

History and evolution of leadership



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A leader, as always said, is born, not made, but leadership is certainly a continual evolution process of qualities like vision, commitment, discipline, trust, integrity, innovation, motivation, authority, dedication, humility, creativity etc., within leaders. Most of these qualities, if not all, in a leader contribute to the success of an organisation. For a reputed business school like Cardiff Business School, choosing a leader who can shape the aspirations & enhancement of the institution to become ideal Business establishment is very vital. & at the same time intricate. Choice of new Dean to replace Professor McNabb should be influenced & inspired by the facts that how much the new Head is able to contribute towards the institution's achievement & perform greatly in the new role. To evaluate this we need to have a brief idea about leadership theories & performances.

A look on the history of leadership finds that the literature on leadership & performance can be broadly categorized into a number of important phases. (Ogbonna, 2000; Harris, 2000). Early studies on the leadership skills concentrated on identifying the personality traits which characterized successful leaders, and are known as 'trait' studies (Argyris, 1955; Mahoney et al., 1960). Trait theories assume that successful leaders are 'born' and that the leader has certain innate qualities which distinguish them from non-leaders (Stodgill, 1948). Ralf Stodgill reviewed hundreds of trait studies (1948, 1974, p. 81) over a period of time, which can be summarized as the personality traits and other in-born qualities of the leader can be identified & it is possible to select those individuals & promote them into leadership positions, they then emerge to take power, regardless of the social organization or historical context. Another set of approach is 'Set' & '

Behavioural' theories. It summarises about the behaviour & style that a leader chooses or adopts to solve problems. (Hemphill and Coons, 1957; Likert, 1961). Similarly the Viewpoint of theories like situational & contingency is that leadership effectiveness is dependent on the leader's diagnosis & understanding of situational factors, followed by the adoption of the appropriate style to deal with each circumstance. (Ogbonna, 2000; Harris, 2000).

All the theories reviewed above illustrate that leader plays a very important role in the progress & performance of the organisation. But if one critically evaluates the affect that a leader has on the organisation then, one can say that the decision a leader takes can sometimes be restrained by certain factors. Some people argue that constraints placed on leaders are due to situational factors. Although there have been few studies that have a direct bearing on this important issue, research on sports organisations has tended to support this argument. In practice however, this argument has rested heavily on the findings of just one major study that of Lieberman and O'Connor (1972), which has become the most commonly cited evidence of this issue and which is widely regarded as the major counterpoint to the proposition that leadership makes a difference. (Thomas, 1988)

One more key aspect to discuss here is that of sex differences in leadership, as our main concern is to look for the leader that can be Head of Cardiff Business School, we should not be biased to only one gender. Male leaders are rated as more effective & conscientious than female leaders, but A Meta-analytic review of 17 studies examining sex differences in leadership indicates that male and female leaders exhibit equal amounts of initiating

structure and consideration and have equally satisfied sub-ordinates. (Platz, 1986). More & More women are becoming managers; this rise in trend is because of the federal implication which prohibits sex discrimination in employment. Despite this rise many individuals still believe that men are better leaders. (Bass, Krusell, & Alexander, 1971; Bowman, Worthy, & Greyser, 1965; Rosen & Jerdee, 1978; Schein, 1973) there are some evidence to refute this argument indicating that men and women may differ in personality characteristics which affects the leadership styles & effectiveness. (Hoffman, 1972; Maier, 1970; Megargee, 1969; O'Leary & Depner, 1975; Templeton & Morrow, 1972) Furthermore several studies have demonstrated that men and women differ in leadership behaviours also. (Bartal & Butterfield, 1976; Petty & Lee 1975)