A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

To explain the concept and practice, there are leadership related studies both with wide-ranging and wide-scope. The present study offers an insight of the leading theories about the leadership phenomenon. In general they can categorized firstly by the relationship (between leader and led), secondly, the personal qualities of leader and last but not the least, his/her skills relevant to the tasks assigned. Among all the prominent theories, there exists a general view that the word leadership is actually a process comprised of leaders' impact upon the group of people unless and until the tasks are achieved. The current study is an attempt to develop a leadership model which provides a strong basis for the researchers to implement the same that has been evolved from the theories in hand. All these theories cannot be implemented en masse due to many obvious constraints. In this regard, the researcher systematically studied the most prominent leadership theories by investigating the leadership characteristics, competencies and skills which may provide a strong basis to reach an ultimate leadership model.

Keywords: *Leadership Theories, Comparison & Review*

INTRODUCTION

Regarding the leadership theories, the related research is diverse and wide-range. The current study not only aims to present an overview of leadership rather it offers background of leadership theories and scrutinizes complexities within. The selection of most appropriate and compatible theories is the outcome of what has been examined in available literature thus evolving the most suitable and highly applicable theory in contemporary situation. The researcher chooses particular theories of the leadership with the aim to go in depth that in which manner the social influential process is used by diverse models and theoretic approaches. The researcher, in present study, discusses main theme that influences the most dynamic feature in the prevailing socio-cultural and socio-economic situation. Some consistent studies on the topic of leadership and its related phenomenon have produced theories involving the Great man theory, traits, process, contingency, situational, style and behavior, transactional and the transformational theories. Thus, theories of transactional and transformational leadership, for instance, seem to be most dominant.

The Great Man theory claimed that leaders are born and gifted with the certain daring abilities (Thomas, 1888). The Trait theory represents the individual features of the leaders and elaborating about the origin and characteristics of the leaders (Yukl & Fleet, 1992). The style and behavioral theory expounds mostly about intrinsic abilities and their effectiveness of the concerned leader who is at the helm (Howell & Costley, 2001). The Contingency theory recommends that on part

of the leadership there is no distinct approach to lead and allows him/her to proceed accordingly as the situation demands (Langton & Robbins, 2007). The Situational approach replaces and makes the leader to compete with the situation whenever it occurs. On the contrary, the Process theory tells that the objectives are achieved by repeating them in certain cycle by utilizing certain constants whatever the situation demands (Hazy & Ashley, 2011).

Later on, the transactional leadership according to the literature describes about the pact endorsed between the leaders and the followers for the ultimate betterment of the organization. This theory operates for all the working units and environment around to provide best atmosphere whatever possible under the direct guidance of the leadership (Gerry & Eid, 2012). The transformational leadership is distinct in the spectrum of all other theories. It engages followers/employees on both polls about their interests either they are personal/organizational. This theory is inspirational as well because the leadership and the followers both participate and share the issues and their most appropriate solutions in the most conducing environment (Zakeer, Nawaz & Irfan, 2016). This vary phenomenon has certain strong impact to elevate the moral standards of the followers which ultimately yield prominent output.

LITERATURE REVIEW
This section represents the emergence of leadership theories which grows from Great Man theory followed by other theories. In this regard, each leadership theory has certain strengths but also has certain weaknesses. Both, the strengths and weakness depends upon the situation which force the concerned leader to adapt the most befitting traits of the leadership. Below is the inclusive insight concerning the theories of leadership that were appeared from time to time in diverse situations and diverse circumstances.

The Great Man Theory (1840)
In the mid of nineteenth century, the Great Man theory was developed. Though scientifically, there was no mechanism as such to categorize the types of leadership yet it was a successful attempt. In this regard, the attributes concerned with certain person have a prominent status as it is said that some people are born great and other become great (Carlyle, 1888). Among them the former have certain legacies behind those which are instrumental in becoming a successful leader. They have a history of leadership which helps them to become a great leader. As for as second category is concerned, persons with their knowledge, skills, experience and consistent struggle write their names in the list of great men (Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009). In the same line, the main theme behind this theory was that whenever the suitable situation is confronted, this type of great leaders will rise. The common traits of leadership are spanned over eras, as to support their rise and fall. They become history as every nation, culture and last but not least the organization needs heroes (Grinin, 2010).

