Leadership Styles: Advantages And Disadvantages

Leadership is more than just a word especially in today's society, it's about how leaders behave which builds trust and confidence in people that are following them. In today's competitive world, leadership styles and skills are crucial for both personal and professional development this especially applies in the business world. Leadership has been said to be about personality and genuineness and also about the winning of possession for changing or improving something (Northouse, n.d). Research has indicated that despite the multitude of ways leadership has been conceptualised, there are four main components which are central to the phenomenon and are important. These include:

1. Leadership is a process;
2. Leadership involves influences;
3. Leadership occurs in groups; and
4. Leadership involves common goals.

It's therefore, clear from these components of leadership, that it can be defined as a process, whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, n.d). A leader and their leadership style propose a variety of arguments such as which leadership style is better, what age does leadership come at and does a leader only have the ability to have one certain type of leadership style or does it change depending on the situation. Leadership styles throughout time have continued to grow and change, there are a variety of different types of leadership styles which differentiate from one another significantly (Lombardo, 2019).

The purpose of this essay is to answer these questions by using leadership styles from relevant examples and case studies. Influential leaders will be examined within the essay to provide clear understanding about leadership styles and how they use this style and why it has worked or why it didn't for them. Each leader will be examined thoroughly throughout and their reactions to particular situations which have occurred allowing their leadership style to be addressed.

"We represent diversity, kindness, compassion, a home for those who share our values and refuge for those who need it" (Lester, A.). This quote was highlighted in The New York Times newspaper. It clearly represents a true leader, a person who can stand up at difficult times and still be a voice to be heard. It highlights an individual who has immense compassion but also the ability to communicate on an emotional level to those who follow. This is just one example of why the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Arden is to be considered a leader with a charismatic leadership style.

On 15 March 2019, an Australian man gunned down two mosques in Christchurch New Zealand, leading to the death of 51 people and leaving 31 civilians having serious injuries as a result of this attack (Lester, A). This tragedy highlighted why the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Arden reactions to the event are to be considered a true representations of a charismatic leader. Jacinda addressed media outlets and press conferences in a manner which not only impressed many individuals but also many other National Leaders such as Donald

Trump and Scott Morrison. What sets Jacinda Arden apart as a charismatic leader is that she is an extremely skilled communicator who is not only verbally eloquent but also has the ability to communicate on a much deeper and emotional level (Northouse, n.d). A charismatic leader has the ability to stand up in difficult times and exhibit exceptional devotion to their beliefs and this is exactly what Jacinda Arden did on March 16, 2019 (Lester, A). On this day Jacinda was pictured wearing a black hijab, her face creased in grief for those bereaved by the Christchurch shooting. Jacinda's ability to sympathise and care for not only those individuals affected but also her Nation which was in grief, shows how deeply passionate she is about helping those who need it. A picture which showed Jacinda Arden hugging a Muslim women made Martin Luther King Jr's daughter Bernice King stand up and quote Jacinda Arden "as being a person who reflects the type of sincere, people-oriented leadership that the world needs to evolve from its current chaotic state." The New York City Muslim community organiser Faiza Ali then went on and called Ms Arden an "remarkable leader" and her face was one of those she would "never forget" from the tragedy (Reynolds, 2019). The two strong statements which were posted on twitter demonstrate clearly why Jacinda Arden should be considered a leader with charismatic leadership style. The ability to stand up and talk about such a hard situation demonstrates her ability to connect to the people on a much deeper and emotional level. Jacinda knew her words were not going to be enough in this crisis and it was her actions which she undertook making her stand out and appear so powerful and strong. When you consider a leader it's not just about what they do day-to-day but how they can handle challenges which are placed in their path.

A charismatic leadership style is about the communication and actions that the leader presents, these are not strong actions but are there when there required. Jacinda clearly demonstrates a charismatic leadership style not only when handling the after math of the Christchurch tragedy but also throughout her whole term as New Zealand Prime Minister. A charismatic style of leadership relies on the persuasiveness and charm of a leader, who is driven by commitment and conviction to a certain cause. It's directed by leaders who are sometimes called "transformational leaders" because of the multiple similarities that they share, with only the main difference is audience and focus (Lombardo, 2018). While charismatic leaders try to make the existing state of affairs better, transformational leaders tend to focus on transforming environments or aspects into their vision. It is this aspect here why Jacinda Arden should be considered as having a charismatic leadership style rather than transformational or any other style, as she wasn't trying to transform any aspects of the crisis into her vision but rather develop a more peaceful world and reconnect and rebuild her community.

