

Free critical thinking on a critical evaluation of margaret thatcher's leadership...

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Introduction

Very few people emerge as a leader that is mainly driven by the personality traits and leadership approach of the individuals. These personality traits and leadership approach makes them successful. Moreover, the distinguishing traits and characteristics also enable a person to become an influential leader. In contemporary world of today, where strict competition lies between people, few are able to succeed in making their position strong as a leader. One such leader evaluated in this paper is Margaret Thatcher, a former prime minister of UK who had ruled for a period of 11 years (Northouse 2010, 302; Reitan 2003, 52). This paper critically evaluates her leadership style and traits that has made her a successful and most influential female leader globally. In addition, the paper also evaluates the gender issue that she had faced as a female leader that has not affected her performance to be an effective woman leader

Margaret Thatcher

Margaret Thatcher is recognized to be a well-known and only female leader in British politics who have become prime minister. In addition, she was also the first the head of state in the Western nation. She is also known to be the Iron Lady as she had served the nation for the longest period of time (Blundell 2008, 86). She is more recognized for her autocratic style of leadership. She came to the power in the year 1979 and spent 11 years as conservative Party leader. She resigned in the year 1990. As a leader, Margaret Thatcher had revitalized the country's economy that was facing slow time (Northouse 2010, 302; Roy and Clarke 2006, 129). She had

adapted free-market principles in the economy that has changed the fate of the country. During her period of elected prime minister, she had brought many significant changes. Margaret Thatcher led the country into the Falklands War. Moreover, she fight against powerful trade unions of the nation and privatized many state owned companies of the country. Moreover, council houses were also sold that had allowed many families were allowed to purchase and live (O'Brien 2011, 112). Through her leadership approach, she had divided sentiment that had resulted in UK's current socioeconomic structure. Furthermore, she represented British with a good image on a global stage and stood up to Soviet Union and Europe. Thus, the politics of Margaret Thatcher has made her to be considered as a great politician. She had achieved numerous successes that are defined by the history.

Margaret Thatcher's autocratic leadership

Margaret Thatcher is well known to be an authoritarian leader. The autocratic leaders are the one who have nature to control others and strive for power and authority. Moreover, autocratic leaders are mainly characterized by their leadership approach where foremost is the decision-making responsibilities (Reitan 2003, 47). As an autocratic leader, Margaret Thatcher had ability to dictate methods and work processes, even if there is no or little input from other people. Adapting to this type of leadership approach, Margaret Thatcher had efficiently and quickly made decisions that did not require any process of laborious democratic that may take hold on

results. Moreover, these characteristics have led Margaret Thatcher to work successfully in a high-pressure environment (Benson 2011, 84).

Traits of Margaret Thatcher's as an autocratic leader

Margaret Thatcher had several traits that had contributed to her success as a female politician. Without effective authoritarian traits, it was not possible for her to become successful and an influential lady with strong powers. The following are some of the key traits of Margaret Thatcher that had made her a successful and globally known authoritarian leader in the history.

Strong relationship building

Margaret Thatcher was aware of the importance of collaboration and building strong relationship with others. She ensured to falsify the political alliances particularly with Ronald Reagan, US president (Priest and Gass 2005, 112). The two shared many ideological, financial and political approaches. Moreover, the two also supported each other in their military aims that include the 1983 battle of Britain against the armed forces of Argentine during the Falklands War and the United States bombing of Libya in the following year (Campbell 2008, 98). The approach led by Margaret Thatcher ensured strong ties with US that have made UK a strong force in international affairs. Thus, the support by public for the Falklands War had proved as an important turnover in her life to win the re-election in the year 1983.

Determination

Margaret Thatcher was a truly determined leader. The strong determination had enabled Margaret Thatcher to set goals to achieve them. For example she was determined and was successful in reducing the influence of trade unions through legislature that was concluded by the miner's strike during 1984-85 when decision was taken to shut down the mines that were unprofitable (Roy and Clarke 2006, 127). Margaret Thatcher build coal supplies and refused to give up on the union demands and broke the resolution of NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) that was followed be a year of strikes where the NUM conceded without a deal.