Contrary to the above, it is suggested that the group of intellectuals have a strong impact upon the decisions regarding certain phenomenon as compared to the individual because a group of beliefs and ideas can motivate stronger to that of a single person. These knowledgeable people have related the development and growth of organization with the strength of the great man (Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson & Bien, 2011). The theories of leadership got advanced from the basics which say that leaders are by birth. Moreover, the same theories also support that the potential of leaders is the replica of his/her strength which can be gauged whenever the need occurs. They also accredit leadership as courageous, focused and persuasive. This very theory has its limits when the phenomenon of leadership is studied in the services sector (Zakeer et al., 2016). The researchers looked beyond the great man theory to seek for the most appropriate and befitting one which may enfold the leaders those who are neither born great nor do they become the same.

The Trait Theory (1930-1940)

The trait theory expounds that individuals have certain abilities/qualities that motivate them to rise and assume the role of leadership. Apparently, these intrinsic abilities like intellectual ability and personality are main parameters behind the leadership effectiveness. The leadership literature reveals the most prominent qualities of leadership traits which overwhelms the human features like intelligence and motivation (Yukl & Fleet, 1992). The leadership traits are the features which make him/her distinct and most suitable in the role of leadership. The trait theories highlight certain behavioral and personality features which are frequently common among the leaders. Later on, regarding the characteristics of the leadership the exponents of the trait theory opposed by saying that how come an individual with the same qualities cannot occupy the status of the leader (Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader, 2004). The difficulties in correlating between the leadership effectiveness and their traits ultimately led the researchers to change the models all together by searching and developing a new model for the same phenomenon.

In this regard, the situational dynamics occupy the prominent status contrary to the leadership traits as the response of leader overwhelms his/her characteristics. The trait theory of leadership further believes that individuals have definite natural features that make an ordinary individual a leader. The main characteristics, in this regard, are the creativity, wisdom and responsibility that mark an individual as a good leader (Hitt, Black, Porter & Hanson, 2007). The trait leadership theory focused on examining social, physical and mental characteristic to develop understanding which is an amalgam of characteristics which is further shared among the leaders. With respect to the trait theory of leadership, there were many shortcomings. However, towards the psychological aspect, numerous studies were conducted to get hold of behavioral approach. Among the existing leaders, various studies have examined the traits by recognizing characteristics those which are liable for the abilities of leadership (Alberto, 2015). The leaders those who possess the required traits undertake certain decisions and the ultimate actions like setting objectives, role modeling and articulating vision to become a successful leader.

The Styles and Behavioral Theory (1940-1950)

While going beyond the trait theory of leadership, the theory based upon the person's behavior proposes an altogether new perception which focuses upon the leaders' behaviors contrary to social, physical and mental features of leaders. Consequently, with psychometrics developments, particularly the factor analysis, the scholars were then able to gauge the relationship of causes and effects with unambiguous behaviors of leaders (Howell & Costley, 2001). The behavioral theories categorized the leaders in two magnitudes regarding the tasks and the individuals involved to achieve them. The leadership literature reveals that both magnitudes accredited to diverse terms but their essence are alike. This theory opposed the Great Man theory and believes that great leaders are groomed, not born. The theory of behavioral leadership focuses upon the leaders' actions and not on intellectual abilities (Gibson, Donnelly & Ivancevich, 2003). Moreover, it is believed that the individuals can learn through observations and experiences to become the great leaders. However, there is another belief that leaders' behavior results from a logical evaluation of democratic and autocratic styles of leadership.

The style theory identifies the standing of certain necessary leadership skills which help them to perform an action similar to leader prior capacity. This theory suggests that each individual has their own style, whatsoever, in which they feel more comfortable. The relevant literature reveals that each style has its own efficacy level regarding its strengths and weakness. By focusing upon the list of successful leaders, the researchers recognized two other personas (consideration & initiating structure) regarding leadership (Langton & Robbins, 2007). To them, the consideration comprises behaviors, relationship and concern for people while the initiating structure comprised of task behaviors and concern for feedback. Through consideration, the leader elevates the level of understanding and confidence of their subordinates while initiating structure is manifestation of the magnitude, by which the leaders and the subordinates describes, directs and improve their participatory role for the betterment of performance and achievement of organizational objectives (Zakeer et al., 2016). The above said phenomenon helps the leaders to adopt their styles with the behavioral magnitudes.

