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GOOD OLD DAYS AND FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES

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Abstract

The research investigates progress of leadership theories. Critical theory has been utilized as the paradigm of inquiry in this research. Critical theory demonstrate that the theories of leadership have been reformatting through the changes found in society and history. Therefore, while investigating the research topic, historical/social changes and their influences have been taken into consideration. The approach provides a non-linear understanding for the future of leadership theories. It contributes to the existing literature through utilizing critical theory while investigating leadership theories. In addition, the research presents a different perspective about future of leadership theories. Further researches concerning leadership must focus on culture, and leadership theories and their interactions.

Keywords: Cultural Leadership, Leadership, Management, Management History.

Introduction

The concept of leadership has been an ongoing topic of discussion since time immemorial. For the longest time, the progress of leadership moved with the axis of military command. One of the earliest records regarding military leadership dates back to Sun Tzu (400-320 BC). According to him, wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage, and strictness, are the common characteristics of good leaders. Conversely, good leaders should not be reckless, cowardly, quick tempered, sensitive (as regards honour), and overly compassionate (Chen, 1994). His ancient philosophy on leadership has carried far beyond his time and space and reached our world today. Utilizing soft power gains importance in his leadership understanding. The most important component of gaining soft power is having and using knowledge effectively. He sees applying hard power as weakness: a real leader wins the battle even before departing for the battlefield.

Ancient Times

Some ancient Greek philosophers evaluated leadership from the perspective of wisdom and virtue. Socrates, as a retired soldier, criticized the idea of following a leader, and suggested his disciples pursue wisdom and virtue², and not any individuals (Plato, 2008). Plato like Socrates emphasized the importance of virtue and wisdom in leadership. According to Plato (2013: 379):

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² According to Socrates, virtue is knowledge of what is good and bad that can be taught (Plato, 2013).

“As before, rulers must be constant and valiant, good-looking, and of noble manners, but now they must also have natural ability which education will improve; that is to say, they must be quick at learning, capable of mental toil, retentive, solid, diligent natures, who combine intellectual with moral virtues; not lame and one-sided, diligent in bodily exercise and indolent in mind, or conversely; not a maimed soul, which hates falsehood and yet unintentionally is always wallowing in the mire of ignorance; not a bastard or feeble person, but sound in wind and limb, and in perfect condition for the great gymnastic trial of the mind.

Furthermore, he posited that an ideal state should have four main virtues at its core: prudence, courage, temperance, and justice (Takala, 1998). Also, the ruler of a state, who must have natural charisma (Williamson, 2008), should seek knowledge in good, truth³, and wisdom (Popper, 2011). Therefore, philosophers should be kings and kings should be philosophers (Plato, 2013: xvii). Although Socrates and Plato define leadership differently than Sun Tzu, where they intersect concerns knowledge. They all see “knowledge” as an inseparable measure of leadership.

Aristotle, as the tutor of Alexander the Great, focused on the ethical measures of leadership, and inferred that truth⁴ in practical matters can be seen from deeds, while life and knowledge are experiential and not propositional (Chappell, 2012). People’s deeds and choices aim at the knowledge of good, and a good person always does good things⁵, to which effect a leader should be a good person (Aristotle, 2000). In addition, Aristotle stated that leaders must have practical wisdom, which is, “a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods”. Thanks to practical wisdom, leaders could decide “what is good for them and their men in general” (Ibid:95).

Virtue or Virtù

The idea of being a good person as a leader was challenged by Machiavelli (1469-1527). Machiavelli investigated the moral aspects of leadership; as Howell and Letza (2000) have underscored, Machiavelli utilized the Italian word “virtù”, which has a rather different meaning from its conventional English usage. Whilst conventional virtue aims to be morally good, Machiavellian virtù aims to provide for the good of the state (Parel, 1992). Machiavelli (2008) inferred that leaders should learn not to be good, per se, but rather learn utilizing how to use goodness according to each situation. Nonetheless, while doing this, they should not be odious and louse either. He evaluated human nature as being ungrateful, unstable, selfish, insincere, and cowardly, thereby recommending that leaders should prefer to be feared rather than loved, yet concurrently take care not to become hated either. Therefore, a leader must learn how to act akin to a combination of the fox and the lion: as the fox cannot protect himself from wolves and a lion is defenceless against traps, so a leader must be a fox to recognize traps and a lion to scare away wolves.

