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# Leadership: Are Leaders Born or Made?

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Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor of Business Administration

European Business Administration

Bachelor Thesis

27 October 2021

Author(s) Title	Sofia Penttilä Leadership: Are Leaders Born or Made?
Number of Pages Date	46 pages 27 October 2021
Degree	Bachelor of Business Administration
Degree Programme	European Business Administration
Instructor(s)	Daryl Chapman, Senior Lecturer
<p>The aim of this study is to answer the unanswered question of whether leaders are born or made. Traits Theory carries the idea that an individual becomes a leader based on their inherited personality traits and other attributes, and it is seen as a profession of the chosen few. Whereas the other side of the spectrum, Behavioural Theory looks at leaders as people who are made, through training, self-education, opportunity, and life experiences, seeing personality traits as trainable. There are also those who see the grey area between the two theories and see them intertwining together.</p> <p>This specific question has been the topic of numerous studies and even decades later there has been no universal conclusion to it. The research was done through a thorough theory and literature review that took into account both, older - more historic and recent perspectives on the matter (books, online articles, journals etc.) and analysed the psychological viewpoints that have a clear correlation with the topic. All sources were collected within the criteria of for example publishing date, appropriate content etc. A qualitative case study to establish an in-depth understanding of leadership. The analysis of the mentioned topic clearly showed the differences between the two theories and the simplified viewpoints they support, and how they are intertwined together - meaning that the two theories interact with one another. The study concludes that leaders are born and made - and each leader is his or her own mixture of the two perspectives.</p>	

Keywords	Leadership, Management, Genetics, Environment, Emotional Intelligence, Leaders

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## 1 Introduction

The field of leadership has taken an increasing part of the management knowledge - in theory and in practice – since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When one looks at the conceptions of organization and management, leadership has a clear central place in motivating employees, enforcing principles, and communicating future visions and goals. Thus, the academic field of leadership has been very much preoccupied with the continuous tasks of identifying and defining practices and identities related to successful leadership (Crevani, et al., 2010, p.77) and it has caused debates on; what actions individuals take, how they behave and react for them to want to occupy positions of power and authority. While some mutual ground has been found on how we define leadership and how we see modern leaders and what type of skills we expect them to have, we have yet to find universal clarification for the definition of what is modern leadership. Meaning the conceptualization of the term is unclear. But most importantly, we haven't been able to reach a conclusion on how one becomes a leader. The main purpose of this paper is to evaluate, analyze and critique the topic of leadership in detail and answer the question of whether leaders are born or made, or whether they are a combination of the two.

It has been decades, and yet we still ask the same question over and over again. Are leaders born or are they made? This question in particular has been a subject of numerous scholarly studies. (Mishra, AK, & Mishra, KE 2012, p.29) Some see that the decision of whether one becomes a leader or not is based on their inherited personality traits, that make them better suited for such positions. While on the contrary, some see it involves one part opportunity, self-education and one part mentorship (Jones, E. 2011) for leaders to adapt their attributes and skills to match better with the job at hand. There's no shortage of literature that evaluates and analyses leadership or opinions of the subject, which sparks deep disagreements about the topic that are widely conversed. It in return shows how saturated leadership as a topic has become as it's constantly put on a pedestal for more research and innovation and its importance cannot be denied, as it is part of various institutions at different levels of the hierarchy - businesses, education, military etc. **The leadership theories provide a simplified perspective of a larger topic on how leaders come to be, but they interact with one another – meaning**

**that leaders are born and made – and each leader is his or her own combination of the two perspectives.**

## 1.1 Structure

The report is divided into three parts: analysis, discussion and conclusion. The analysis part takes into consideration relevant literature, more recent and older authors and introduces different perspectives and theories that have surrounded leadership for years. In the discussion section all the sections are combined to a more holistic view and discussed further. The conversation starts with an introduction to the different meanings of leadership throughout ages and an overview of the topic. It also takes into consideration the overlapping's the topic has with management and the differences between the two topics. Once the basic understanding of the terms has been achieved, the paper moves on to the actual question at hand: Are Leaders Born or Made?

Traits Theory by Thomas Carlyle section of the paper explores an individual's inherent gene components and dives deeper into personality traits and what traits are seen as ideal for someone in a leadership position. Personality and human behaviour will be analysed through the spectrum that Five Factor theory distinguishes in people to understand better how people with different characteristics behave under various circumstances. This section is followed with the discussion of – Leaders are made – as assumed and supported by Behavioral Theory. This section analyses the issue that arises from one's life experiences and allows for personality growth, rather than seeing human's behaviour as stagnant, but rather changeable and trainable. Thirdly, the paper analyses the topic of emotional intelligence and why it is so important for one to be able to understand their own emotions and be clear about them. This will then be applied to the context of leadership to bring light to why it is valuable for them in their work lives. After the analysis of the topic of leadership, the paper moves on to the discussion section that looks at the previously discussed topics as a whole and creates a more holistic view of the matter, while taking into account psychological perspectives. The report ends with a comprehensive conclusion and summarizes the findings of the literature review.

## 1.2 Methodology

The secondary data collection was done by referring to various research literature (books, online articles, journals etc.) written and collected by different researchers and experts in the field of study. These sources were collected for example within the criteria of publishing date, appropriate content etc. Furthermore, investigating old data on this research problem is relevant as it helps to understand the development of opinions and similarities throughout the ages enabling integrating separate and lacking information into a more comprehensive whole. A qualitative case study to establish an in-depth understanding of the context. Deeper evaluation of the material and analysis of the controversies and debates enables for a better understanding of the nature of the phenomena surrounding the subject. In the best situation, the review material and its conclusion can encourage further dialogue and discussion on the topic.

The conclusion was reached through a thorough and extensive theory/literature review that analysed and explored leadership from different perspectives and considered the older, more historic definitions and characteristics of the topic while also looking at the changes and further research that has been done in the past decade on the subject. To aid in the gathering of the conclusion the paper also took into consideration the psychological viewpoints that allow for more insight into the topic, through psychological development, factors of emotions, environment and personality. It's not just about the divided opinions on how one becomes a leader but finding the linkages between the two ends of the argument.



## 2 Defining Leadership

These days, it's common to hear of the importance of leadership in almost every sphere of human endeavour. It's seen as crucial for the functioning of all institutions - not only for different companies but hospitals, schools, NGO's, etc. If faced with a problem leadership is seen as the solution. (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012, p.122) It would appear that leadership is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness, whether we are looking at a political party, a hockey team, an army or a multinational corporation. Due to this, it does not come as a big surprise that the topic continues to be the focus of many researches and controversies. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p.596)

Although, the topic of leadership is widely spoken there is no universal clarification for leadership or the difference between a leader and manager that would have been universally accepted by everyone. With leadership and leader having many different definitions, multiplicity of competing views such as Pardey (2007, p.5-7) describing leadership as "Leaders are people who inspire others to follow." And "Leaders make -- particularly difficult decisions when there is great uncertainty or even danger, or when the choices they make are unpopular or that others are unwilling to make them." Whereas, Robbins and Coulter (2016, p.523-525) in their book define a leader as someone who has managerial authority and can influence other people. In addition, leadership in their definition is a process of leading a group while influencing them to achieve certain goals. Similarly, an influential early commentator on the topic of leadership, Ralph Stogdill (1950) saw leadership as an influencing process that aimed at goal achievement and his definition of the topic was divided into three sections or concepts. First, leadership is seen as an interpersonal process where an individual seeks to influence others and their behaviour. Secondly, placing leadership in social context, in which different members of the group/team who are the target of the influence are followers or subordinates. Thirdly, it acknowledges a criterion for effective leadership, which in Stogdill's definition is goal achievement. By looking at these different definitions on leadership and everything that has been stated, most definitions on the topic share these processual, evaluative, and contextual components. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p. 596)

Even though many of the definitions appear similar and have things in common, these different distinctions of these subjects leave a lot of room for one's own interpretation. How they see leaders taking on leadership positions and what they do in these positions.