The Contingency Theory (1960)

The contingency theory of leadership claims that there is no particular approach of leading and each style is based upon certain circumstances. It indicates that some individuals are required to perform their best accordingly whenever situation arises. The contingency theory of leadership, to some extent, is the extension of trait theory with due logic that traits of individuals are situational in which the leaders use their leadership authority (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). In the contingency theories, it is usually believed that leader is expected to express their leadership role whenever feel that the followers are responsive. The contingency leadership theories emphasis upon certain situational variables that defines which leadership style is well-matched for a specific situation. The main theme of the contingency theory is that "there is no single style of leadership" which is suitable in all situations. The success of leadership while choosing any leadership style depends

upon the situation and the potentials of followers (Langton & Robbins, 2007). When designing the organizational strategies, factor of contingency is therefore most effective in any environment and the concerned situation.

The contingency theory recommends that no leadership style alone can cater all prerequisites of the leadership. This phenomenon is reliant upon certain factors those which are responsible for the ultimate success. To be successful, the leadership has to adapt, accommodate and respond to certain situation and eventualities may comprehend followers' potentials. Inside the organization, with respect to change, leaders not only change the situation and dynamic services but also try to transform accordingly and utilize the working potentials of the employees to its maxima (Lorsch, 2010). Rationally, contingency theory is similar to behavioral theory in the sense that leadership in not effective in all situations. It means that one style may be active in one situation but may not be effective in other. Though, the situational leadership remains to emphasis mostly upon the leader, however it gives prominence to group dynamics. For leaders and their group relationships, numerous studies support the modern theories related with the leadership and the group dynamics (Alberto, 2015). Contingency leadership theory gives strong support that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the behaviors, traits and the diverse situational factors.

The Situational leadership theory (1970)

The situational theory of leadership believes that leadership must be matching with the maturity of their subordinates. Moreover, there is no alternate way to lead affectively but to adapt situation and transform the style whatever the leadership possess formerly. This theory demands that the style must be relationship and task oriented (Yukl & Fleet, 1992). Among these factors, changing aspects were grounded upon extent of task behavior (control, direction & accomplish), the socio-emotive backing, the followers required behavior, the willingness (commitment and competence) in task performing and last but not least the purpose and objectives (Barrick, Mitchell & Stewart, 2003). Moreover, in establishing the leadership approach, the leader is required to consider the working capacity and psychological maturity of their subordinates. To address the situations, the said theory bound the leader to determine the needs required by the leadership and their followers to shape the situation being faced (Langton & Robbins, 2007). The main theme of situational theory is that different situations demand different leadership styles.

The factors defining the adaptation of leadership style are an assessment of the commitment level and the competence of both the followers and leaders. The valuation of the said dynamics can be ascertained if leader adapts more supportive and directive style. Situational theory recommends that the effectiveness and the ultimate success of leader are contingent upon coherence between particular situation, its format and concerned leaders (Shin, Heath & Lee, 2011). The situational theory emphases upon the adaptation of situation while contingency theory emphasis upon the effectiveness of the leadership towards the bracket comprising the leaders' style, abilities, context and the situation. The effective and successful leaders are those who are task-oriented regarding

their style with special reference to the maturity of individuals and the corresponding group (Zakeer et al., 2016). When the leaders completely comprehend the maturity level of followers, they can manage the situation most successfully. The factor of maturity has a distinguished place in this theory as this vary factor establishes the level of following.