Confidence

Being confident in one's ideals has led Margaret Thatcher to be a great leader. She had confidence in herself during her prime ministerial period that has led her to run conviction politics based government. She was driven by her own values. For example, she was confident in imposing her own ideals such as free market economics, tax-cuts, privatization and promotion of house ownership (Benson 2011, 127). On the other hand, some political critics have argued on this approach of Margaret Thatcher that had led her to face downfall and failures. For example, when she faced unpopular policies and economic problems that include infamous Poll Tax, she had decided to step down from seat of prime minister. Moreover, this failure was also obvious when Margaret Thatcher had lost the support of closest colleagues and the Cabinet (Klenke 2004, 62).

Resilience

One of the traits Margaret Thatcher possessed is being certainly resilient. As she faced tougher challenge, she was seemed to be on a rise to take pleasure in the process. Being the first female Prime Minister of British, she had three distinct attributes of resilient i. e., challenge oriented, self believe and sense of purpose (Ennis 2013, 34). Margaret Thatcher was absolutely clear about her intentions and goals. She was driven by resilience to achieve what she wanted and believed that she was right. She took each step without any second thought that could affect her decision. All attributes of resilience had resulted in her ultimate demise that was because of the overplayed resilience attributes (Adler 1996, 154). She had good leadership approach that showed high levels of resilience in her that had brought positive consequences and productive work attitude.

Rooted Beliefs

Margaret Thatcher had strong rooted beliefs. Her brought up had taught her the necessity of self-help, personal authenticity and charitable work. Throughout her governance, she had taken decisions by self on the basis of foundational and moral values. As a leader, she had understood her core values and beliefs that had led her to achieve success easily.

Gender issues and effectiveness as a female leader

Historically, the leadership and gender studies had largely unrepresented women (Northouse 2010, 302). However, Margaret Thatcher stood firmly and tried to make her position strong (Priest and Gass 2005, 102). Her weaker point has a leader was that she belonged to a lower middle class, while the

other national leaders belonged to the upper class (O'Brien 2011, 112). As a result she is understood as a combination of toughness and vulnerability. Thus, the vulnerability of Margaret Thatcher was related to the gender issues. Moreover, as women are considered to be a weaker element and inappropriate leaders, Margaret Thatcher tried to prove this view wrong. She worked to improve the image that women cannot become good leader (Aitken 2013, 131). Her personality characteristics and traits led her to eliminate the gender issues and came up as one of the best authoritarian leader.

During the tenure of Margaret Thatcher's as a prime minister, the "masculine" leadership approach had not discouraged her from utilizing her status as a female. Although all her cabinet members included male ministers, but she had created and emphasized on her exemplary position as a female Prime Minister (Blundell 2008, 87). Being a female prime minister, she had many advantages where her leadership approach was noticed by a highest degree of ability in changing between the femininity-masculinity roles. Margaret Thatcher is known to be a professional "gender-bender" (Darby 1983, 160). The toughness of Margaret Thatcher had made her opposite gender colleagues speechless and confused them on how to react, specifically due to a reason that she was a female leader. Nevertheless, Margaret Thatcher had also used her womanly charms at appropriate situations (Lussier and Achua 2012, 45). Margaret Thatcher's 'perplexing charm' had led her to get away with the political tricks and ploy that a man could not.

Besides emerging as an important female political leader, she also worked

for the female liberation. She had emphasized on the individual rights (Cooper 2012, 104). Margaret Thatcher insisted that females must be promoted on merit basis and not that of sisterhood. She had never asserted that females possess inborn capacities that makes them good leader. However, Margaret Thatcher did argue that females have “ special talents” to serve public. The capacities and traits are not innate, but these are developed through experience of life (Reitan 2003, 75).

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it could be said that Margaret Thatcher was a successful and an influential female leader. The leadership traits and characteristics possessed by Margaret Thatcher led her to the success. Her strong determination to work, inner confidence, deep rooted belief and resilience were the traits that has defined her to be an authoritarian leader. Moreover, her autocratic leadership and sense of making decisions made her to become prime minister twice in her political career. Although, she faced few gender issues initially as she was the first female prime minister in history of Britain, but her personality and authoritarian leadership encouraged to battle against the gender issues and lead as a successful female leader. Thus, her leadership approach encourages other individuals to have confidence in oneself that will make the other influential factors less active.

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