Leadership is more than just leaders “being nice to people”, “understanding them” and “making sure they don’t push other people around.” (Prentice, 2004) Even though there is literature surrounding leadership that takes seriously the relational and contextual aspect of leadership, many studies convey a strong leader-centric view. This means that the leaders are seen as the key agents while the followers are assumed to be more or less passive receivers of their influence. (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012, p.123) It is however, agreeable that one must have people who follow them to call themselves a leader. One cannot lead unless there are people who are willing to listen and follow. And if they do have followers, it doesn’t automatically make someone a good and effective leader.

Below are some quotations on leaders to enhance the definition further:

“Leader is somebody who has followers.”

(Drucker, 2004, Forbes, cited by Kaarlgaard 2004.)

“A leader is a person who can provide guidance to employees throughout establishment of values and ethics, but also manage change through vision.”

(Dias and Shah, 2009, Introduction to business, p.190)

“Great Leaders think of the needs and opportunities of the organization before they think of their own needs and opportunities.”

(Drucker, Hesselbein and Kuhl, 2015, p. 17-18)

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.”

(John Adams as cited by Drucker, et al., 2015, p. 18-19)

“Leadership can be defined – as a territory within which we have responsibility for action and reaction. It is taking charge – something we all have to do, even if only from time to time. Leaders are both servants and the architects of history.

(Nicholson, 2013, p.9)

Each definition, from whichever perspective it is from adds richness to the definition and enables one to see it from various points of views.

## 2.1 Leadership Versus Management

Noticeably, leadership is one of the most discussed topics around management. (Carter, 2018) When discussing the difference between leadership and management some claim that leadership is, to put it simply, one facet of the management role. Leadership is often associated with elevated hierarchical positions and power, while also being linked to the theories of management. (Stanley, 2016, p.25.) Whereas, some see that leaders and managers make different contributions through their work: leaders have followers while managers have subordinates. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p. 598) For a company to flourish it needs effective management and leadership. A company can offer the best product at a great price and still not be successful, if its management is lacking. (Dias and Shah, 2009,p.176)

Born in 1909, (-2005) Peter F. Drucker was highly considered the foremost pioneer of management theory in the world. Not only did his ground-breaking work turn modern management theory into a serious discipline we see it as today, but he also wrote 39 books, and numerous scholarly articles. At the core of his philosophy lies the view that organization's most valuable resource are people and manager's job is to prepare and free these people to perform. (Drucker, Hesselbein and Kuhl, 2015, p.21 & 23) Drucker also makes a distinction between leadership and management. In his words, management is doing things right, whereas leadership is about doing the right things. Meaning that leadership looks at the best course and direction we should take and the wished end result, while management follows the act of leadership. Once the direction has been clarified and announced, the management looks at the objectives that need to be fulfilled to get there. (Bobinski, 2004) Whereas Warren Bennis as referenced by (Thomas, M 2006, p. 41) makes a distinction between the two by saying: "Management has to do with efficiency, with making things run properly. Leadership in contrast is concerned with identity – why we are here, what our business is; what our destination, goals and missions are." The relevance and significance of management in terms of its role in the business' success relative to that of leadership has been an ongoing debate since the first publication on leadership. (Nienaber, 2010, p. 662)

However, in practice, the roles overlap and the distinction between leadership and management is blurred. It is likely that every manager requires some type of leadership qualities (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p.599) throughout their line of work. It can be found that there are some common themes that emerge and provide us the basis for a clear definition of what leaders do. A French engineer, Henry Fayol, saw that companies do not have only top managers, as it was thought at the time, but there are also supervisors and middle managers that are involved in the company through the execution of the functions he characterized as forecasting, organization, command, coordination and control. (Ionescu, 2016) As Fayol at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century laid down these rules for what is classical management tradition, some of the principles for management could be written today with some of these principles of management being still as relevant to our perception of leadership. In today's world, it is less common for us to try to distinct leaders and managers, as managers are often referred to as leaders. (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012, p.122) This means that the best way to understand leadership is to acknowledge and appreciate both the linkages and overlaps between the two and their differences. (Pardey, 2007, p.5-7)

Kotter defines the differences between leadership and management as can be seen in the figure below:

<u>Management</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting targets/goals</li> <li>• Establishing detailed steps</li> <li>• Allocating resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a vision for future</li> <li>• Developing strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve the vision</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an organisational structure and set of jobs</li> <li>• Staffing with qualified people</li> <li>• Communicating the plan</li> <li>• Delegating responsibility for carrying out the plan</li> <li>• Devising systems to monitor and control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating direction by words and deeds</li> <li>• Create teams and coalitions committed to working to achieve the vision</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring performance to plan</li> <li>• Identifying significant deviations</li> <li>• Planning and organising to solve problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energising people to overcome obstacles in the way of change</li> <li>• By appealing to the basic needs, values and emotions</li> <li>• By empowering people to act</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produces predictability and order</li> <li>• Ensures expected results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produces change</li> <li>• Ensures adaptation to a changing environment</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Kotter's Leadership vs Management (Thomas, M 2006, p.86-87)

So much like the definition of leadership, there are multiple views on what separates management and leadership and what people see individuals doing in managerial and leader positions.

### 3 History of Leadership

It must be remembered that, all the way till 1960s, we hardly used a word such as “leader” when looking at the public sector. (Pardey, 2007, p.5-7) Also, the title “manager” wasn’t used in the same context we use it in today’s society – not to describe a business manager but to describe a city manager, which was an American creation in the beginning of the 1900s. (Drucker, 2000, p.17) It would appear, that Frederick Winslow Taylor, the man who invented Scientific Management was the first one who used the word “management” in the same context we use it these days. (Drucker, 2000, p.17) It was also pointed out by Frank Heller (1997) that the United States Library of Congress did not have a single book on leadership in 1896. Even the first publication around the topic of management appeared almost two centuries ago. (Nienaber, H, 2010, p. 661) Whereas, these days we recognize that we now have an access to vast, global literature on the subject (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p.596) and we are being exposed to more information daily through new research and articles that are being published online.

