Major Traits/Qualities of Leadership

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ABSTRACT: We live in a world with a population of more than 7.1 Billion, have we ever imagine how many Leaders do we have? Yes, most of us are followers; we live in a world where we follow what have been commanded. The intension of this paper is to equip everyone with some knowledge to know how we can identify who leaders are, are you one of them, and how can we help our-selves and other develop leadership qualities. The Model highlights various traits which are very necessary for leadership.

This paper have been investigate and put together after probing almost 30 other research papers. The Principal result we arrived on was that the major/ essential traits which are identified in a Leader are Honesty, Integrity, Drive (Achievement, Motivation, Ambition, Energy, Tenacity and Initiative), Self Confidence, Vision and Cognitive Ability. The Key finding also says that the people with such qualities are not necessary to be in politics, but they are from various walks of life such as major organization, different culture, background, education and ethnicities. Also we found out that just possessing of such traits alone does not guarantee one leadership success as evidence shows that effective leaders are different in nature from most of the other people in certain key respects. So, let us go through the paper to enhance out our mental abilities to search for the Leaders out there.

KEYWORDS: Leadership, Honesty, Integrity, Drive, Motivation, Initiative, Self Confidence, Vision, Cognitive Ability.

1   INTRODUCTION

The study of leader traits has a long and controversial history. While research shows that the possession of certain traits alone does not guarantee leadership success, there is evidence that effective leaders are different from other people in certain key respects. Key leader traits include: drive (a broad term which includes achievement, motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative); leadership motivation (the desire to lead but not to seek power as an end in itself); honesty and integrity; self-confidence (which is associated with emotional stability); cognitive ability; and knowledge of the business. There is less clear evidence for traits such as charisma, creativity and flexibility. We believe that the key leader traits help the leader acquire necessary skills; formulate an organizational vision and an effective plan for pursuing it; and take the necessary steps to implement the vision in reality[1].

Prominent trends in leadership research are reviewed. Theoretical perspectives are organized in a four-fold typology based on the dominating assumptions of the research effort: (1) the focus on a universally appropriate set of leadership traits, (2) the focus on a universally appropriate behavioral style, (3) the focus on situationally contingent leadership traits, and (4) the focus on situationally contingent behavioral styles. Potential organizational prescriptions following from each perspective are identified (e.g., selection, placement, and training). It is argued that existing research has mapped only a portion of the domain of leadership phenomena due to a concentration on relatively few leadership constructs and because of the popularity of a limited set of empirical methodologies. Recent developments, promising new directions, and novel methods in leadership research are described[2].

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Unlike "harder" sciences (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology) where well accepted "laws" may govern phenomena, the soft science of behavior in organizations remains an imprecise, inexact exploration into the causes and consequences of complex human interactions. [2] Even though researchers now agree no single set of traits or style alone always provides effective leadership, that does not mean traits and styles are irrelevant [3].

The primary data used in this research are cases of successful and unsuccessful firms, given by the CEOs or the executives of leading Korean firms who participated in the Advanced Management Program at the College of Business Administration, Seoul National University, and the CEO course of the Federation of Korean Industries from 1986 to 1995. [4] The trait-based perspective of leadership has a long but checkered history. Trait approaches dominated the initial decades of scientific leadership research. [5] The findings indicate that the perceived importance of specific leadership traits is determined partly by culturally endorsed interpersonal norms and partly by the requirements of the leadership role. [6] Our literature review focuses on the emerging construct of ethical leadership and compares this construct with related concepts that share a common concern for a moral dimension of leadership (e.g., spiritual, authentic, and transformational leadership). [7] In previous literature on employee selection, leadership, and organizational trust, scholars have identified integrity as a central aspect of work behavior. However, despite important contributions, their work often has confused integrity with other concepts (especially honesty and conscientiousness) and has treated integrity as either a morally neutral or relativistic phenomenon. [8] The ethical nature of transformational leadership has been hotly debated. This debate is demonstrated in the range of descriptors that have been used to label transformational leaders including narcissistic, manipulative, and self-centered, but also ethical, just and effective. [9] The trait-based perspective of leadership has a long but checkered history. Trait approaches dominated the initial decades of scientific leadership research. Later, they were disdained for their inability to offer clear distinctions between leaders and non leaders and for their failure to account for situational variance in leadership behavior. [5] More recently, the trait, or individual difference, approach to leadership has regained some prominence. Some of the problems and shortcomings that plagued its earlier ascendant period, however, still exist to limit the potential reach of such models. [10]

