Leadership Theories

Your Name (First M. Last)

School or Institution Name (University at Place or Town, State)

**Leadership theories**

Leadership theories are considered to be school of thoughts that spots light on factors that explain why an individual (leader) excels in life. Most of the leadership theories focus on the behavior and traits that a leader adopts to boost his/her abilities. Following are the four well-known leadership theories. Each of these is given in-depth below:

* Great man theory
* Traits theory
* Situational leadership theory
* Contingency theory

**Great Man Theory**

First selected leadership theory is known as the **Great Man Theory**. This theory was introduced in the 19th century. The exact year of its introduction was 1840. “**Thomas Carlyle**” was the theorist who proposed it.

**Key components of Great Man Theory**

According to Great Man Theory, an individual has leadership qualities in him/her in a heroic act or manner. This theory claims those who become leader are born with some special abilities and traits. Leaders have the inborn charisma, confidence, communication skills and social intelligence, etc. (Khorakian,et,al,2019,p.1117-1144). Set of great qualities are the main factors that distinguish the leaders from the rest of the people (Hunt,et,al,2019,p.22-26). This theory also highlights the point that no all the individuals are born with same great qualities that a leader is gifted with by God, for leading people. In simple words, it could be said that this theory emphasizes on the idea of in-built skills of a leader. This theory claims that those who are in power deserve it because of their special endowment. One destined to be a leader, has the traits that remain stable across different groups and times. Another major claim of this theory is that almost all the great leaders share the same leadership characteristics regardless of place and time (when they were born or where they were born).

**Traits theory**

The root of this “Trait Theory” could be traced back to Great Man Theory but this idea was further polished and presented in the form of Trait Theory by “**Francis Galton**”. Francis Galton proposed this theory in 1869.

**Key components of Traits theory**

Before taking into account, the Traits Theory of leadership, it is important to mention that this theory is enrooted in Great Man Theory. Trait Theory claims that there are certain a leader has certain traits that produce certain patterns of behavior for differentiating a leader from his/her followers (Sharma,et,al,2019,p.1-14). This theory highlights certain leadership traits i.e. action-oriented judgment, the willingness of accepting the responsibility, competence for assigned tasks, thirst for achievement, ability to motivate people, quality of courage and resolution, creativity and emotional stability, etc. This theory is used for predicting leadership effectiveness (Tricarichi,et,al,2019). The pre-defined set of qualities is the primary reason why a leader reflects some extra-ordinary skills. This theory also highlights the idea that great leader shows some pre-determined skills with which they are born that assist them for leading others. This theory claims that those who are born with leadership traits, can become great leaders.

**Contingency theory**

Theory named as “Contingency Theory” is being given by “**Fred Edward Fielder**”. This theory was proposed in 1978 that spots light on how leadership affects group performance.

**Key components of Contingency Theory**

According to this theory, the effects of leadership on the overall performance of the group cannot be undermined. “Contingency Theory” claims that three main things must be considered for knowing what would be the impact of the leadership on a group's performance. First point mentioned in this theory is the relationship that a leader shares with his/her members (Bachrach,et,al,2019, p.297-308). There is a need to examine type of relationship a leader has with his/her employees (good or bad) for noting the influence of leadership on group performance. The second important thing that must be noticed is the leader's position, whether he/she has a strong or weak position. If the leader has a strong position he/she would greatly influence the group performance. The third most important thing as per this theory is the nature of the task. If the task would be structured then the overall performance of the group would be satisfactory (Cunha,et,al,2019,p. 702-727). On the other hand, if the task is unstructured then group performance would be doubtful. This theory claims, actions of a leader are contingent (depend) on both internal as well as external situations.

**Situational Leadership Theory**

A theory called Situational Leadership Theory was proposed by “**Paul Hersey and Ben Blanchard**”. This theory was introduced in the form of “life cycle theory of leadership” in 1969 for the first time.

**Key components of situational leadership theory**

This theory works on the assumption that the situation is the central thing that changes the most effective style of leadership. For delivering the best leadership, a leader must learn to adapt his styles as well as his approach to a wide range of circumstances (Henkel,et,al,2019). For example, it has been analyzed that some employees work best under the supervision of an autocratic leader, while some employees deliver the best work under the guidance of a leader who could step back and trust the abilities of his/her team. As per this theory, situations matter. In some fields innovation is needed while in other fields personal charisma works at its best, so depending upon the situation, a leader has to change his/her behave (Daniëls,et,al,2019,p.1). This theory claims that the best leader is the one who knows how to deal with different situations as uniform attitude towards various situations fails to resolve issues. For showing the best leadership qualities, one must react by keeping the situation in consideration. This theory stresses upon the idea that situation must be judged properly by a leader, before taking a decision.

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