If one looks all the way from ancient times till quite recently, the primary generators of knowledge about leadership were political and moral philosophers, practitioners, and historians. Today, social scientists are the ones who share that knowledge, in particular those who have grounding in psychology. Philosophers have leaned more towards normative or prescriptive accounts on what leaders do, or what it entails. Whereas historians looked and tended to produce accounts of deeds and lives of leaders, monarchs, military leaders and politicians. In contrast, practitioners focus on analysing leadership through a lens that is rooted to their personal experience. (Wilson, 2016, p.17) Leadership, is a human cultural creation, along with all the social forms that define and surround it, and it was mostly created to find solutions to problems. No matter, in what juncture in history we stand, we face a plethora and abundance of challenges: some which are universal to human societies and others highly specific. (Nicholson, 2013, p.40)

The field of leadership has taken an increasing part of the management knowledge - in theory and in practice – since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When one looks at the conceptions of organization and management, leadership has a clear central place in motivating employees, enforcing principles, and communicating future visions and goals. Thus, the academic field of leadership has been very much preoccupied with the continuous tasks of identifying and defining practices and identities related to successful leadership. (Crevani, et al., 2010, p.77) In the past century, the field of study, investment and research in leadership has grown significantly - leading to substantial developments in leadership theory. Theories such as Great Man theory, Situational Leadership theory, Participative and Contingency theory have been explored over the years. (Kumar R., 2018) These studies on leadership have aided in the progression of moving away from just universalistic traits and style theories, to for example transformational leadership in 1980s and 1990s, which puts more emphasis on the relationship between leaders and their followers, and their charisma and company vision. (Bolden, Hawkins, Gosling and Taylor, 2011, p.6)

### 3.1 Leadership is/was For Men

For a large part of the twentieth century, people had a mind-set that saw leaders as men and disregarded women from the equation. Most of the research on the subject was done by men whose respondents/ participants were men. (Buchanan, D. and Huczynski, A., 2010, p. 603) Schein has demonstrated through a classic study of sex how women face problems while moving up through managerial roles because of the bias sex role stereotypes create of them. Through his study, Schein found that there was a high correlation between they ways both the female and male participants perceived “males” and “managers” but no correlation between the how the participants perceived “females” and “managers.” Due to the fact, it was as though being a manager was defined by the respondents by attributes that are thought to be masculine. (Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Curphy, G., 2019, p.25) and easily connected to men. The Great Man theory that will be discussed further and in more detail in the next chapter of the dissertation was created by a man for men. This theory is a well-known historical perspective that argues that the fate of organizations, and even societies is in the hands of powerful idiosyncratic (male) individuals (Buchanan, D. and Huczynski, A., 2010, p.299) which in itself can be criticised for such a strong view point that disregards the other gender completely.

### 3.2 Women in Leadership Today

In a more recent study in 2016, a review of research took note of the gender stereotypes that see women as more communal – kind and nurturing but less agentic (dominant and ambitious) than men. Considering that leadership is in many cases believed to require agency, women are seen less suited for leadership as they do not fill the requirements of such positions like men. In addition, as women are more open about their emotions and display them more than men, people infer that women allow their actions and decisions to be to be “controlled” by their emotions where as their male counterparts are more rational and objective with their decisions. (Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Curphy, G., 2019, p.25 )

However, it would appear that over time the area that has changed involves women’s own perceptions of their roles. Contrarily to the studies conducted earlier, women see the same amount of similarities between “male” and “manager” as they do in “female” and “manager”. To them, there is no contradiction with being a woman and a manager. (Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Curphy, G., 2019, p.25 ) Due to this, women take on leadership roles in greater numbers today than ever before but the percentage of women in these positions has stayed relatively stable over the years. (Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Curphy, G., 2019, p.24) Still, accordingly to Hughes, Ginnet and Curpy (2019) this progress does not insulate a woman from feeling unfairly judged and scrutinized, which can through the stereotypical threat, the person’s awareness of being judged by stereotypes affect their performance at work. (Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Curphy, G., 2019, p.25) and due to this, women might not be considered for leadership positions as easily as men or they might not apply for them because of the judgement they might face. Still, it seems we are seeing an increase in the number of women in leadership, and it will likely continue to grow as long as organisations understand that integrating more women into their workforces can bring forth a positive impact that promotes equal opportunities and aids in the establishing of systems that give equal recognition, no matter the post. (Granados De Ita, 2021)

## 4 Two Different Sides of the Argument

The question of whether leaders are born or made has divided opinions of many and no actual conclusion has been made on the topic. This particular question has indeed been the subject of multiple scholarly studies. (Mishra, AK, & Mishra, KE 2012, p.29) Some see that this question will never be answered. Even in some cases this question has been called a “myth” because of it, leaving many to wonder what the actual answer could be or whether we are asking the right question. Others see that leaders have certain traits and attributes that make them better candidates for leadership positions, whereas on the other side of the argument the prevailing idea is that leaders are made through training and life experience, while others look at the combination of the two.

### 4.1 Leaders are Born

It was during the first half of the twentieth century, when researchers presumed that leaders could be identified by looking at people’s personality traits and other attributes. By doing this, it would be possible to select specific individuals who possess these characteristics and hire them to leadership positions. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p.599) Traits theory, also known as “Great Man Theory by Thomas Carlyle, suggests that leaders are born with certain physical traits and personality characteristics, which validates the distinguishing between them and non-leaders (Ahmed, Nawaz and Ullah Khan, 2016, p.2) When looking at the most commonly known historical model, leadership was seen as a province of the chosen few (Kotter, 1996, p.176) which supports the assumption and theory that leaders are born and their leadership skills are a given gift.

Due to leadership being seen as something one inherits, the theory sees leaders as almost mythical and heroic. The founder of the theory, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was born in Scotland during a time that was surrounded by crisis and upheaval, because of industrialisations and Napoleonic wars. Hence, he searched for a source of strength, wisdom, uplift and direction, which according to him couldn’t be found in a church anymore. According to him, the Great Men that his theory is based on, were sent by God to be “heroes” and they would bark on the journey of leadership through righteous process of hero worship. In his view, the group of Great Men consisted of priests, poets, kings, prophets, and men of letters. He considered Shakespeare’s characters as good portrayal of men’s greatness, whereas in real life he looked at Olive Cromwell and Martin Luther as examples of great men. (Spector. B. A, 2016 as cited by Ruzgar, 2019, p.319-



320) The idea that leaders are born and they excel as leaders because of their inherited traits is in some ways supported by Hamel and Breen (2007, p.180) as they state that leaders hardly ever give thought to the background factors of guiding perceptions that affect their organization skills and leadership in corporations.

This can be interpreted that there are pre-existing factors in play that enable others to pursue such positions more easily than others and they are more inclined to do so because of their personality traits. Meaning, that this approach takes into account the genetic components that can affect one's ability to become a leader. For example, it seems reasonable to say that college professors are "partly" born due to there being a genetic component to intelligence, which surely plays a role in one choosing to become a college professor. (Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. and Curphy, G., 2019, p.14) This same example, surely applies to leaders and how intelligence plays a part in their roles as well. The Great Man theory, which does not have an equivalent female theory focuses on political figures and claims that leaders take on their positions of influence from which they not only dominate but direct the lives of others by force of personality. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p.599)

## 4.2 Character

It is thought that at the core of one's personality system is character, the foundation on which individual's personality structures operate and develop. Whereas traits are seen as amendable to change, character is a more permanent part of oneself, fixed and fundamental. Character is who we are. As Kellerman (2004) points out, the word is commonly used, and we presume that to know a person's character equals to us knowing his or her moral compass.

## 4.3 Big Five

Today, psychologists converse about the "Big Five" personality traits because they appear to be the main characteristics that distinguish people and influence their behaviour in different situations. (Pardey, 2007, p.47) What makes defining specific personality traits so difficult is the situational variation, among other things. An angry person won't behave angry under all circumstances, but he can be gentle. (Vilkkö-Riihelä

and Laine, 2014, p.35) and kind. The mentioned theory states that personality can be categorised into five core factors, which can be seen below:

1. Extroversion:

Its sub-features are for example: being active, confidence, happiness, sociability, and experience-seeking. Highly extroverted person will seek the company of others while a person who ranks lower on the spectrum feels more reserved and withdraws easier from for example big social events.

2. Neuroticism:

Contains sub-features such as: hostility, anxiety, impulsiveness, feeling of inferiority. Someone who ranks high on the spectrum of neuroticism sees the world as threatening and feels many negative feelings. Whereas if an individual ranks low on the spectrum they do not feel depressed or get worried as easily but feel balanced and at ease.