Figure 1.1: Major Traits/Qualities of Leadership

2 RESEARCH METHOD

Recently combining research methods e.g. [11] p. 112 became increasingly important in particular when pursuing the goal of gaining "**rich theoretical insights**[12] p. 613." One form for "developing new theoretical insights" [13] p. 506 is the review centric research approach in which a researcher reviews "existing theory and research" [13] p. 506, but the argument can be made that we also can include case study research findings that are based on the real world observation of practitioners and organizations e.g. [14], [12]. In the research presented here the focus is on combining the most important "**previously established studies and concepts**" that I have identified in the academic literature based on which I **provide a synthesis** that "**advances our understanding**" [13] p. 507". In this study I identify the most important success factors that help in the current business or organizational situation to build our goal to accomplish a competitive advantage. My research approach incorporates the "interpretive paradigm" in which a rich description of each factor in our current organization context is established [12] p. 615.
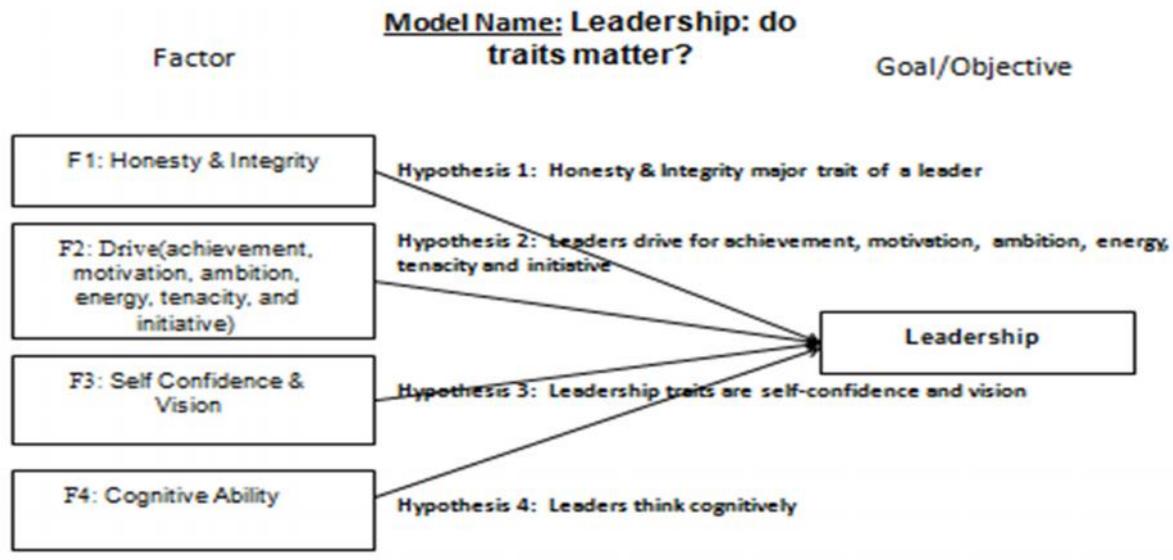

Figure 2.1: The Leadership and its relation to four independent variables

3 GOAL : LEADERSHIP TRAITS:

The study of *leadership* traits has a long and controversial history. While research shows that the possession of certain traits alone does not guarantee leadership success, there is evidence that effective leaders are different from other people in certain key respects[1] p. 48.Prominent trends in *leadership* research are reviewed. Theoretical perspectives are organized in a four-fold typology based on the dominating assumptions of the research effort: (1) the focus on a universally appropriate set of leadership traits, (2) the focus on a universally appropriate behavioral style, (3) the focus on situationally contingent leadership traits, and (4) the focus on situationally contingent behavioral styles[2] p. 315.

Following a brief historic overview of the people and limitations of research on *leadership*, this article describes several key findings about which recent theorists and researchers agree: (1) the centrality of values to leadership, (2) the importance of an articulated goal or vision, (3) the necessity for disagreement and conflict in effective leadership, (4) the personal traits and styles of effective leaders, and (5) the critical interplay of these traits and styles with the leadership situation [3] p. 42. By

comparing *leadership* traits and styles of CEOs of successful Korean firms with those of unsuccessful Korean firms, this study also suggests ways to develop CEOs for corporate success[4] p. 40.

