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Great man theory definition pdf

Great Men's Theory and Leadership Theory! 1. The Great Man Leadership Theory: One of the early ideas of leadership, which is still popular among certain circles, is that leadership is a born quality. This is the Great Man Leadership Theory which confirms that leaders in general and great leaders in particular are born and not made. According to the theory, leadership calls for certain qualities such as charm, persuasiveness, commandarial personality, high level of intuition, judgment, courage, intelligence, aggressiveness and orientation of actions that are such traits that they cannot be taught or studied in a formal sense. One either has them or doesn't have them. Leadership qualities are carried in genes. In other words, they were born, or something inherited in the family from generation to generation. Examples are drawn from great leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mao Tse Tung, Kamal Ataturk, Abraham Lincoln, General de Gaulle and others. They are born natural leaders with innate leadership qualities and achieve greatness by divine design. It is said that history is nothing but a biography of great men and women. They are the people who made history. They were great leaders of their time. It is said that such people will be leaders in any case because they are inherently endowed with leadership traits and skills. They are not trained in leadership nor do they acquire leadership skills in their lives; such skills are natural to them. In other words, there is something in their anatomy, physiology, and personality that marks them out of the general mass of humans. They have an instinctive drive to take leadership and have an inborn will to achieve greatness and success. People turn to them instinctively for inspiration, solace and support. The further implications of the theory that leaders are born and not made, are as follows: (i) Leaders are God's gift to mankind. The measure of divinity is associated with leaders and their actions. (ii) Everyone cannot aspire to be a leader and achieve greatness. (iii) The quality of leadership born alone is necessary and sufficient for a leader to exercise influence over his followers and be successful. (iv) The quality and effectiveness of leadership are independent variables. Situational factors such as the nature and needs of followers, the demands of tasks and the general socioeconomic environment have little or no influence on the appearance or effectiveness of a leader. (v) This theory discounts the belief that individuals can be trained to assume leadership positions and roles. Leadership qualities cannot be transmitted through education and exposure. The theory of Great Man leadership is similar to the idea of the king's divine right to rule and rule over their subjects hereditary immortals. Kings should gain their legitimacy from God Himself. Similarly, some individuals are destined to become great leaders themselves God gave them certain abilities that could be adapted from the divine nature. In fact, The Great Man Theory dates back to ancient Greece and Rome when leadership used to correlate with certain strange mental, physical, and personality characteristics. Since leaders are considered born, a measure of divinity is used to be associated with them and their behavior. This theory brings some credibility as far as leaders in general and great leaders in particular have a certain mystique about them and are viewed admired by their followers. The quality and actions of these leaders inspire implicit respect, at least in some ways. The incident and effectiveness of some great individuals who become such leaders without supervision and training cannot be explained in any way other than by genetic theory. Criticism of the Theory: It is clear that the Great Man theory has no scientific basis and empirical validity. It's more of a piece of speculative ideas. The great drawback of The Great Man Theory, aside from the inconsistency of its inherent traits, is the unreasonable belief that some people become great leaders and succeed independent of their environmental situation. The Great Man Theory is completely rejected by many modern theories and even by some leaders themselves. The reasons are not far to look for and they are listed as below: (i) No one is born, divine or mysterious about the quality of leadership. A born leader is an imaginary character. So-called born leaders tend not to fit in conditions of modern complex rapid change. If at all there are leaders born, they are freaks of nature; Their availability is negligible, unreliable and cannot meet the demands of a growing community for effective leadership in all areas of activity. (ii) A leader is an ordinary human being who happens to acquire certain characteristics and skills useful for influencing others. Leadership qualities can be obtained and sharpened by anyone through proper education, training, and exposure. (iii) The quality and nature of leadership itself is not enough to achieve effectiveness. Situational factors, along with leadership skills and qualities, have a considerable influence on the emergence and effectiveness of leaders. (iv) Genetic theories or great people about leadership provide no scientific, verifiable and predictable explanation of why, how and when leaders emerge and become effective, what critical qualities are needed to achieve greatness in leadership, and why as between two leaders a comparable quality, one becomes effective and the other fails. A rather moderate point of view is that a person may not completely rule out genetic traits