Likewise, Kant (1724-1804) criticized Machiavellian understanding of seeing a leader as an exception to following moral rules. He developed a deontologist ethics approach rather than consequentialism . While evaluating if some action is right or wrong, deontological ethics focuses on the action itself rather than its consequences⁶ (Price, 2008). According to Kant (1964), leaders are not

³ Plato, with the effect of Socrates’ ideas, defined the form of truth encompassing two different worlds: eternal and material ones. In the material world, truth can be seen with senses, but in the eternal world, the ability of reason helps one to see truth which is superior to the senses. The object of knowledge is what exists, and its function to know about reality and truth can be seen as abstract while it is more obvious in the eternal world than in the material one (Plato, 2013).

⁴ Aristotle rejected Plato’s form of truth and combined relativism with objectivity (Lloyd, 2011).

⁵ Aristotle divided “good things” into three categories: external good, good of soul, and good of body. Good of soul is mostly called as good, and human virtue means soul, not body.

⁶ Consequentialism is also known as teleological ethics. It is the doctrine that, the moral rightness of an act is determined solely by the goodness of the act’s consequences (Audi, 2015:176).

above the law and same as any ordinary person, whatever the issue, they must follow moral rules. Furthermore, Kant (1795: 76) classifies states, “according to persons who hold highest authority in the state or according to manner in which head of state governs people”. Under the first classification, the state could be an autocracy (rule by one person), aristocracy (rule by a group of associated people), or democracy (rule by everyone who makes up civil society). Under the second cluster, the state could be either republican (government and legislation are separated), or despotic (state executes on its own authority and law) (Ibid). Kant supported representative types of government and separation of powers. For these reasons, democracy is considered as the best type of government according to his understanding. In addition, good leaders show respect and trust to followers and encourage their autonomy (Bowie, 2000). In lieu of establishing a vertical hierarchical order between leaders and followers, he encourages a more egalitarian approach and a less hierarchical relationship. He sees all followers as individuals with the same rights as the leaders who deserve to be treated equally and respectfully. This Kantian leadership understanding also prepared the ground for a democratic leadership type and participative leadership approach.

Natural-born Leaders

Carlyle (1841) emphasized the important role of “Great Men”, such as the Prophet Muhammad, Attila the Hun, Julius Caesar, or Napoleon, in shaping world history. According to him, history of the world is just the collective biographies of such great men. The Great Man Theory states that leadership could only be acquired through birth, and not by experience. Carlyle (1841) developed the first trait-based leadership approach by giving meaning to great men beyond human abilities and influenced by divine inspiration. Galton (1892) supplemented Carlyle’s natural-born leadership theory with his eugenics concept. Eugenics believes that quality of human beings could be enhanced through heredity (Galton, 1883). Trait-based leadership ignores timely social and situational forces that cause the emergence of leaders (Cawthon, 1996) and underestimates the role of education on their development. On the other hand, Stodgill (1948) differentiates the understanding of being a leader according to social situations: one person could be leader in one situation but this does not mean that he would be able to lead under other, and different, circumstances. Stodgill’s views were accepted by a majority of his contemporaries. Even though trait-based leadership made a precise distinction between leader and non-leader, absence of situational variance in the essence of conjecture acted as a brake on the progress of trait-based leadership theory (Zaccora, 2007).

Like Carlyle and Galton, Weber (1947) emphasizes the role of divine origin in leadership. He utilizes the term “charisma” as a supernatural, heroic, or paramount quality that distinguishes the individual from others. Ordinary people could not have that kind of quality, and an individual could only be defined as leader if he has charismatic attributes. Due to the nature of charisma, a free election is not possible in the process for emerging leaders. Additionally, Weber (1978:1125) emphasizes the role of followers accordingly:

“If the charismatic leader has not designated a successor, and if there are no obvious external characteristics, like those that usually facilitate identification in the case of incarnation, it may easily occur to the ruled that the participants [cleric] in his exercise of authority, the disciples and followers, are best suited to recognize the qualified successor. At any rate, since the disciples have in fact complete control over the instruments of power, they do not find it difficult to appropriate this role as a “right.” However, since the effectiveness of charisma rests on the faith of the ruled, their approval of the designated successor is indispensable. In fact, acknowledgment by the ruled was originally decisive.”

Weber defines the election process of a new king, pope, or bishop, by their disciples or followers, as a recognition or qualification of a charismatic leader. Even though, Weber has not

created a profound leadership theory (Conger, 2011), his definition of charismatic leadership has shifted the divine origin leadership theories from trait-based to ones based on charisma. Weber recognizes the followers' role in leadership and perceives their relation from a reflexive perspective. In order to gain the recognition of their followers, leaders must first earn their respect through demonstrating their own positive traits and level of knowledge. The traits of leadership lead to the result of ensuring power over followers. These traits must also be well-reflected on the motivation and performance level of followers in a positive way. Otherwise, the power of the leader cannot be sustained over the followers for too long a period.