The trait-based perspective of *leadership* has a long but checkered history. Trait approaches dominated the initial decades of scientific leadership research[5] p. 6. Multivariate analysis of variance revealed cultural differences in terms of which traits are regarded as important for effective *leadership*. For example, the Australians rated traits that attenuate leader–follower power differences (e.g. friendly and respectful) higher than did the Chinese[6] p. 47.

4   FACTOR 1: HONESTY & INTEGRITY:

The purpose of the present research was to address this issue directly by assessing the statistical relationship between perceived *leader integrity* and transformational leader ship using the Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS) and the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)[9] p. 75. In previous literature on employee selection, leadership, and organizational trust, scholars have *identified integrity* as a central aspect of work behavior. However, despite important contributions, their work often has confused integrity with other concepts (especially *honesty* and conscientiousness) and has treated integrity as either a morally neutral or relativistic phenomenon[8] p. 154.

The findings suggest that ethical leadership is more than traits such as *integrity* and more than values-based inspirational leadership. It includes an overlooked transactional component that involves using communication and the reward system to guide ethical behavior [15] p.5. A reputation for ethical leadership rests upon two essential pillars: perceptions of you as both a moral person and a moral manager. The executive as a moral person is characterized in terms of individual traits such as *honesty and integrity* [16] p. 128.

Observers have long believed that personal traits such as integrity would be important to perceptions of leadership effectiveness and research has borne that out. For example, survey research has linked perceived leader effectiveness with perceptions of the *leader's honesty, integrity*, and trustworthiness [7] p. 596. *Honesty*" was the highest ranked characteristic of both emerging and entrenched groups. The younger group also valued leaders who motivated others, were receptive to people, had a positive outlook, and used good communication skill [17] p. 286.

5   FACTOR 2: DRIVE (ACHIEVEMENT, MOTIVATION, AMBITION, ENERGY, TENACITY, AND INITIATIVE)

Although research shows that certain traits alone do not guarantee leadership success, evidence that effective leaders are different from other people in certain key respects exists. Key leader characteristics are (1) *drive, which includes achievement motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative;* [18] p. 3. As an introduction to this topic, it must be understood that "to lead in combat, you must be competent and courageous, *demonstrate initiative*, understand human nature, consistently set the example, and inspire others[19] p. 2.

Paper describes the IT human resource vision that is guiding such a transformation at 3M-a large multi-product, diversified manufacturing firm (1998 sales: $15 billion)-and focuses on the implementation of its *leadership initiative* [20] p. 327. As expected, leadership correlates *with initiative taking*, trait measures of intelligence specific task competencies, and several indicators of generosity. The review finds no link between leadership and dominance[21] p. 354.

The average person who occupies a position of leadership exceeds the average member of his group in the following respects: (i) sociability, (ii) *initiative*, (iii) persistence, (iv) Knowing how to get things done, (v) self-confidence, (vi) Alertness to, and insight into, situations, (vii) cooperativeness, (viii) popularity, (ix) adaptability, and (x) verbal facility. insert quote here [10] p. 106. The first evidence comes from Stogdill's (1974) review. Stogdill found that surgency (i.e., dominance, assertiveness, energy or activity level, speech fluency, sociability, and social participation), emotional stability (i.e., adjustment, emotional balance, independence, and self-confidence), conscientiousness (i.e., responsibility, achievement, *initiative, personal integrity*, and ethical conduct), and agreeableness (i.e., friendliness, social nearness, and support) were positively related to rated effectiveness. Stogdill (1974) did not organize his findings as we describe them; nonetheless, his findings support the idea that there is a relationship between personality and leadership[22] p. 13.

6   FACTOR 3 : SELF CONFIDENCE & VISION:

Al-though several have identified specific charismatic attributes such as a transcendent *vision* and/or ideology (Blau, 1963; Dow, 1969; Marcus, 1961; Willner, 1984), insert quote here [23] p. 638. He concluded that measures of dominance, extraversion, sociability, ambition or achievement, responsibility, integrity, *self-confidence*, mood and emotional control, diplomacy, and cooperativeness were positively related to emergent leadership [22] p. 10.

Personality traits are considered especially relevant to successful leadership and those highlighted as the most pertinent include energy levels and stress tolerance, self-*confidence*,
internal control orientation, emotional maturity and integrity[24] p. 2. His history of successes in the real estate field, in combination with an ambitious personality, led *this visionary leader* to dream, of ever-greater expansion, but in new and unfamiliar territories [25] p. 50.