or be born of some leadership attribute. Just like there are some singers, artists, geniuses who are 'prematurely mature' and almost born in various fields of activity, there may also be leaders who are born—individuals who demonstrate leadership qualities from an early age and who a large amount of intuitive wisdom. It is also said that great leaders, based on their 'magic', bend situational factors to their advantage; situational factors therefore have little independent influence on the effectiveness of leadership. Another point of argument is that leaders are made' from people who have certain basic leadership attributes. The latter are allowed to sharpen and develop through the process of education and training. Qualities or Characteristics of a Good Leader: Traits theorists identify a long list of qualities that leaders have. The following list is only illustrative and incomplete. 2. Theory of The Nature of Leadership: Modification of The Theory of Great Man is a Theory of Nature that holds that the quality or nature of leadership can be obtained. They don't always need to be born. The theory of the nature of leadership states that there are certain qualities or characteristics that can be identified that are unique to both leaders and leaders of such qualities to some extent. Leadership qualities may be born or they can be obtained through training and practice. (i) Intelligence: Good leaders must be intelligent enough to understand the context and content of their positions and functions, to understand the dynamics of environmental variables, both internal and external, that affect their activities and have a good perspective on the dimensions of their current and future organizations. (ii) Personality: It's not confused with physical appearance, even though it's important. More than an outward appearance, a certain quality of inner personality marks a good leader of others. These qualities include: emotional stability and maturity, confidence, assertiveness, strong drive, optimism, extroverts, achievement orientation, goals, discipline, skills in associating with others, integrity in character and tendency to be cooperative. These qualities tend to help leaders to organize and coordinate human efforts, guide and motivate people in task situations, to make good decisions, to achieve concrete results and goals, to resolve conflicts and manage organizational change. (iii) Other qualities: Aside from the attributes of intelligence and personality, good leaders also have some key qualities such as open mind, scientific spirit, social sensitivity, ability to communicate, objectivity, obedient interest in humans, pragmatism and a sense of realism. Ralph Stogdill: who conducted extensive research on leadership qualities, shows that effective leaders can be seen as having a strong drive for responsibility, task orientation, passion and persistence in pursuing goals, thoroughness, originality, problem solving skills, encouraging to carry out initiatives in social situations, confidence and a sense of personal identity, to accept the consequences of decisions and actions, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, the ability to influence others and the capacity to compose social interactions for the purposes at hand. The list of leadership qualities is almost endless. While ownership of the above qualities does not guarantee success for a leader, what we do say is that they increase the likelihood of success and allow leaders to interact and address the situation more effectively. However, serious deficiencies in the above qualities may be disastrous for leaders. For example, an unwise and indifferent person does not make a good leader. It is quite possible that the presence of some vital qualities in a marked level can compensate for the absence or lack of other qualities. For example, a higher achievement orientation can to some extent compensate for a lack of tolerance and objectivity. Limitations: The theory of nature is described as outdated by many modern theories. The validity is essentially questionable on several accounts: 1. It is not based on systematic research or development of concepts and principles. This is more of a speculative theory that fails when exposed to empirical tests. It's just a descriptive theory of how some people emerge as leaders. It has several properties of explanation and predictive. 2. It is impossible to isolate a particular set of traits that can be consistently applied to leadership in a variety of situations: cases can be cited to prove that simply ownership of certain traits is not enough for a person to become a leader. Also the absence of so-called traits prevents individuals from appearing and proving their worth as leaders. 3. Theory of nature does not try to link certain traits with the performance and effectiveness of the behavior of the leader. Some traits tend to cancel each other out. For example, pragmatism and having a sense of ethical right and wrong don't always go along. The characteristics needed to maintain leadership are different from those needed to gain leadership. 4. The characteristics of a person do not form his total personality, nor does it fully express about attitudes, values, aspirations, and behaviors. 5. Theory of the nature of looking inwards towards the leader alone to rule out follower groups and task situations, which are actually more important for the effectiveness of the leader. 6. There is no way to systematically define and measure incidents and intensity of traits among people who are purported to be leaders. It is also impossible to position traits along important hierarchies. Important.