The Process Leadership Theory (1970)

The process theory of leadership is generally based upon the systematic study in which actions and events are assumed as outcome of definite efforts. These results are assured by certain well defined process. This theory states that goals are attained by repeating them in certain cycle by using certain constants whatever situation demands. The process theory elaborates the mechanism by linking the individuals' motivation with their needs to bring about the change (House & Aditya, 1997). In the same line, path goal theory, equity theory and expectancy theory falls under the category of process theory. The process theory, in management research, offers justification for 'how' something happens while the variance theory expounds the phenomenon of 'why'. The researchers proclaim that all the natural pursuits are multi-dimensional i.e. the resulting data is not determined by what we have fed to system (Rothaermel & Hess, 2007). It is the main reason that the process theory is altogether different and intricate as well. On other hand, the theories of motivation are classified into two diverse approaches, the content theories and process theories.

The process theory imparts a broad based understanding regarding the phenomenon of leadership. The said theory supports the equity values, self-awareness, social justice and responsibility and the individual empowerment. The process theory and other emerging theories recommend that the role of leaders is to subsidize the welfare of those who follow with the phenomenon of social responsibility (Hazy & Ashley, 2011). Moreover, this theory strongly supports the process of evolution. Later on, the leadership theories have moved from birth to trait, from acquired traits to the adapted styles, from behavioral to the contingency and from situational to the processes. Now, the interaction of the followers group depends upon the organizational and personal role in the development of the morals (Zakeer et al., 2016). Last but not the least, leadership theories which emerged from the former theories, enfolding all the attributes of the leaders and the followers, were the transactional and transformational leadership theories. Both these theories were widely used by the researchers in different context and different situations.

The Transactional leadership Theory (1970)

The transactional leadership theory also identified as exchange leadership theory is considered as a transaction between the followers and the leader. In fact, this theory believes on the sharing and high valued relationship between the followers and leader (Bass, 1998). The transactional leaders, to be inspirational and effective, find the means to bring into line the phenomenon of reward and punishment for task performance assigned to followers by leader. In this regard, the transactional leaders are effective in developing shared and supportive environment necessary for individuals

and for organizational performance towards the goals achievement (Howell & Avolio, 1993). The transactional theorists recommend that individuals are pursuing minimum unpleasant experiences and maximum pleasant experiences. The transactional leaders mainly put emphasis upon relations between the follower and leader based upon a series of exchanges between them (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003). For achieving the assigned goals, the transactional leaders are based upon the contingent reward which is an active and positive exchange between followers and leaders.

The reward comprises respect from the leader to the followers for the task achieved. The positive support may be exchanged for effort, performance and teamwork over promotions and increase in perks and privileges. The leaders instead concentrate upon mistakes, avoid responses and delay decisions and this method is known as the management-by-exception categorized as active and the passive transactions (Gerry & Eid, 2012). Between these, the transformation of transactions is based upon the effectiveness when the leaders intrude. The leader, in active form, consistently monitors the output and diligence of the followers and strives to take the lead prominently. On the other pole, in management-by-exception (passive), the leader pronounces standards and potentials in the first part and then phenomenon is monitored sitting at the fence. In same line, the rewards help to elevate expectation and the association level to comprehend the followers' values, actions and willingness in due course (Zakeer et al., 2016). The transactional leader gets engaged in both complex and simple exchanges with followers about their performance and ultimate goals which are to be achieved due to stringent rules and regulations.

The Transformational Leadership Theory (1970)

The transformational leadership theory makes available a basis for a strong relationship between leaders and followers which in further provides a resilient trust level resulting in an unflinching inspiration. In this theory, on the part of leader, his/her main power emanates from charismatic behavior and the inspiration which he/she induce (Burns, 1978). The rules and regulations, in this leadership theory, are flexible keeping in view the dynamics of group norms. From the rest of the previous and contemporary theories, the transformational leadership is distinguished as all of its dimensions are aligned to what followers require. This theory prefers followers' participation and their persistent association with the leader by sharing the ideas and decisions in a most conducive working atmosphere (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Based upon certain shared values, principles and the objectives, the transformational leaders engage in strong interactions with their followers which ultimately lead to achievement of desired goals. The transformational leader tries to encourage followers to rearrange their needs beyond their self-interests and streamlining their efforts for certain high profile objectives (Avolio, 1999).

