Robert Blake and Jane Mouton's Managerial Grid (Blake & Mouton, 1964) and b) George Graen's Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The first major relational approach to be discussed is Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid. (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The title of the concept Management Grid (Blake & Mouton, 1964) indicates that it is a suitable tool for effective leadership.

The original grid which was created in 1965 caused the two researchers to worry about whether or not a leader was genuinely concerned about his followers or his production. How an individual leader approaches both relationships and tasks will determine where he or she sits as a leader on the management grid. As a consequence of the above, we conclude that there are five basic leadership styles: impoverished, authority-loving, country club, team, and straight on the road

In the mid-1970s, George Graen started suggesting a different classification of theory for understanding leadership. Graen's theory of leadership proposed that leadership should be understood as existing in three distinct realms: a) follower b) leader and c) relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The main concept of the Leader-member exchange theory is that leaders and followers exist in a bilateral relationship. From this perspective, the concept of leadership should be examined in combination with the nature of that relationship.

2.5. Transformational Approach

The ultimate leadership approach is popular amongst organizational theorists. The term "transformational approach" of leadership was firstly mentioned by James Downton in his text about the concept of Rebel Leadership (Downton, 1973). Furthermore, the concept of Transformational leadership was analyzed in a more detailed view by the political sociologist James MacGregor (James MacGregor, 1978).

According to this approach, the whole meaning of leadership can be entirely understood by describing the two sides of the coin of leadership which are transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional is the type of leadership which focuses on a series of exchanges that can occur between a leader and followers. Promotions and pay raises have been the most predominant strategies for transactional leadership throughout the corporate USA. Promotions or pay raises are offered to the followers that meet the leaders' demands and succeed in their goals by transactional leaders. Rewards have also been used as a tool utilized to get the best outcome in terms of the followers reaching goals or even exceeding them. Rewards are also the external motivation for followers and if they cease to exist, followers will lack their motivation to be successful.

On the other hand, we could easily deduce that transformation leadership could be defined as the procedure of interaction and engagement among people that creates a higher level of motivation and morality to both sides, the side of the leader and the side of the follower.

More essentially, transformational leadership is most simply understood as leading followers to meet or exceed goals because the leader provides rewards to followers. Charismatic and inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are the three factors of transformational leadership proposed by Bernie Bass as a more in-depth understanding of its nature (Bass, 1985).

Charismatic leadership is considered to be the ability of the leader to influence and inspire his team to achieve targeted goals or tasks. Undoubtedly, the ability of influencing is unique and not everyone possesses it. The different characteristic of this type of leadership is that while in any other case the leader rewards his followers for executing their tasks, the transformational leader inspires his team without promising any rewards (Bass, 1998). The followers are motivated by their leader's vision. Another important factor of transformational leadership is the intellectual stimulation (Northouse, 2007). More explicitly, transformational leaders encourage their team to be more creative, innovative and to challenge both their own and leader's and indirectly the organization's values and beliefs (Northouse, 2007). According to Northouse (2007), both transactional and transformational leaders engage in intellectual stimulation themselves, the purpose of that intellectual stimulation differs. In this respect, transactional leaders tend to focus on how best to keep their organizations and the systems within their organizations running. The final factor of transformative leadership is individual consideration. The main point of this factor is that the leader evaluates the potential of his followers and by providing them directions, he individually assigns tasks to his followers in order at first to significantly alter their skills and motivations and secondly to meet immediate organizational needs. The concept of this factor is that the leader achieves the maximized potential of his followers which in turn leads to the maximization of his resources.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many models and approaches that have been analyzed through the years. However, historically the most widely known and accepted models/approaches are the following, summarized as key points:

- Trait Approach: it's the oldest approach and is based on the assumption that some people are born with specific characteristics related to their personality or with special communication skills that make them suitable for leaders.
- Situational Approach: this approach is considered to focus on specific organizational contexts or situations that enable leadership.
- Functional approach: According to this approach, the prominent leader is someone who looks like, acts like, and communicates like a leader.
- Relational approach: leadership is a matter of building and maintaining relationships with one's followers.
- Transformational approach: a leader is a person who utilizes communication to increase followers his morale and ideas, motivation, and performance to accomplish organizational goals.

In this respect, these approaches have each contributed to the understanding of leadership, none of the approaches has provided an entirely satisfactory explanation of leadership and leadership effectiveness. After the '70s, there have been various

alternative approaches put forward. Researchers have drawn a line between the old versus the newer paradigm models of leadership (visionary, charismatic, transformational). Those new models are not irrelevant to the concepts of 'charismatic leadership', 'visionary leadership, and 'transformational leadership. The conclusion is that traditional approaches as they have already referred consider leadership as a process, that involves influencing others, occurs within a group context and involves goal attainment while more recent definitions of leadership have stressed the importance of the role of leader and focus more on the character of a leader as 'defining organizational reality'. Undoubtedly, all these approaches resulted in the fact that the role of the leader is considered to be of first and primary importance for the welfare of every firm.

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