Coming back to the first dimension of the charismatic role, we all know that a primary part of the leadership role is to determine where a company needs to go and to build commitment to go in that direction. There can be no leadership *without vision*. Hopefully, everyone who comes within the leader's sphere of influence will align themselves behind this vision. It represents the leader's core values and beliefs, and enables him or her to define the guiding philosophy of the organization: the mission[26] p. 4. Leadership in business based on a recovery of virtue. The *vision for leadership* articulated here draws principally on the writings of the classical philosopher Aristotle and of the contemporary philosopher Josef Pieper [27] p. 359.

7   FACTOR 4: COGNITIVE ABILITY

Results revealed that extroversion, openness to experience and cognitive ability were predictive of emergent leadership behaviors. Conscientiousness and cognitive ability were associated with team Implications and future directions for research are discussed [28] p. 27. Locke (1991) argued that cognitive ability "is an asset to leaders because information" (p. 46). Furthermore, leaders are responsible for such tasks as developing strategies, solving problems, motivating employees, and monitoring the environment [29] p. 543.

For example, Moss (1931) suggested that cognitive ability without social competence could not greatly affect leadership performance. Stogdill's (1948) review of leader attributes indicated that the influence of leader intelligence was delimited by the level of intelligence exhibited by the average group member [5] p. 7. Psychologists have known for some time that measures of cognitive ability and normal personality, structured interviews, simulations, and assessment centers predict leadership success reasonably well (cf. Bass, 1990; Howard & Bray, 1990; Hughes et al., 1993; Sorcher, 1985; Yukl, 1989) [22] p. 6.

The accumulated research now shows that there are some universal traits leaders possess that are repeatedly associated with effective leadership, including persistence, tolerance for ambiguity, self-confidence, drive, honesty, integrity, internal locus of control, achievement motivation, and cognitive ability (Den Hartog & Koopman, 2001; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Yukl, 1998)[30] p. 28. Leaders must gather, integrate, and interpret enormous amounts of information. These demands are greater than ever today because of rapid technological change. Thus, it is not surprising that leaders need to be intelligent enough to formulate suitable strategies, solve problems, and make correct decisions [31] p. 49.

8   EXPLANATION AND DISCUSSION:

We have lot of theories describing the important traits of leaders. Society has always expected a lot from leaders. Leadership is not just about leading people to success but leading people in such a manner which is most right and fruitful for the long term. Honesty, Integrity, Drive for achievement, Cognitive ability, and self-confidence are some of the numerous qualities a leader possesses. From across the Globe there is leader who came from different backgrounds, races, ethnicities and culture but all of them had some or the other traits which we have discussed in this paper. It is through identifying these traits we can develop the new breed of leader for the uplifting the society and world. There is less clear evidence for traits such as charisma, creativity and flexibility. We believe that the key leader traits help the leader acquire necessary skills; formulate an organizational vision and an effective plan for pursuing it; and take the necessary steps to implement the vision

in reality[1] Well at the end I would like to mention about the conclusion by Kirkpatick & Locke in their paper, Regardless of whether leaders are born or made or some combination of both, it is unequivocally clear that leaders are not like other people. Leaders do not have to be great men or women by being intellectual geniuses or omniscient prophets to succeed, but they do need to have the "right stuff" and this stuff is not equally present in all people. Leadership is a demanding, unrelenting job with enormous pressures and grave responsibilities. It would be a profound disservice to leaders to suggest that they are ordinary people who happened to be in the right place at the right time. Maybe the place matters, but it takes a special kind of person to master the challenges of opportunity. Let us not only give credit, but also use the knowledge we have to select and train our future leaders effectively. We believe that in the realm of leadership (and in every other realm), the individual does matter [1].

9   CONTRIBUTION AND NEW INSIGHT

Importance of this research paper and findings is to realize that it is an essential part for one to know the traits/qualities of Leadership. This can help us to identify, develop and understand the traits of leadership. One new insight this paper discovered is that leaders do need to have "Cognitive ability" which demands a leader to gather, integrate and interpret enormous amount of information.

10   CONCLUSION

Honesty & Integrity, Drive (achievement, motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative), Self Confidence & Vision and Cognitive Ability are essential traits/qualities of Leadership. These traits will help the leader acquire necessary skills and techniques, helps to formulate vision for any field they are in and successfully plan for pursuing vision into reality. It is not necessary that leaders are to be in politics, they can be anywhere like workplaces, educational institution, organizations, in societies and where there is need for one. As very well mention before leaders do not have to be men or women who are highly successful or intellectual but they need to have the "right stuff" which cannot be found in all.

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