3. Openness:

Contains sub-features such as: Flexibility, artistry, tolerance, curiosity, dreaminess, and intellectual curiosity. Highly ranking person looks for experiences, carries a rich imagination and is curious. While a low-ranking person likes to stick with what is familiar and feels safe.

4. Conscientiousness:

Contains sub-features such as: systematicity, determination, self-discipline, deliberation, and prowess. Highly ranking person knows how to organize things and is ambitious. Whereas low-ranking person isn't systematic and can't manage their time well.

#### 5. Agreeableness:

Contains sub features such as: trust, altruism, modesty, adaptability, and sensibility. Highly ranking person is better at taking other people into consideration and trusts easily and is more sincere. Whereas low-ranking person has a harder time empathizing with other people and their situations.

(Vilkko-Riihelä and Laine, 2014, p. 36)

Instead of looking a personality in binary categories, the Big Five Model assesses these personality traits in a spectrum. Meaning, that individuals are ranked on a scale that places them somewhere between the two extreme ends. (Lim, A, 2020) To put it simply, an individual will not be categorised either as an introvert or an extrovert, but they will be placed somewhere on the spectrum between the two personality traits.

It must be remembered that different cultures put more value on different personality traits. For example, in cultures that value individualism, being active, competitive and determined are more highly valued. Whereas communal cultures value and respect harmony and the group's benefit rather than the individuals. These five factors seem to be traits that, regardless of culture encouraged interaction between people and them getting along. (Vilkko-Riihelä and Laine, 2014, p.37) Grandstaff (2008) states that by understanding one's own personality leaders can manage their behaviour and become more effective as they are aware how their personality might manifest, and they can adapt their behavioural response if needed. This can mean how one interacts with others, how quickly he or she can make decisions or how conscientious one might be about their responsibilities.

## 5 Ideal Personality of a Leader

According to Hamel (2013) we expect too much from leaders today and there just aren't enough extraordinary leaders to go around that could tackle the complex growth of organisations or the dilemma of fast changing environment. We expect them to be strong in themselves but open to other people's influence. They need to be confident and yet humble. We expect them to be prescient, with good foresight, but to also be practical, extremely bold, and prudent as well. (London, S., 2013) They should know when to

encourage loyalty and warmth with their own teams and when they need to step back. Leaders need to keep employees focused on the goal, to address lacking or poor performance while giving relationships an edge. (Hill, 2021) Whereas (Bennis and Thomas, 2002) believe that “—one of the most reliable predictors and indicators of true leadership is an individual’s ability to learn from even the most trying circumstances and being able to find meaning in negative events.” To put it simply, it is the skills that are required to conquer adversity for one to merge stronger and more committed than ever are the same skills that make those who they see as extraordinary leaders. In addition, according to Dias and Shah (2009, p.214) great leaders are also approachable, always willing to listen and accessible. Effective leaders are also great communicators. Traditional leadership models of leadership often present leaders as outstanding characters, like warriors, as generals of armies, as sages, even pillars of the community. Even when we look at models of servant leadership in more detail it showcases leaders as individuals who do remarkable and unusual things simply by being humble. Much like Jim Collins (2001; cited by Emerald, G 2004, p. 82) characterises leaders of high-performance companies as people who: “—build enduring greatness through paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.” While Jones (2011, p.4) reminds that leaders need to be able to delegate tasks appropriately, which requires them to understand their subordinate’s weaknesses and strengths.

According to Dias and Shah (2009, p.191) the keys to good leadership are:

1. To communicate a vision and rally others around that vision.

2. Establish company rules

The values the company establishes can include a concern for its employees, for customers, for the environment and for example in the quality of the company’s products.

3. Promote corporate ethics

Establishing corporate ethics include heavily the demand for honesty and that everyone shall be treated equally and fairly. Ethics can also include the concern for social responsibility by leaders, which can set the pace for it within the entire business.

#### 4. Embrace change.

Leaders must find ways to transform the way the company does business, for it to work more effectively and efficiently, by using less resources to full fill the same objectives. They must also ensure their employees are able to deal with the changes within the company.

Emerald (2004, p.82) brings up the issue of our culture – how it promotes and majority of us have bought into it – leaders are seen as strong, individualistic and charismatic. Yet still, the leaders who put their organizations first and themselves second turn out the best. As stated by Bobinski (2004) some see it that one does not manage people -people are lead and things are managed.

So, what do we think are the best personality traits for leaders? It must be emphasized that there is no correct answer to this specific question as there is no great certainty over what personality is, what its dimensions are or how these can be measured. (Pardey, 2007, p.49) However, for a long-time people associated specific traits such as extroversion with leadership in positive light. But these days' people have started to stray away from the idea, and they acknowledge that there are other traits that can be effective and beneficial. That you don't need to be the most dominant and social voice in the room every time you act as a leader. That leaders can be introverted, good listeners and adapters – who change their approach when surrounded with different people. Even Collins (2001, p.44) mentions in his book that was published in 2001, quite a few years back – that the popular, modern-day notion: “Leadership is the answer to everything.” has the same ideology behind it than “God is the answer to everything” used to have in the Middle Ages, when people were trying to understand the concept of natural phenomena. Like those ideas have evolved throughout time, so have how individuals see leadership. Meaning some are looking beyond the leader-centric viewpoint.

#### 5.1 A Good and Bad Leader

“With great power comes great responsibility”

There are millions of people who work with and through other people to achieve objectives that are called leaders. Whether these individuals see themselves as leaders and whether they are brilliant leaders or disastrous ones is an entirely different issue.

(Goldsmith, 2008) One being a leader does not equate to them being a good one and like in every group of people there are rotten apples in the mix. As stated by Chamorro-Premuzic (2016) over 50% of employees quit their job because of their managers. Moreover, there's an increasing interest among scholars to look at the negative features of leadership and management practices that are often overshadowed by the optimistic accounts of these topics. There's a growing number of studies that acknowledge and focus on, toxic relationships, abusive and toxic behaviour of those who are in positions of power. (Neves and Schyns 2018; Simonet et al. 2018 as referenced by Harris, A. & Jones, M. 2018)

Kellerman (2004) states in the introduction of her book that some: “– exercise their authority, power and influence in ways that do harm. That doesn't mean that this harm is done deliberately. It can be due to neglect or carelessness, which does not make it less injurious and in some cases calamitous.” In our everyday life, we are in constant contact not only with good leaders and their good followers who do good things but also with bad leaders and bad followers doing bad things. She emphasises that we must not pretend that bad leadership is not related to good leadership, for acknowledging both will help not to distort the enterprise. We shouldn't distance ourselves from even the most extreme examples like Hitler, as - - “he was brilliantly skilled at inspiring, directing and mobilizing his followers.” May it be extreme, and bad leadership that had devastating consequences, one cannot deny that being leadership – in one of its worst forms.

