

A Research on Nelson Mandela Leadership Style from 1963 to his death

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Abstract

This paper presents the life of one of the extraordinary leaders of the 21st century, Nelson Mandela and provides an in-depth analysis of his leadership style in the standpoint of Transformational Leadership theory from the period of 1994 to 1999. Why doing this, the researcher also deals into Trait Leadership Theory. The paper analyzes the factors that contributed to the birth of Mr. Mandela as a leader as well as his governance.

Finally, the paper shows that Mandela was a great transformational leader and further noted that he fulfills most of the requirements of Transformational Leader Theory as well as presented some of his failures regarding decision-making. In the final end, the paper reveals that Mandela leadership demonstrated good qualities and some of these included: integrity, vision and being tenacious; all of these were useful ways that led him to success in the face of unpredictable times.

1.0 Introduction

Leadership is a concept that has progressed over time. Individuals such as Martin Luther King, Mahatma Ghandi, and Mother Theresa have arisen as defenders of the societal issues of their times. This paper looks at one of the most noticeable leaders of our time, Nelson Mandela, from 1963 to his death.

First it will highlight a brief description of Mandela, his leadership qualities, evaluate said qualities, power and influence and then critically analyze his leadership styles in the perspective of two leadership theories:

- (i) Trait Leadership Theory, including its four stages of leadership: Charisma, Integrity, Visionary and Tenacity.
- (ii) Transformational Leadership Theory

The paper will then come up with a critical analysis in terms of Transformational Leadership Theories, which was Mandela's Leadership style during his governance. This will cover phases of Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Simulation and Individualized Consideration. Nevertheless, this paper will show that Mandela's chosen leadership style, revealing both his successes and failure as a leader and finally, the paper will close with a brief summary or conclusion.

1.1 Brief description of Nelson Mandela and his Social Background

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the leader and father of South Africa post-apartheid society was born on the 18th of July 1918 in Transkei, a village in the south-eastern area of South Africa. He was exposed to African History from his childhood due to his father being the chief of the village. Resultantly, he gained a deeper understanding of the South African government and the unfair, brutal and heartless treatment that was imposed on them (Black

people) by the apartheid region. His father was a key influenced to his life path as he was inhumanly treated by white people. Once again his father influenced his life path as he was the one who permitted him to enroll in an elementary school where he was given the English name, Nelson, calling it fate or destiny. In his biography, Mandela wonders if his teacher gave him that name after the British sea Captain Lord Nelson (Mandela N., 1994).

The apartheid system created a policy of racial ghettoization under a legislated system dominated by the whites. Under this regime, the black South Africans were forced to live in isolated areas from the whites and to use separate public facilities. Regardless of constant struggles to defeat apartheid, its laws persisted in effect for the most part of 50 years.

Mandela was a lawyer, prominent activist and the leader of the African National Congress (ANC) Party and also the first black President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He is famous for his dedication and struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

2.0 Historical Context about Leadership Theories

According to Marshal (2011), leadership is the capacity that one has to guide others to achieve a desired goal. Notwithstanding, attempts had been made throughout the years toward an effective leadership performance and all has originated different theories. Horner (1997) postulated that the theories of leadership were born in the first decades of the 20th century. Horner explains that originally, leadership was described in terms of traits, qualities and beliefs held by individuals. Accordingly, this theory held that leaders possess positive qualities and personality traits, which distinguish them from their followers. Horner (1997) clarifies that leaders were viewed as being born not made and were superior to employees.

2.1 Trait Leadership Theory

Allport (1936) suggests that there are central aspects of an individual's personality which made them more likely to lead. Mandela's name is identical with traits such as:

2.1.2 Charisma

Mandela had the talent to stir a crowd; individuals listened. In 1964, at the Rivonia trial, Mandela delivered a 3-hour speech to the court voicing his determination in removing all traces of apartheid. Charisma is a great trait for leaders and it creates, motivates and engages work force.

2.1.3 Integrity

Mandela was known as a truthful and esteemed man who was successfully able to move South Africa to free and fair elections. Integrity is a very important trait in leaders that helps to increase trust, motivation and organizational commitment.

2.1.4 Visionary

A number of leaders are able to envisage the future in ways many individuals cannot do. This is a useful trait of a great leader as they can possibly withstand deprived times and predict better future. Mandela was able to see the bigger picture throughout his 27 years of incarceration.

2.1.5 Tenacity

Being unwavering and is an extremely useful aspect of being a leader. Progressive resiliency and flexibility in the face of challenges can nurture leaders which may increase organizational profitability. Mandela was able to be steadfast in his beliefs and never gave up on his ideals.

2.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

This leadership occurs when individuals interact with each other in a form and that both the leader and the follower can achieve high motivation and morality (Burns, 1978). This ideal is also supported by (Anne M Baker, 2006).

Likewise, Marshal (2011, p.11) reinforces the point that transformational leadership is a “style of leadership in which the leader identifies the needed change, creates a vision to guide change through inspiration, and executes the change with commitment.

Additionally, Bass (1990) debates that within the transformational leadership there are four vital elements that constitutes this leadership theory: Idealized Influence, Individual Consideration, Intellectual Simulation and Inspirational Motivation. Bass (1990) explains that Idealized Influence is the ability that leaders have to inspire trust, respect and commitment to a cause. Concerning the Individualized Consideration, this is when the leader recognizes and values the followers. Regarding the Inspirational Motivation, the leaders create and share a vision towards the future and highly encourage the followers to achieve it. Finally, the Intellectual Simulation, the leaders are highly educated and well informed. They always find new creative result to the problem. Marshal (2011) also supported these explanations.