Capitalism and Leadership

Until the French Revolution, monarchy dominated the world body politics, and correspondingly, leadership theories mostly developed around the axis of how to be strong or good monarchs. Due to the destructive impact of the French Revolution, monarchies began to weaken one after the other, and especially after the spread of the Industrial Revolution, raising productivity and efficiency became paramount values thereafter in the 19th century. To this effect, in the 20th century, discussions about leadership transformed from consolidating monarchies to becoming efficient leaders.

Taylor (1911) reformed the strategic perspective of ancient leadership theorists for the purpose of increasing productivity at work. He raised the operational level leadership understanding through the term of "functional foreman". Taylor gave much importance to the concepts of power and knowledge in his management principles. According to him, power could be gained through knowledge in this management approach. Moreover, he expanded labour division among functional foremen according to their knowledge level. His leadership understanding was based on knowledge management which covered all production phases (Grint, 2011). Since he saw workers as akin to soldiering, hence, if the functional foreman did not know the production process better than them, they could find a way to cheat him and slow down production. In this manner, his leadership understanding is based on supervising and exercising influence over followers.

Strategic leadership perspectives were redefined by Fayol (1916) for the purpose of creating more effective organizations. He developed fourteen management principles for top management purposes: a. unity of command, b. authority and responsibility, c. discipline, d. unity of purpose, e. unity of direction, f. subordination of individual interest to the common good, g. remuneration of personnel, h. centralization, i. the hierarchy, j. order, k. equity, l. stability of tenure, m. initiative, and, n. esprit de corps (Ibid). Fayol believed that these principles were not only suitable for the French mining industry, but could easily be adapted for different organizations or institutions through the management framework of five common organizational functions: a. planning, b. organising, c. commanding, d. co-ordination, and, e. control (Smith and Boyns, 2005). Fayol's top-down approach brought a more holistic technique, than Taylorism, to the leadership literature. Besides, he realized the importance of managing the human factor in organizational productivity, and especially after the translation of his work, *General and Industrial Management*, into English in 1930, his influence on leadership issues extended beyond France and even found its way to the present day. Power is implicit at the centre of Fayol's management principles. It is expected that there will be one boss in the hierarchical order and followers must obey him/her. Afterwards, the followers' obedience will be amply rewarded for each individual. In addition, if Fayol's principles are applied consistently and institutionalized by leaders, they can reshape organizational culture for institutions as well.

The world's political and social structures were reshaped after the First World War. The Russian Monarchy was overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917. After the death of Lenin, Stalin came to power, and contrary to expectations, he shifted his political status towards

dictatorship. Almost around the same period, Fascism first emerged in Italy and then extended to Germany, Spain, Japan and Argentina. The rise of socialist dictatorships and fascism prepared the social atmosphere for emerging autocratic leaderships. Lewin and his colleagues (1939) investigated the impact of social climates on children's aggressive behaviours and recognized three types of leadership styles: a. autocratic, b. democratic, and, c. laissez-faire. Autocratic leaders did not ask other people's opinion and showed a tendency not to share power with anyone. They desired to see their own goals accepted as the group's common goals. On the contrary, democratic leaders included others in the decision-making processes and offered two or three different goals while leaving the final decision to the consensus of group members (Lippitt, 1939). Laissez-faire leaders did not interfere in the decision-making processes and allowed people to make their own decisions (Lewin et al., 1939).