### 5.1.1 Bad Leaders in Modern Day

Kellerman (2004) points out that leaders are like everyone else. They - like many of us, behave badly for different reasons and in different ways. Every so often the context fosters bad behaviour. A city that has for long tolerated corruption is more likely to be defrauded by its own elected officials than in a city that has a long and strong traditional government. In occasions followers, entices their leaders to go astray. People who hold authority and power are not immune to the manipulation and influence of others, particularly close advisers. Still, most bad leaders behave badly because of what they want and who they are. This in many ways can result in an emerging crisis of leadership in many companies, where a large number of employees hold their leaders in quiet contempt. Extreme ambition, self interest and naked arrogance makes an unattractive notion of leadership. Linking to the so called “celebrity chief executive” ideal that sees

that superstar leaders can somehow come and transform a business on their own. (Thomas, M, 2006, p.17)

It seems very reasonable to say that not everyone possesses the components of leadership that most see as valuable or the needed level of emotional intelligence, when they should especially when you look at the positions they hold in companies and how their actions can affect those around them. If we just look to the USA and what happened in their nation when Donald J. Trump was elected as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of United States, many could argue that the country had never been more divided than during his time as the president. Even Joe Biden, the 46<sup>th</sup> president of U.S, says in his inauguration speech: “– bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation and I ask every American to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the foes we face, resentment and hatred, extremism, lawlessness, -- with unity we can do great things, important things.” (BBC News, 2021) It is, of course, advisable for everyone to remember that during one’s inauguration speech the president is supposed to show their character, the direction they will take during their presidential period and most importantly inspire and give hope to the citizens. It is because of that we must also filter out some of the things that we read and hear and decide for ourselves what we see as the truth and facts.

However, this does bring us to the question, how do we separate good leaders from the bad ones? If we were asked to name a bad leader, because of the past, but somewhat recent events in the US, many might point their fingers at Donald J. Trump, because of his racists comments and shows of unprofessional behaviour. But even still, he had many who supported him and voted for his re-election. This means that some did see him as a good leader whereas others did not. So where do we draw the line between a good and a bad leader? How do we define them if even our basic definition of a leader hasn’t been universally accepted and people have their own views on what makes a leader great and good in their eyes? It is easy to go to the extremes and talk about leaders who cause conflicts around the world and are larger-than-life figures, but if we want to look at the leaders on a lower level – not world known faces, what separates them from one another.

Should a good leader take on a more altruistic approach to his or her work – that it would benefit as many people as possible. Or should a good leader have a vision and an effective approach to work? So in other words: Who is a good leader? Is it based on the decisions that are more morally correct or on how effective one is and their performance

level? What if one is effective but also coercive in his approach. Is it based on what benefits the majority? Much like in the definition of leadership, there are many variations to the clarification of what it means to be a bad leader and what it entails.

## 5.2 Issues With “Born” Theory

The Traits Theory by Taylor has been criticised for its inability to identify or agree on a definite list of traits leader possess and for its failure to consider the behaviour of their followers or the many complex situations leaders face in their work. (Pendleton and Furnham, 2012, p.13-14) There’s also a difference in leaders. Some leaders are very well groomed to their task and tactful, while others are more abrasive and messier, yet it can be that the latter is just as effective and efficient as a leader as the former and vice versa. (Dias and Shah, 2009, p. 212) Traits that have been considered essential in some situations are now very much seen as virtually irrelevant in others. Even though Traits Theory is still seen as a big and important part of defining leadership it has been widely agreed that to overemphasize the leader’s traits is to underemphasise other important variables, for instance the situation, the followers, and the nature of the tasks at hand. (Kellerman, 2004)

This theory can be seen as very close-minded as it takes away the effort of pursuing leadership positions. If one is supposedly born to become a leader then there is no way for others to ever reach the same level at their workplace, no matter how much they train their skills and educate themselves on different topics. How should one further their career if it is not through hard work and learning from their life experiences? Many, well known leaders have had humble beginnings instead of being born to parents who are both leaders and pass on the genes of “leadership” on to them. Even Boerma, et al., (2017) mentions that there are multiple examples of historical figures who have not had a family history of leaders.

For a very long while we also viewed the best leaders being loud, dominant, and even narcissistic. However, these days we recognize that that might not be the case at all. The best leaders don’t need to be extroverted and overpowering in their ways and if they are, it doesn’t automatically mean they are better than those who are reserved and quiet. The reason why this “extroverts are the best leaders” mentality is still very much alive though might be because the leaders we see portrayed in social media over and over again are those who are in the limelight, social and known by many. We do not often



hear of the ones who don't become the face of the company and they handle the business behind the scenes. And one of the downsides to this is, when companies are looking for "the perfect" candidate to fill in a position or a manager, or a leader etc, they might overlook suitable applicants because their personalities aren't as loud as those around them.

## 6 Counterpoint: Leaders are Made

"You can achieve anything in life, as long as you don't care who gets the praise."

(Harry S. Truman as cited by Collins, J., 2001, p.39)

This ideology "Leaders are made" is supported by Behavioural Theory that sees it so that good leaders aren't made by their inherent characteristics, but leaders make themselves successful and effective via their actions – training, learning (Mulholland, 2019) - self-education. This means that people are coachable and able to develop themselves throughout their lives. Much like many others, Kotter was one to advocate for identifying talented people at the early stages of their career and then starting the development of their leadership skills systematically over time. (Thomas, M 2006, p. 88) According to this theory, there are no personality traits that individuals are born with that cannot be changed and developed as a result of life experience. In most cases leaders embrace opportunities, respond to a set of external circumstances and engage in skill development. (Boerman et al, 2017) These days we are also aware that it is possible for different groups to have informal leaders who emerge (Robbins and Coulter, 2016, p. 523-525) even though they might not seem like leaders at first glance. To say leaders are made, it would more than justify the diligence of industry that has surfaced over the last ten years for leadership experts and consultants in the field. (Ihorindengera and Ramkumar, 2018) We have access to thousands and thousands of books on leadership, executive programs at hand at the world's most esteemed universities and training targeted at any level or function. That is to say that a lot of resources and energy is being spend on these different programs (Hedges, 2014) to help people enhance their skillsets. It's also logical to go to someone who has a lot of experience in the field and has been successful, ask for their guidance rather than talk to someone who has no idea how to

advice someone on the matter as they haven't experienced it themselves. Many try to find individuals who can help them advance in their careers.

Maybe why so many leaders would prefer to say they were "made" is because it gives the idea that they worked hard to be where they are today. Leadership wasn't given to them, they earned it through developing themselves and their skills – meaning hard work, and by being open enough to adapt their leadership styles to fit the organizations they run or work at. Whereas the idea that leaders are born can make one's contribution to their success little less insignificant as it seems they were destined to do it from the beginning. Even Liu, (2010) states in the introduction of his book that leadership is something an individual exercises or not, not something one has or not. If one has exercised leadership, they are a leader; otherwise, they are not. It doesn't matter if one has a large mass of subordinates or a splendid title. One can see leadership on the playground with children when someone emerges as a leader of a group or is chosen to be a team leader. We can see leadership in communities with their volunteers leading political activity, doing work or leading a project. It must not be forgotten that people act differently in different groups. In another group an individual might feel more comfortable to take on a leader's role while in another, one might be more of a silent watcher and let others dominate and lead the conversation.

