

Critically examine this statement focusing on the role of leadership theory to de...

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Leaders are born. A leader has his or her own traits and these cannot be changed. Critically examine this statement focusing on the role of leadership theory to develop leaders within organisations.

1. 0 Introduction

People are born with traits that he/she inherited from the parents, some of it so called natural talents. A parent who is a leader sometimes has a child who is also become a leader, but it is also very common that a parent who is a leader have a child who is not a leader.

Contradiction about whether leaders are born or made is an endless discussion, in which every theory of leadership always changing from time to time.

Nowadays, it is important to understand the nature of leadership and to develop strong leadership skills, because it can determine the success of an organisation. However, to develop the leadership skill need time and it is not easy.

This paper will explain about the nature and nurture of leadership to determine whether leaders has his or her own traits and cannot be changed or not and about how to develop leaders within organisations.

2. 0 Literature Review of Leadership Theories

According to Samson & Daft (2009) leadership is the ability to influence people towards the attainment of organisational goals. Leader has many

styles and they are also diverse in qualities. Leadership as a dynamic process in nature is always changing as organisation is changing due to the dynamic of environment. Power has been used by the leader to influence people and get things done. In addition, an effective leader must also build trust among the followers as well as to follow the code of ethics to realise the goal that has been set up. Moreover, beliefs, values, skills and traits are also several characteristic that are needed by a leader to be success (Ridley, 2003).

2. 1 Leadership Theories

Several theories of leadership has been exist since long time ago, starting from 1930s with the leadership trait theories, which still has been argue until recent days about whether leaders are born or made.

2. 1. 1 Trait Theories

Characteristics of a person that distinguish from the others are called traits. Intelligence, values and appearance are traits of the leader. Trait theories have been introduced in 1930s in which it was perceived that leaders' characteristics are different from the nonleaders. It means that leaders are born not made, and the characteristics of leader has been inherited from the parents, thus whoever has that traits it means that they could become a great leaders.

Later, many researches propose new theories of leadership because it seems like there is no longer relationship between traits and leadership (Samson & Daft, 2009; Stodgill, 1974; McCall, 1983).

2. 1. 2 Behavioural Theories

Behavioural theories have been introduced on 1940s and 1950s under the study of Ohio State University, the University of Michigan and the University of Texas. They perceived that it is not personality traits of the leader that determine the effectiveness of leadership but its behaviour of the leader; behaviour of the effective leaders is different than the ineffective leaders. Leadership skill can be developed through training, and can be applied within an organisation (Samson & Daft, 2009; Stodgill, 1974; McCall, 1983).

2. 1. 3 Contingency Theories

Contingency theories have been introduced on 1960s and 1970s, in which it perceived that each situation has different in leadership style. Fiedler's contingency theory, Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory and path-goal theory are several models of contingency theories that still applicable in current organisation.

2. 1. 4 Leader-Member Exchange

Every leader has to be a role model for her/his member(s) because members will do whatever their leaders do. In contrary, member has to be loyal to their leader because without the leader they would be lost.

2. 1. 5 Charismatic Leadership

According to Samson & Daft (2009), the ability to encourage, inspire and motivate people to do more than they would normally do is the characteristic of charismatic leader. When there is a problem in an organisation in terms of the entire group need, charismatic leader can be very powerful and bring positive influence to the organisational performance.

2. 1. 6 Transformational-Transactional Leadership

In Transactional leadership style, the leader already elucidate the job requirement and the role of an employee as well as provide rewards and being considerate about the social needs of the employee (Samson & Daft, 2009).

In transformational leadership style, the leader has ability to convey change and innovation. According to Dvir et al. cited in Samson & Daft (2009), skill of transformational leadership can be learned because it is not a personal characteristic. However, having some personality traits related to the leader's trait as stated in leadership traits theories makes it easier to demonstrate transformational leadership behaviours.

3. 0 Nature vs. Nurture (Trait vs. skill)

When born, people already inherited traits from their parents, however that traits can be developed or not developed depending on that person itself. Leadership research was first focus on the inherited traits, which is included: energetic, persistent, adaptable, ambitious, cooperative, achievement-oriented, dependable, stress tolerancy, assertive, decisive, dominant, self-confident and responsible. Leadership trait theory and charismatic leadership theory assume that people are born to be a leader or not to be a leader.

However, due to environmental changing, leadership has become dynamic and must be suitable and contingent with certain situation and condition.

Those conditions could be due to employee's behaviour, organizational

goals, organizational behaviour or organizational changing.