The transformational leader changes the values, attitudes and views of followers because these leaders have the ability to lead the changing situation. The literature revealed that followers and leaders keep aside their personal interests for the goodwill of organization (Masood, Dani, Burns & Backhouse, 2006). The leader focuses upon followers' needs and thus transforms everything

hence by motivating and empowering their followers. Moreover, the transformational theory of leadership is distinguished from previous theories regarding moral dimensions and professional ethics (Gerry & Eid, 2012). The transformational leader is characterized by his/her capability to identify the need for change, build vision towards change and enhance followers' commitment to accomplish the tasks ultimately. The followers of such leaders dwell in an independent working environment and strive to improve their cognizance, moralities and services (Zakeer et al., 2016). Abiding by the rules and regulations, to some extent, both the transformational and transactional leaders have certain commonalities with respect to their vision and the organizational uplift.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers used different methods to draw inferences about their research studies. In this regard, in present study, the researcher used analytical and comparative method by analyzing characteristics of different theories in hand about leadership that were developed from time to time by different researchers. The analytical method is used wherein someone tries to compare individualities of certain phenomenon. In this regard, in current study, the researcher thoroughly studied the different theories along with their traits like the Great man theory, traits, process, contingency, situational, style and behavior, transformational and transactional theories. For this purpose, researcher compare the characteristics of each theory and tries to draw conclusion that which theory is most befitting in diverse situations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The leadership studies have a vast perimeter with various theoretical and empirical researches. There are diverse views about each theory of leadership especially related with the leader who dwells in different circumstances. It is said that humans are born with certain abilities (great man theory) but the inbuilt traits are completely interlinked with the knowledge, skills and experience they acquire during the course of time (trait theory). Along with their profile including gestures and attitudes also transforms (behavior theory). There is a bracket between the leaders' capacity and circumstantial status about his/her decisions (contingency theory). In same line, evaluation process comprises the apparatuses to measure magnitude of certain processes (process theory), adaptability (situational theory) and the sociability (transformational theory). Another leadership theory involves the individuals' performance, skills and knowledge supported by the package of rewards and punishment (transactional theory). In present study, the researcher select particular leadership theories in order to drive more details while exploring the process of social influence taking into account the diverse theoretical approaches and models.

Numerous leadership theories emphasize upon basic facts namely attaining the goals, sustaining leaders' status and how to pursue the said phenomenon. The literature reveals that the leadership is utilized with certain motives and objectives the individuals establish those which are in conflict and struggle with others. In due course the tools such as psychological, institutional and others are employed to motivate, engage and please the followers towards achievement of certain well

defined goals (Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009). In the context of higher levels of motivation and morality, it is characteristic of only transformational leaders when individuals engage with others and support each other including leadership. In the leadership studies the concepts of complexity have brought about the queries that what is the complexity leadership? In this context, leadership is regarded as a shared dynamic phenomenon with unfixed mediators those who are interrelated with each other in several dimensions to yield positive results (Gerry & Eid, 2012). It results in innovation, learning, knowledge distribution and last but not the least the adaptation to change. The entire process is complex and required the leaders to adapt the suitable style compatible with the above said phenomenon.