## 6.1 Lifelong Learning

The so called "leadership industry" has grown exponentially in the recent years and has been tagged as a subject that should be studied and a skill that should be taught. To meet this increased demand for leadership training and education, a team of experts has emerged. These said experts, leadership teachers, scholars, consultants, and coaches work on the optimistic assumption that developing leaders equals to developing a valuable human resource. (Kellerman, 2004)

It has been a misconception that learning ends when you graduate from school - but that is not true at all. The best leaders keep training their skills, they read books to educate themselves on different topics to further their knowledge in different areas and fields, so when the time comes, they know how to adapt better in situations and help guide their employees. In many cases, effective leaders can change their leadership styles to match the changing environment. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p.615) It's clear that the twenty-first-century employee must know more about both management and leadership

than those who worked in twentieth century. And this fascination towards leadership has grown exponentially, which is seen at bookstores that are flooded with books about the topic. (Northouse, 2001, p.1)

In many ways, the idea that leaders are born is nearly oblivious to potential and power of lifelong learning. We can never learn it all. In a static world, it would be possible to learn virtually everything we need to know, but in an ever-changing world that we now face it is not possible. (Kotter, 1996, p.176-177) and we must constantly keep training our skills to better compete in the work markets where the competition is already tough to begin with. American companies spend around \$14 billion annually on different leadership development training programs. Unfortunately, in many cases, once the leadership program ends, new behaviours aren't sustained. Apparently, studies have found that adult learners, when studying in a lecture setting forget nearly 50% of all they have learned within two weeks. (Hedges, 2014) Even Henry Mintzberg (cited by Kruyt, Kumra and Srinivasan, 2019) sees that leadership is like swimming, cannot be learned by reading about it." And even though the sentiment is in many ways true, it completely disregards the importance of reading and expanding one's knowledge through variety of literature. Surely, reading isn't enough on its own, but in the long run it can help massively.

Effective leadership is in most parts a journey of life-long learning that ebbs and flows depending on the different groups we pass through, the bonds we make through different relationships and the ties we cut with others. In many ways life is about building contacts and acquaintances as such as ditching the ones who are not good for us and generate a lot of tension in our lives. (Hughes, Kinder and Cooper, 2019, p.268) and in a workplace leaders need to know who are holding the teams back and who are pushing them forwards. People skills are vital in many ways and many practice those skills outside of work without them knowingly doing so. Every encounter with another person can change the way an individual reacts to certain things at a workplace.

Due to globalization, we now also have access to a vast pool of information through variety of forums and platforms. Our access to information has never been easier or faster, just few clicks away, and you are bombarded by multiple sources on the same topic. People are more informed on topics than ever before. As our world changes, and we live in an era of fast-paced environment leaders must keep up with the newest trends and one way to do so is keep educating oneself and participating in different trainings

and conferences. Even Daniel Goleman (2013) points out that when you live in an era where almost everyone, not all – has access to the same information, new values arise from asking smart questions that open untapped potential and putting ideas together. The power of the social media and digital movement has put the youngest generations in touch with the rest of the world, and they are now able to interact with global brands and causes in unprecedented ways. This allows them to build relationships and connect with people across the world, which they might never meet face to face and helps them develop a global sensitivity. In comparison to the previous generations, the newest generation is able to look at things differently – and they do. (Drucker, Hesselbein and Kuhl, 2015. p.15-16)

## **7 Leaders Are Born and Made**

While there are those who take into account one or the other theory, there are also those who see the linkages between the two theories. Mishra. AK, and Mishra. KE (2012, p.29) state that they consistently answer this specific question by asserting that leaders are both made and born. This viewpoint entails that although some people are clearly more naturally inclined to become leaders, even based on their genetics, everyone has the capacity to become a leader, if they have the desire for it and then secondly, they make the effort to achieve it. Even Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2019) claim that both views of the debate are wrong to a certain extent as they imply that leadership is either acquired or innate, leaving out what matters the most: how these factors interact. This supports the idea that the two are indeed intertwined and should be looked at together.

Curiously enough, when we turn to look at the psychological perspective on individual's development, the current perception sees that biological factors such as genes, evolution, maturity of the brain are one part of it, while social-cultural factors are another (community, culture, family etc.) and these two interact with one another. In addition to the socio-cultural and biological factors, there's the third factor that comes to play in one's development and that is one's own actions. An individuals' own choices and activity influence how one's environment and inheritance materialize (Vilkko-Riihelä and Laine, 2014, p.20) in one's life. This psychological view is pretty much the same as the theories – Traits Theory and Behavioural Theory - we have just looked and opened up in the previous section. The only difference is that not many leaders, gurus or business people

seem to talk about how the two interact but they seem to support one or the other view. Empirical research confirms that leadership development is both shaped by nature and nurture. Richard Arvey and his colleagues, found by using the Minnesota Twin Registry that 30% of the leadership behaviours and the leadership roles that people take on can be based on genetic factors, while remaining 70% result from environmental factors. (Mishra, AK, & Mishra, KE 2012, p.29) Along with the empirical research, the mentioned researchers found in a subsequent study that environmental factors such as perceived parental supports, socio-economic status, and perceived conflict with parents decrease the influence of genetic factors on whether an individual decides to occupy a leadership role. (Zhang, Zhen, Ilies, Remus, & Arvey, Richard. (2009) referenced by Mishra, AK, & Mishra, KE 2012, p. 30) It was also noticed that when an individual lived in a family that showed higher parental support or lower conflict with parents, one's opportunities to become a leader were determined more based on the environmental factors instead of genetic factors. Taking this into consideration, it can be seen possible that creating an enriched, or more enriched environments for adolescents, in some ways "evens out the playing field", to a certain extent at least, which makes it so that the "right" attributes for leadership someone is born with matter less in the enriched environments. (Zhang, Zhen & Ilies, Remus & Arvey, Richard, 2009, p.126-127)

This idea, of the two theories and ideals connecting is also supported by Nicholson (2013, p.72) as he sees that "we are all born with the rudiments of character pre-programmed into our DNA" – while also our – "schooling, upbringing, formative experiences and critical relationships" – play a part in all of it. One's personal qualities – habits, values, instincts, interests, and abilities don't matter, as long as the leader can generate the right response to meet the challenge ahead. (Nicholson, 2013, p.119) Simply put, good leaders will know how to adapt to a situation, and they do not see their personalities stopping or not allowing them to perform like they should. And if someone is for example extremely frightened by the idea of presenting in front of an audience, if they choose to and put effort into it, through practice they can make the feeling go away completely or they are at least able to function well enough to push through it if they have to.

## 8 Emotional Intelligence

Peter Salovey and John Mayer, two American academics published articles in 1990 that brought the phrase “emotional intelligence” into our public domain. This idea was then picked up by Daniel Goleman, a journalist, which led to his book, *Emotional Intelligence*. (Pardey, D., 2007 p.17-18) Simply put, emotional intelligence is about being intelligent about our own emotions. Being clearer about what we express, why we do it and when. Being more emotionally intelligent doesn't terminate spontaneity or transparency, rather it helps one understand how we express our own emotions affects not only ourselves but others around us. Throughout our lives, we aren't taught how to get on with others, yet we are constantly thrown into a boiling cauldron of personalities and meant to find our way, while defining our own identities along the way. Having a high understanding of our emotions means we can identify how we generate, express, and react to our emotions. Where do they come from? What message are our emotions trying to tell us? Are they appropriate for the level of intensity expressed in a situation? (Hughes, Kinder and Cooper, 2019, p.267-268)

According to Goleman (2013) leaders who heed their inner voices are able to draw on more resources, which enables them to make better decisions and connect better with the authentic parts of themselves. These days, emotional intelligence can be seen as the latest management gimmick due to its popularity. It is an aspect of leadership, the ability to appeal directly to people's emotions, which is often described as “charisma” rather than cater to their rational responses. To give an example of appealing to emotions; when Queen Elizabeth I was standing in front of her troops at Tilbury and said: “I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of king of England too”. By saying this, she was not only inspiring her troops, but she did it by pulling on their emotions. Since people are driven by their emotions and not just by their rational analysis of the world about them, it can be assumed that leaders must be, to a certain degree, emotionally aware (Pardey, D., 2007 p.17-18) and the more emotional intelligence is being researched the more important it seems when dealing with people at work. The best leaders are generally more emotionally intelligent, which makes it possible for them to stay calm under pressure and have better people skills. (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2016) A person who is a highly emotionally intelligent person won't try to suffocate his feelings but is open to the whole spectrum of them. (Laine and Vilkkö-Riihelä, 2014, p.54)

## 8.1 Empathy

Empathy has been categorised as an essential and central social skill. One being more empathetic means the individual can easily put themselves in another person's shoes and understand them from within, so to speak. A highly empathetic person can in some ways feel the feelings another is going through (Laine and Vilkkö-Riihelä, 2014, p.53-54) and look at the situation from that person's perspective.