3.0 Analysis of Mandela's Leadership Style

Critically analyzing Mandela's leadership performance under the range of these elements of transformational leadership stated above, you will realize that his leadership ability justifies these requirements. For instance, as an Inspirational Motivational Leader, Mandela was able to inspire the ANC to follow his lead and campaigning for equal rights (Stengel (2012). Additionally, whilst in prison, Mandela was able to have a voice (through others) to communicate his vision of ending apartheid. Similarly, Sinclair (1995), notes that Mandela had a charisma, an ability to motivate others to be the hero and to guide the country. Mandela being an inspirational motivator was able to broker a peace deal in 1990, despite an initial amount of arrest leading, but eventually led to a fairer system.

Mandela particularly possessed the ability to appeal to others through his individualized consideration, (Sampson, 1990). One example is the way in which he would remember people's name and imbue warmth and energy, relating to people closely. This is in support of Sinclair's (1995, p.30) third leadership characteristic of interpersonal skills where the individual possesses human resource management capability, listening skills and open communication and the ability to lead people. Mandela supportive behavior towards followers, showing concern for their needs, encouraging and assisting them to develop is a clear manifestation of this individualized consideration.

Sampson (1999) recognizes the intellectual simulation when he stated that Mandela particularly possessed the ability to be creative and innovative. Changing outlook on life, Mandela was able to make the ANC members and those who followed him realize that their sacrifices and decisions would lead to South Africa freedom. Mandela demonstrated an above average memory, and the ability to learn and remember things quickly. He always saw issues from positive and negative sides and strategically approached them.

However, despite all these great characteristics that this great leader presented as a renounced leader, the principle of share vision as defended by the Burns (1978) was sometimes severely violated. For example, Stengel (2012) explains that Mandela had decided and initiated the negotiation process between ANC and the ruling government secretly. This attitude on the part of Mandela violated of the ANC policy concerning negotiation. Secondly, the President of the ANC was not even aware of this negotiation broker by Mandela. Stengel (2012) considers this attitude could have developed the country into worst chaos, such as civil war, since some members of the ANC were not in the know and were not comfortable with his attitude.

Interestingly, the harsh social and political context of that period, and the growth of the ANC were putting high pressure on the government. Mandela being a great visionary understood that the government wouldn't have rejected a negotiation proposal at that movement (Mandela, 1994-1995). In fact, this did not materialize, caused Mandela to have substantial arguments to convince his colleagues and the President of the ANC that it was ripe enough to take actions. However, why did Mandela take on the negotiation alone?

Mandela also lost the characteristics of a transformational leader when he said that his colleagues would have condemned and failed the idea of negotiating with the government. Mandela was quoted in (Read, 2010) "I knew that my colleagues' upstairs would condemn my proposal, and that would kill my initiative even before it was born". Transformational leaders do not use progressive words such as "I" but "we", and also by him relating to an initiative as "my initiative" undermine transformational leadership principles. Language of this kind is avoided at all cost by transformational leaders. In situation of this kind, he should have shared his vision, encourage the group to get involve and assume the vision as a common goal.

However, while reading Mandela's memoirs or pieces of interviews, there is a sensation that Mandela brags himself for this act as his solely, in which without him, no such accomplishment would have been conquered. Mandela tries to justify this attitude, saying that if the negotiation had gone wrong, the group (ANC) would have known exactly who to blame (Stengel, 2012). Based on his argument, any scholar would had concluded that if the negotiation was successful, then the group would have also known clearly who to praise. However, in the light of transformational leadership theory, the leaders and their followers share the responsibilities. Transformational leadership takes into consideration that the successes and failures belong to the group, but not a particular member.

Stunner (2007) also explains that although Mandela adhered to the idea of cooperative leadership, he normally believed that leaders must decide and do things without conference. He argues that Mandela's personality often clashed with the ANC's political trend. This resultantly led to series of internal conflicts within the party. Grounded on these facts, the following interrogations may arise: Why did he act alone to begin the negotiation? Did he want to be the only hero in the process of negotiation? Did he want to take all the acknowledgment as the only sponsor in the change of South Africa's fate?

4.0 Conclusion.

In conclusion, the researcher chose one of the extraordinary leaders of the 21st century, Nelson Mandela and provided an in-depth analysis of his leadership style in the standpoint of Transformational Leadership theory

from the period of 1994 to 1999. Why doing this, the researcher also deals into Trait Leadership Theory. The paper also analyzed the factors that contributed to his birth as a leader as well as his governance.

Finally, the paper has shown that Mandela was a great transformational leader and it is further noted that he fulfilled most of the requirements of Transformational Leader Theory and that he had some failures regarding decision-making. Mandela leadership demonstrated good qualities as a leader and some of these include: having integrity, vision and being tenacious; these are all useful ways in which we can lead our organizations or businesses to success in the face of unpredictable times.

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"Those who anticipate the future are empowered to create it"

(John F. Kennedy)

Associated Value: Treat Staff Fairly and Impartially

Associated Principle: Act honestly and do not tolerate or justify dishonesty conduct in any circumstances

Goal: To create an organizational culture that encourages honesty, fairness, integrity, and professionalism in the workforce.

Objective: develop and support policy actions to increase fairness in the workplace.

Rationale: Developing and supporting policy actions that encourage fairness in the workplace is one of the best approaches to eliminate unfairly treatment in the workplace and thus leads to building integrity and professionalism among the workforce.

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