There are some other theories of leadership in the offing as number of theories has been evolved from great man and trait theories ending at transactional and transformational theories. Despite, the previous theories of leadership focused on behaviors and characteristics of effective leaders. Later on, theories reflect the circumstantial format of leadership and role of followers whatsoever (Alberto, 2015). Regarding the leadership, the situational needs in which the leader functions, the complexity leadership postulates that to succeed the performance at optimal level, organizations cannot be planned with simple and already streamlined structures those as all this underestimate the contextual impediment in which organization functions and adapts. Between followers and leaders it is not the status in the exchange process which matters while accessing the dynamics of leadership phenomenon (Zakeer et al., 2016). In different organizational cultures, the comparative research, on leadership effectiveness remained origin and area of primary studies and research. These studies compare the leadership within different cultures to examine the limits to which the leadership phenomenon was practiced and developed in one culture proliferate to others.
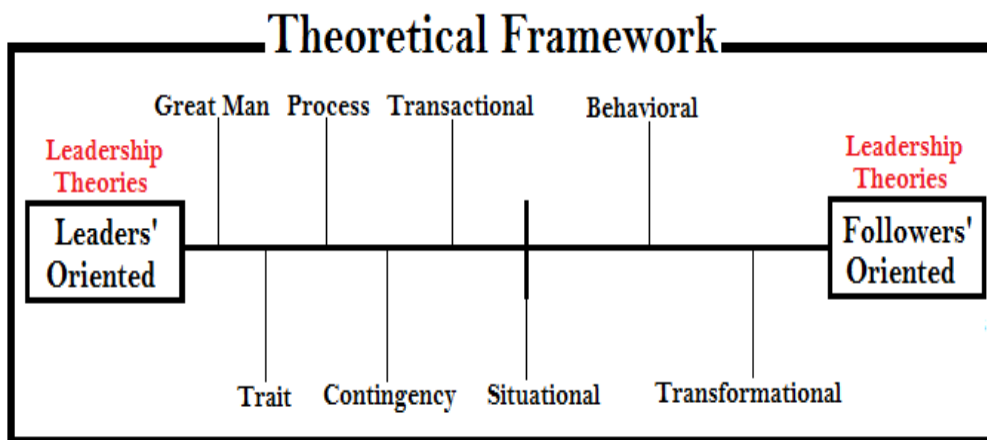
COMPARISON OF LEADERSHIP CHARATERISTICS

Table 1 Comparison of Characteristics (leadership theories)

SN	Attributes	Great Man	Trait	Behavior	Contingency
1	Change Resistant	√	√	x	√
2	Understandable	√	√	√	√
3	Communicable	x	√	x	x
4	Decisiveness	√	x	√	√
5	Motivational	√	x	√	x
6	Responsible	√	√	√	√
7	Supervision	x	x	x	x
8	Intellectual	√	√	√	x
9	Influential	√	√	√	√
10	Innovative	√	x	x	x
11	Inspirable	√	x	x	x
12	Charisma	x	√	x	√
13	Visionary	√	x	x	x
14	Directive	x	x	√	√
15	Authentic	√	√	√	√

Table 2 Comparison of Characteristics (Continued)

SN	Attributes	Situational	Process	Transactional	Transformational
1	Change Resistant	x	√	√	x
2	Understandable	√	x	x	√
3	Communicable	x	√	x	x
4	Decisiveness	x	x	√	x
5	Motivational	√	√	x	√
6	Responsible	√	√	x	x
7	Supervision	√	x	√	√
8	Intellectual	√	x	√	√
9	Influential	√	√	√	√
10	Innovative	x	x	x	x
11	Inspirable	x	√	x	√
12	Charisma	x	x	√	√
13	Visionary	x	√	√	√
14	Directive	√	√	√	√
15	Authentic	√	√	√	√

Figure 1 The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework emerged from the comparison of the most prominent theories in hand regarding the leadership. The comparison among characteristics of different leadership theories fall under the categories in two same dimensions, the leaders oriented theories and the followers' oriented theories. The theoretical analysis of these theories highlights the logic behind the Bass model of leadership, based upon two styles of leadership (transactional & transformational). The transactional leadership theory enfolds the leaders' oriented while the transformational leadership is the followers' oriented. Therefore, present study supports the Bass model of leadership. Both above said theories and styles envelop all the attributes of the followers and the leaders. Thus, the transactional and transformational theories have emerged from the theories already existed and gives strength to what was mentioned in them.

CONCLUSION

The present study highlights some most significant trends in the leadership theories. Firstly, it gives a preview of the leadership phenomenon. On the same lines, the researchers those who are conducting their studies are sorting out the dimensions comprising the follower, the leader and their interactive dynamics in the organizational context. The second trend is based upon the phenomenon which explores how the leadership process actually takes place in the organization. The third one encompasses about the further studies for evolving the role of various moderators and mediators those which help in explaining the leadership impacts and the prospective results. To summarize, studies of leadership has moved further and focus upon person, the phenomenon and the concerned organization. As a leader, the factors like charisma, skill, experience matter a lot to bring about a practical change (impact) to make the things happen accordingly with the support of the functionaries of the related organization. The prospective view about the leadership is certainly most awaited as the theories in the offing will be more refined and befitting as well.

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