## 8.2 Importance of Emotional Intelligence

While machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) has been through a booming growth – we all need to develop our skills for us to be able to differentiate ourselves. Meaning that those individuals who want to stay relevant in their professions need to focus on capabilities that AI cannot replicate as well, which include motivating, understanding and human beings. (Beck and Libert, 2017) With technology gaining more importance in our lives, the emotional side of us, human beings is gaining more significance. Emotional intelligence and cognitive flexibility cannot be substituted by machinery (Ceballos, 2021) and that is why leaders need to have social understanding and empathy. According to Goleman (2020) one of the most persistent things he sees people get wrong about the concept of emotional intelligence is that it equates to being “nice” when it doesn't at all – leading to possible misunderstandings. It also obscures what makes the framework so useful – and in some ways prevents leaders from having powerful and productive dialogues that build up their abilities to influence and lead in all their different relationships through the components: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management.

By using an example, Goleman brings up the question of who is the person being nice to. He knew a manager who was polite and charming, and very willing to please her clients and boss. But when Goleman spoke to the people who had worked for her, he found out that she created a toxic work environment for her direct reports. On the other hand, in many cases niceness can be interpreted as someone who avoids confrontation and is, due to this, easily manipulated by others. (Goleman, 2020) Even though pacesetting and coercion have their uses, a research revealed that these styles can in a worst case scenario damage the working atmosphere by reducing employee

commitment and reducing their flexibility. According to Goleman, the most effective leaders are those who master four or more styles, especially positive ones, and who are able to change the styles as needed. Considering that, it is not a “mechanical” matching of behaviour to context like in other contingency theories, but a sensitive, fluid, flexible and seamless adjustment. (Buchanan, D. and Huczynski, A., 2010, p.614)

## 9 Future of Leadership

The topic of leadership is more relevant now than ever before. As our world is changing, we require new kind of leadership. Our planet is going through a climate change and we experience extreme weather and temperature conditions all over the world. Natural disaster, new diseases and outdated social systems that don't meet the needs of communities and families any longer. This is what the new age leaders are up against. (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005, p.1) Not only that but, across different sectors organizations are converting into digital workplaces. This arises new concerns such as ethical practices that come forth when looking at the dark side of digital transformation. (Cortellazzo L, Bruni E, Zampieri R, 2019)

Amidst the pandemic, many businesses have largely, and quite often successfully found ways to adapt to new ways of working. This means that they have for example embraced digitalization and reorganized their supply chains. The time, battling with Covid-19 has both accelerated and revealed a number of trends that will play a major role in the shape of the future of our global economy. (Hatami and Segel, 2021) One of the key force examples that can be seen influencing leadership in the future is for example robots, which will decrease the job availability to human workforce – leading individuals with a need to update their skillsets to stay relevant and discard those that serve no value any longer. Due to this, some leaders, not all will need to find a way to juggle but also effectively exploit the benefits of this machine/human combination. With workforces being more diverse than ever before, digital and dispersed, it is clear that leaders' ability to adapt, mobilise and motivate multiculturalism has never been more crucial. They will also be required to take incremental action to support their staff in updating their skillsets via training opportunities and flexible career choices within an organisation. (Oliver, 2017)



Especially during the pandemic, leaders have felt that during a moment of crisis, everyone looks their way. For example, David Schwimmer, the CEO of London Stock Exchange Group, has said:

*“People are looking to me for a different kind of leadership. In a normal environment, it’s about business leadership and setting up strategy, as well as culture and people decisions. In this environment, it’s about helping people maintain morale--.”*

Because of the pandemic, organization’s operating models and CEOs have been unfrozen, maybe more than ever before in a generation. This means, we have an opportunity to reset how we work and make it multiple times more effective and efficient – leaving us free of the burden of historical norms. (Dewar, ‘et al., 2020) Much like the world around us is changing and developing, leadership must keep up with it and keep moulding to match the requirements of said task. Change is constant. To be able to compete and be successful, organizations need to constantly look forward, and leaders must embrace change and lean into it instead of shying away. (Morgan, 2019)

## **10 Discussing Leadership**

Leadership as a topic has been studied in many fields of endeavour, by many individuals and scholars for a long period of time. Instead of these studies resulting in an unequivocal and clear understanding between multiple parties, it has created opposing definitions that still exist and continue to evolve. (Swanwick & McKimm 2011; Jones & Bennett 2012 as cited by Stanley, 2017, p.29.) A plethora of papers, journal articles, books and web pages has resulted in us having a wide variety of theories, perspective and definitions about topics such as how to recognize effective leadership, promote change and innovation, develop better leaders etc. When we research, discuss, or teach leadership, it seems that we face a plethora of adjectives to describe leaders and yet we still have not found much common ground on the matter and the arguments vary from one person to another.

Even though traits theory offers an idea on leadership through the male gaze and unfortunately, many would still argue in this day and age that leadership is a task bestowed for men and not women, its basic principles are still very much relevant today.

While discussing leadership we need to look at different individuals and their personality attributes to understand how one would behave in a situation there are put into – a new job title perhaps. During the time Carlyle brought forth the idea, women didn't have as much freedom as they do today. Due to this, we now see more and more women in leadership positions, and we are able to look at for example nurturing personality traits as a possible advantage that has been seen for years as not proper for those occupying leadership positions. So while the theory can seem outdated and not fit for the modern "standards" it still takes into consideration the importance of one's personality.

The literature that looks at leadership often brings up the same people - gurus as examples of good leaders as their stories are so widely known across the world, which leaves out many good leaders whose names aren't as widely spoken. When asked to name a great leader, many point to the late Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple, whose approach to leadership was in some ways different and not comparable to the leadership you read in most books about the topic. (Robbins, S. and Coulter, M., 2016, p.523)

The problem with the topic comes from the fact that there are many stories where a highly intelligent person, skilled individual - an executive was promoted into a leadership position and then failed at the job. Whereas sometimes, someone with an average but not extraordinary technical and intellectual abilities gets promoted into a similar position and then succeeds a lot better than expected. For example, in 1971, Darwin E. Smith – a man who appeared very ordinary was chosen as the managing director of Kimberly-Clark (an old paper company that shares had dropped 36% in the last 20 years, becoming worse than the average return in the stock market.) Previously, he had worked as a lawyer in the company and was unsure of whether the company had made the right choice by hiring him for this position. His new title was also questioned by one of the leaders in the company, who said he wasn't fit for the position of a managing director. However, Smith stayed as such for 20 years and during those years he grew the company into the world's leading supplier of paper-based consumer goods and the company beat immediate competitors like Scott Papers and Protector Gambel. (Collins, 2001, p.40)

This type of anecdotes great a foundation for the widespread beliefs that identifying specific individuals – with the right skillsets and abilities from the mass is not science but much like art. (Goleman, 1998, p.4) Maybe one of the reasons Darwin. E Smith was able to make such a massive turnover at Kimberly- Clark – was because he was emotionally

intelligent and knew how to work with people. He might not have possessed the stereotypical traits that we have associated and still many do today with leadership, but he had other attributes that in more ways than one compensated for the lack of such traits. Still, not meaning that the ones he did have would be any less valuable than others. It could be possible that he was able to be flexible and sensitive about his own positive and negative traits, which when put into a leader's position allowed him to excel better than others had though he would. Perhaps he was able to flourish because he was finally given a chance to use his skill in such position and perhaps his more dormant personality traits were given more room in this new position.