Shifts in Dynamics of Societies

After the Second World War, the US economy began to grow rapidly and this hectic pace of growth brought much benefit to the people. Thereafter, individualistic culture began to gain more importance amongst the population. Parallel to this shift in dynamics of society, self-actualization approach became popular with the work of Maslow (1943). Self-actualization's reflection on leadership was also seen in the works of McGregor (1960) (Grint, 2011). McGregor (1960) divided people into two categories, as, "Theory X" and "Theory Y", according to his assumptions on human behaviour in the work environment. Theory X posited that average employees were lazy, lacked ambition, were incapable of self-control, and liked the status quo. Consequently, in order to manage them, managers must direct them towards organizational needs, control their actions tightly, motivate them with financial incentives, and when necessary, punish them without hesitation. On the other hand, in contrast to Theory X, Theory Y assumed that employees were hard-working, liked autonomy, were capable of self-control and self-direction, and eager to contribute to organizational needs for their desire to meet self-actualisation (Wilkinson, 1998). Thus, managers must support employees' individual progress, assert less control, allow for more initiative, and in place of giving them an operating manual, they must just say, "do it". Taking the 1960s political, socio-cultural, and work conditions into consideration, this work holds a very important place in leadership studies by realising individual differences among employees and developing different management approaches according to these variances. However, this study seems applicable in places where either self-actualization is very high, or very low, as it defines only two extreme sides; yet between zero and one there are numerous numbers. In addition, another flaw is the ignoring of interactive power and organizational culture relations in organizations. There is an ongoing relationship between power and culture which cannot be stopped, continued, or changed, whenever someone desires. Without setting sustainable power dynamics in an organization, changing official management policies in short terms can harm the solidity of organizational culture as well.

Effective Leadership

In the 1950s, Ohio State University researchers investigated variant types of effective leadership behaviours in different organizational contexts. They found two main behavioural patterns: first was, "supporting and concerning for subordinates", and second, "providing detailed planning" that indicated how to reach desired goals or tasks. Almost at the same time, University of Michigan researchers conducted a study on effective leadership behaviours and found almost the same results as those of Ohio State University. These two works triggered the birth of contingency leadership theories in the 1960s (Seyranian, 2009).

Contingency leadership theory scrutinized the impact of situational variables (e.g. characteristics of task, employees, leader, and leadership position) on leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2011). Fiedler (1967) was the first to develop contingency theory of leadership effectiveness. There

were three main steps in his theory. First step was identifying types of leader behaviour pattern: either task-oriented or human relationship oriented. In order to determine this, Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) scale asked leaders to consider a person with whom they did not work well and to rate their feelings vis-à-vis that person on a scale from one to eight: a high score indicating human relationship-oriented behaviour while a low score referring to task-oriented behaviour. Second step was determining favourableness of the situation that affected the leader's effectiveness with three dimensions. First dimension indicated leader and member relations, as good or bad. Second dimension referred to the level of power that was utilized by leader, as high or low. Third dimension indicated task structure which was the degree of task's clarity and leader's capacity to design goal-path (high or low). The final step was determining the most effective leadership style according to specific situations. Even though the theory was updated several times (Fiedler and Garcia, 1987; Fiedler, 1993), it was highly criticized by academics due to weak links between individuals' LPS score and their approach to leadership (Landy, 1989), rigid structure of theory, lack of good reliability (many academics could not reproduce Fiedler's findings) (Haslam, et al., 2011), and inconsistent results of measuring key variables (Parry and Bryman, 2012). However, contingency theories in accordance to Fiedler's work dominated the leadership literature between 1960 and the 1980s, but due to insufficient empirical support for all aspects of the theory (Yukl, 2011) and inability to grasp the psychological dynamics of interaction between leader and followers⁷ (Reynolds et al., 2010; Haslam et al. 2011), they lost their popularity thereafter.

Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Unlike contingency theorists, Hollander (1964, 1971 and 1995) realized that leadership was not a leader-centric process. Rather, followers had active roles and the two groups were not disparate entities. Thus, he developed a transactional leadership approach that covered mutual interaction between leader and followers and centred on followers' satisfaction vis-à-vis leader's actions (Hollander and Offermann, 1990). According to Bass (1997), transactional leadership utilized the combination of positive and negative incentives and non-leadership factors. In the beginning, leader gave clear organizational expectations to subordinates, and if they met them, as a result of this success, he/she awarded them contingent rewards. This formed the positive incentive segment of the theory. On the other hand, negative incentive factor had two elements. Firstly, active management by exception: leader monitored followers' performance and when they were falling short of standards, he/she took corrective actions. Secondly, passive management by exception: leader utilized negative feedback or punishment when he saw unwanted serious acts from followers. Finally, laissez-faire leadership formed the non-leadership component of the theory. Leader did not intervene in decision making processes and did not take subordinates' responsibilities. The essence of transactional leadership is to achieve an intersection between the leader's goals and followers' satisfaction. If transactional leadership is not embedded into organizational culture and not supported by human resource policy by providing insufficient power to leaders, this understanding fails to provide for the needs of strategic leadership perspective, such as, developing vision and implementing change, and then can be effective only at an operational level. To this effect, it begins to be utilized as a complementary theory of transformational leadership in organizations. Major historical changes occurred in the decade spanning 1970 to 1980: culmination of the war in Vietnam, The Watergate Scandal, first female British Prime Minister, USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, Iran's transformation to an Islamic republic, commencement of the Iran-Iraq war, global energy crises, emergence of Spain as a democracy, Israel-Egypt peace treaty, and China's economic reforms based on foreign investment. While things which