People mostly believe that good characteristic traits can be changed into a bad one, for instance, someone who is very honest could be change to be untrustworthy. Thus, if someone can learn the bad characteristic traits in which he/she become naturally different from the way he/she is through some condition, reason or situation, then they can also learn how to develop the good characteristic traits too. It is difficult, but it can be realized.

Leadership skills, such as creativity, conceptuality, speaking, organizing, social skill, intelligent, analytical skill, persuasive and conceptual skill can be nurtured, for instance by having training and development over time. If a person has a willingness to learn and build up the leadership characteristics and skills, then that person could be a leader.

3. 1 The Nature of Leadership

Many evidences proofed that people are born with the leadership skill as they talent. One trait that a leader was born with rather than learned through her/his life is charisma. A charismatic leader is in my opinion born not made because charisma is something that comes from inside like a leaders personality or basic attitudes. Have you ever felt that you like a person the first time you saw her/him? Same goes with personality, charisma is born with not made of, and one can argue that charisma can be learned too, it is true but a learned charisma would not shine from inside of a leader but rather more in practical things, for instance, it can be seen during speech or the way leaders handle a situation, etc.

Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolf Hitler, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Osama bin Laden, Charles Manson are the examples of leaders who have charismatic style. They have an ability to influence and motivate people to do something.

Another example that proofed the leadership theory is England Kingdom are based on inheritance, for example, keturunan2 raja ratu inggris, kayak turunan raja bakal jadi raja, itu juga kan leader

Another example is Genghis Khan, he became an emperor because of inheritance, and he was able to lead a country. It is proofed that leadership skill is trait, however it also due to a chance to become a leader and also the environment that already structurised a person to become a leader.

Another example in organisation is that when the organisation is a family-business, then most of the time, the family members will be chosen as a leader of the company. This happened in many succeed family-company, such as SinarMas Company, in which all the board directors are the family members.

By understanding the nature of leadership, it is easier to develop the strong leadership skill which is become more important in present day (Krause, 2001).

3. 2 The Nurture of Leadership

Several studies and theories appear to argue about the leadership theories whether leadership is born in nature or has been nurtured over time, those are behavioural theories, contingency theories, transformational-transactional theories, etc.

For example, if in the family-company one of the members has no willingness to lead the company or to develop their leadership skill, then it becomes useless. Thus, trait without willingness is nothing, because he/she is unable to finding the courage and failed in developing the skills.

Moreover, when a leader who is born from non-leadership trait family and become a leader, it means that if there is willingness then the person can develop the leadership skill.

To increase the ability to lead, it is better to focus on the current characteristics, develop the traits related with leadership and also must be contingent according to the situation as environmental is always changing and every organisation has different in culture, behaviour and vision.

As people inherited some characteristics or traits, such as leadership traits, thus genes or the nature provides the goal, but the environment provides the process, and the nurture will determine the result. Nature may be the internal guide or map, but nurture is the final destination (Ridley, 2003).

4.0 How to Develop Leader Within an Organisation

To become a good leader, firstly that person must know themselves better.

According to Quinn, et al cited in Kouzes (2003) a good leader must know what their strengths and weaknesses are, because the instrument of leadership is the self, otherwise that leader could be derailed.

Secondly, credibility is the foundation of leadership (Kouzes, 2003). Values and beliefs are the most important thing to build trust and good relationship between leaders and followers. In addition, leader must be trustable, confidence and have faith inside them in order to be a credible leader, otherwise people will not believe in what the leader said (Kouzes, 2003).

Thirdly, leader must focus on the future (Kouzes, 2003). Being credible is not enough to be a leader, moreover, they also need to be forward-looking and they must be able to foresee that something extraordinary is possible to happen in the future (Kouzes, 2003). It means that, leader must be able to set some good vision and must be very positive, encourage and motivated to achieve the goal.

Fourthly, a good leader must be able to learn from the experience both his/her experiences and other person, especially another leader's experiences and open to the new experiences. New behaviour, skills and attitude must be always considered to be implement as the past or present approaches are identified not working anymore (Van Velsor & Guthrie, 2003).

Lastly, a good leader must know that every situation cannot apply the same leadership style as stated in contingency theories of leadership. Change is recognised as the work of leader in which he/she must get involved into. As quickly as the world and environment are changing, then leader must be able to synchronise their style with it in order to maintain its effectiveness by using proper skills and strategies (Van Velsor & Guthrie, 2003).

5. 0 Conclusion

Understanding the nature of leadership and developing strong leadership skills is the important things. Traits or characteristics of leadership are inherited in nature which is already mapped in the gene. However, environment, such as feedback and social interaction, play an important role in the development of a leadership skill which can have a huge impact. A person who is a good leader has the right combination of traits and has been developed through time and applies with an appropriate style of leadership in every different situation.

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