Realistically, as in most leadership positions you have certain privileges like flexible working hours, remuneration packages that regular employees do not have - depending on the workplace of course. But based on this it could be assumed and almost thought commonsense that everyone would want to go after a job in a leading position. However, this is not the case. Not everyone seems to have the yearn or passion for leadership. It can surely be said that others take longer to grasp the aspects and complexity of leadership and many lack the required level of emotional intelligence and that is why many fail in these positions. To push the point more, wouldn't it be realistic to say that some individuals are born with characteristics that make them yearn, or even "lust" after certain aspects of leadership more than others. Because of this, it doesn't seem too far-fetched to assume that both theories, behaviour and trait theory would be intertwined.

### 10.1 Psychological Development and Thought Process

It can be assumed that many have heard the sayings or a similar one: "Leaders give birth to leaders." Meaning that if a family has many leaders, CEOs in it, it is very likely that their children will become leaders in the future or they will look to work in positions that grant them similar privileges leaders have. But why is that? As we have just discussed about personality in the previous sections and what it means in the context of leadership, the question remains: how does it come to be?

It seems that when authors write about behavioural theory and the ideology that leaders are made – many of them bring up – environment. Further scrutiny and evaluation of the literature surrounding the topic has revealed a slight gap in the information authors provide on the concept of environment. Many do not actually mention what it entails or

means in regard to one's personality development. Even Traits Theory looks at personality traits as a result of one's genes but doesn't take the idea much further. Nobody seems to mention: It is the way one thinks.

One could argue that many leaders give birth to leaders, because from a very young age they install into their children a certain way to think – a thought process that makes them see things differently, in a more leadership manner, which then impacts their journey through the external environment such as school, and they suck up information that supports their uprising. Even Vilkkio-Riihelä and Laine (2014, p.27) state that the cultural values, habits, and attitudes are reflected on one's development through internal environment such as family, and the people one sees often and external environment: schools, parent's jobs etc. The children often start to imitate those around them and those who are closest to them. It is part of their psychological development. Even Dalai Lama, the world's foremost known Buddhist leader says: "Morality, compassion, decency and wisdom are the building blocks of all civilizations. These qualities must be cultivated in childhood and sustained through systematic moral education in a supportive social environment --." (Hopkins, 2006) This actively illustrates that one needs to start teaching at an early age, so that the teachings stick and create a fundamental base for one's development through a specific thought process. The people around you will strengthen your personality traits and fuel the ones they see as valuable. This is also mentioned by Laine and Vilkkio-Riihelä (2014, p.30) who say that environmental factors can impact the way one's genes work; by turning some genes off and others on.

A person can also change their approach and behaviour in situations where certain type of behaviour is not tolerable. One can be short tempered by nature, inherited by genetics but as soon as they leave the comfort of their own home, into the work life they can turn it off. This means that their personality can be whatever, but they are able to alter it and work around it if needed. Even Nicholson (2013, p.13) mentions that we, like leaders, do not have to be prisoners of our qualities. The most impressive individuals are able to rise above them by practicing the power of self-control. That is what leaders need to do. If they are in tune with their emotions, thought process, how they react in situations and personality traits, they can choose to act according to what is needed in a position of power and choose a path that is most beneficial.

That's why it seems reasonable to say that behavioural theories are on to something with the idea that you can change your personality to adapt better. Some go through different

experiences in life that shape up who they are and along the way individuals build up their personality and way they think. Some have variety of support systems through family, friends and education that makes them more prone to feel comfortable in higher end positions, while others can live in an unfavourable environment that doesn't support their personality traits or a way of thinking in a way that would push them towards leadership or development of their skills. This does not automatically translate to the latter not getting into such position, but the starting points are different. Not all parents are managers, leaders, or work in higher position of course, and their children might still end up being leaders.

Walt Disney is a good example of that. He came from humble beginnings and grew up with a home-maker mother and an entrepreneurial father who was unsuccessful at almost all business schemes he ventured, and four siblings. His strict father was not supportive of Disney's creative aspirations and repeatedly forbid him from taking part in related events. Even with the backlash from his father, he succeeded when he created Mickey Mouse at the age of 29. Walt Disney emerged with perseverance, development of his own skills, understanding the mistakes he made and through which he was able to rally a team around an idea that made him a pioneer in the field of animation. (Boerma, et al., 2017) However, it seems logical that the children who grow up in a safe home, supported by their loved ones will feel safe to practice and develop their skills and express themselves more openly, which can build up their confidence for future leading roles in a more positive way.

## 11 Conclusion

In the Handbook of Leadership, R.M. Stogdill states that "There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept." (Stogdill cited in Boerma, et al., 2017) As we have now thoroughly looked at and analysed leadership and what it means from multiple perspectives, one can at least conclude that leadership is very much vital for the functioning of different institutions. Leadership is needed for them to operate efficiently and effectively. And as Peter Drucker said "There must always be a responsible leader: otherwise there is chaos." (William A. Cohen., 2013, p.74) There's a clear glamorization – hero image created of leaders and that idea in itself harbours an approach to the subject which makes it seem like leaders

should be the epitome of perfection. It's not possible for one individual to possess all characteristics, attributes, features that are covered on various platforms on leadership that list down more and more descriptive words that they should be. Humble, yet self-drive, altruistic but with vision and confidence to push an idea through on your own. People are flawed and leaders are not an exception to the equation.

Thomas Carlyle's Great Man Theory that got popularized in 1840s views that leadership traits are intrinsic, and leaders will emerge when they are confronted with appropriate circumstances. These, "Great Men" possess certain talents and qualities that make them better suited for leadership. On the other hand, organizations assume that leaders can be trained and based on this assumption they invest a lot of money and time to help their employees develop leadership skills. This can be actively seen in the fact that US companies spend around \$14 billion on training and higher education that offers a plethora of degree courses pertaining to leadership. So, on this side, it is suggested that leadership is something one can learn. (Boerma, et al., 2017) Some lean more towards genetics while others show clear distinction between those who are willing to learn and see the inherent personality traits as coachable – subjects to change if necessary to occupy leadership position. There also those, who see the grey area between the two theories and see them intertwining together, leaving the true answer to the question in the combination of the two.

The key findings of this paper lay exactly in that grey area. There are so many variables that go into how one becomes a leader that saying simply that leaders are born or made leaves out multiple perspectives and theories that intertwine. Whether one seeks out positions of power and authority cannot be based on one thing as that would simplify the matter too greatly. When looking at how leaders come to be one must consider the gene components that one inherits from his/her parents that make the individual more prone to certain type of reactions and behaviour, the environment they grow up in and the experiences that have influenced the person along the way and lastly, the individual itself – the actions and choices one makes during their life. Why would leaders be either born or made? Even the psychological perspective takes into account, socio-cultural, biological factors such as genes without leaving out individual's own actions and choices. In some cases, it is not enough to say that personality plays a role in one becoming a leader but also how it is changeable – whether by individual's own actions or by the force of the internal and external environment that affects them and their thought process. The two leadership theories provide a simplified perspective of a larger topic on how leaders

come to be, but they interact with one another – meaning that leaders are born and made – and each leader is his or her own mixture of the two perspectives.

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