⁷ Haslam et al. (2011: 27) referred that, "there are two problems in this context: The first is that each term in the interaction is conceptualized as a fixed entity that is separate from the other. The second is that only one of these terms, the person, is the subject of a properly psychological analysis".

seemed impossible began to occur in world body politics and economy, in order to be able to adapt to this breath-taking environment, organizations began to implement major changes accordingly. Still, the static nature of leadership theories of the period did not respond to this need, and in order to manage change, transformational leadership theory emerged in that decade.

Downtown (1973) was first to utilize transformational leadership terms in the literature, but Burns (1978) developed a theoretical framework for political transformational leadership and brought wider understanding to the concept. Subsequently, Bass (1985, 1990, 1997, 1998) expanded the theory to business and public sectors through creating measures of value, such as, “The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire” and the nine factorials⁸, and “Full Range Leadership model” (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). Burns (1978:20) defined transformational leadership not as “a set of specific behaviors, but rather an ongoing process by which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation”. Maslow’s hierarchical needs theory, especially self-esteem and self-actualization higher needs, influenced Burns’ concept (Worth, 2019). Transformational leaders must lead at the level of higher needs as they must enhance the benefits of followers, transform group’s mission, aim at followers’ own values, and make followers believe that the group’s good trumps their own wants and needs (Burns, 1978). At this juncture, the ability to convince followers and attain their support gains importance. In order to achieve this, the leader must be seen as a respected figure by followers. Charisma becomes an important element of leadership to acquire and maintain respect of others. Moreover, Bass (1985), unlike Burns, did not make a precise separation between transactional and transformational leadership, as he posited that transactional leadership was a complementary part of transformational leadership. When works within organizational constraints were performed, the transactional leader was necessary. On the other hand, when change was necessary, transformational leadership came into the fore (Bass, 1997). Transformational leadership has been referred to, and utilized by, many academics and still holds its popularity amongst them. Nevertheless, it has garnered much criticism for giving too much credit to the role of the leader while ignoring the impact of individuals, groups, and organizational development, in the leadership process (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). Hereby, an important question reveals itself: When transformational leader quits his position, how does this gap affect the vision and strategy of organizations? Hence, transformational leaders must be aware of the importance of sharing power in the decision-making process. Herein, the common mind must be encouraged, and followers and other stakeholders must be included in the decision-making process as well.

Culture and Leadership

Lord and Maher (1991) desired to moderate the weight and importance of the leader. Consequently, they added followers’ perception and expectations to their implicit leadership theory (ILT). Though different from transactional leadership, ILT recognized the role of social categorization in leadership (Haslam et al., 2011), and with its cognitive structure regarding the traits and behaviours of followers (Lord et al., 1982 and 1984), became one of the main leadership theories utilized in cross-cultural researches. After the demise of the USSR in 1991, capitalism remained the unrivalled economic system in the world and began to spread to former Eastern Bloc countries. The economic expansion was not limited to a financial dimension but also started a mutual cultural diffusion process. Especially, after the European Union’s enlargement decision in 2004, this mutual cultural interaction process reached peak levels. Many organizations began to employ foreign employees, and thereby, were transformed into multinational companies. This major shift also brought some difficulties in

⁸ The nine factors are: identifying and articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, providing individualized support, intellectual stimulation, contingent reward, active/passive management by exception, and laissez-faire leadership (Diaz-Saenz, 2011:300).

utilization of current leadership approaches, because classic leadership understanding ignored cultural diversity and accepted all employees as homogenous. Hereby, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness Research (GLOBE) project became a milestone in leadership studies through investigating the impact of cultural diversity on leadership effectiveness. The GLOBE research developed its own culturally endorsed ILT that is composed of six leadership dimensions.

Conclusion

Even geographical borders between countries have not changed much recently. Due to employment of foreign employees in many organizations, cultural borders have begun to disappear between nations. Now, it is very common to see different nationalities working in the same organization. This progress increased the importance of cross-cultural leadership day by day, but contrary to the present need, there is not much research about this topic in the existing literature. Therefore, due to ever expanding and dynamic process of globalization, it is assumed that cross-cultural leadership theories will dominate the leadership literature in the near future.

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