The next leadership style which is going to be examined is by a person who is arguably considered one of the strongest transformational leader in history, Adolf Hitler. Hitler is described as having a variety of different leadership styles such as being an Authentic Leader and a charismatic leader but his actions in World War II make it clear why Hitler is to be considered a transformational leader.

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that leads to positive changes in those who follow (Megargee, 2011). This clear definition is important as it highlights why Hitler should be considered a transformational leader, it states that to be a transformational leader the leader needs to lead positive changes to those who follow and that's exactly what Hitler did. Hitler made the German's believe that he was making a positive change which was the right change at the time and was also the only way change could occur. Transformational leaders engage in intellectual stimulation and inspiration motivation (Northouse, n.d). As far as inspirational

motivation is concerned, Hitler attempted to be different in order to become the “great” world leader and developed proper plans and tactics on how to achieve his goals Megargee, 2011). Hitler made the country stand at his feet by appealing to the values and ethics of the German people. Despite the fact that the need for resurrection in Germany’s economy was obvious it’s arguable that Hitler instead of fulfilling his followers higher mental needs and aspirations he was only fulfilling his own needs (Megargee, 2011). He was a dominant, magnetic leader that would possibly fit the characterisation of a pseudo-transformational leader, because this is where a leader satisfies the needs of his followers and their well-being but Hitler did not do that. Hitler was noted for being for Hitler and only Hitler (Megargee, 2011). This is evident in his quote which he states that “it’s not the truth that matters but victory” (Megargee, 2011) The theoretical source on page 10 highlights that many German operators and soldiers have said “if it wasn’t for Hitler, Germany could have won or changed the way the war ended”, he was too opinionated and too set in his ways” (Megargee, 2011) It’s clearly examined above that Hitler was arguably one of the most powerful Transformational leaders today’s society has ever seen. The circumstances under how Hitler become the Commander-in-chief of the army, indicated that no other leadership style defines him better than the transformational leadership style. Hitler’s leadership style was never influenced by anyone else, he believed that his vision was the only way there was, which is a clear example of why Hitler is to be considered a transformational leader.

“The great leader is seen as a Servant first”- Robert K. Greenleaf

This above quote lays its premise on a leadership theory that was developed later than previous mentioned styles and has gone on to challenge traditional leadership styles and approaches. Servant leadership style combines both practical advice on how to be a better leader as well as the philosophical notions of what it is to be a good leader (Muñoz, 2018). The basic idea of servant leadership is to challenge the traditional hierarchical leadership structures and question the idea of what it is to serve and to lead (Muñoz, 2018). One example of servant leadership is demonstrated in Christianity by Jesus. He embodied the idea that by serving others you can empower them and help them see the way. Jesus’s miracles were not performed to give him fame or money but to simply help those people in need. A passage from the Gospel of Mark highlights why Jesus is to be considered a servant leader. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them, not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be servant and whoever wants to be first must be servant of all. For even the son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”(Muñoz, 2018) Jesus did not merely talk about servant leadership and its benefits, he made this clear through his actions. No better example will demonstrate Jesus as a servant leader than when he washed the disciple’s feet. This demanding task was usually left to the lowest ranked people within the society but Jesus wanted to demonstrate that no one should consider themselves mightier than another.

In a more modern context, an American organisation called Festival Foods has adopted servant leadership style as opposed to other styles. The chairman, David Skogen highlights that, the servant leadership idea for the company comes from the notion that the style has many aspects encompassed within, allowing the company to differentiate to its competitors. The idea of persuasion is used within the company consistently, as each morning all employees gather and go through the performance from the previous day. Why this should be considered as servant leadership is because each employee has the ability to contribute their input on their own ideas,

hopes and dreams within the meeting. The idea of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for everyone to speak which creates a more open atmosphere within the organisation. It also ensures that communication lines between the people at the top of the organisation and at the bottom are open which David Skogen believes creates a ‘trickle down affect’ (Bailey, 2018). Servant leadership is still in infancy when it comes to being a complete theory, it is becoming increasingly popular amongst leadership theories (Bailey, 2018). Festival Foods believes Servant Leadership style creates better employee- leader relations and this can have a positive impact on their company.

“Speak even if your voice shakes”.

The final leader which needs to be noted is someone who can no longer voice their opinion but has left behind a message which changed not only a nation but the world. This quote demonstrates that a leader comes from all ages and age simply does not matter when it comes to leadership. It opens a debate about leadership and ‘What is a leader’ and ‘What makes an individual leader’. The above quote was sketched on a piece of paper by a 14year old girl called Dolly Everett before she committed suicide. This clearly demonstrates a true leader, although Dolly took her life it’s the message and the conversation she has started as a result of this quote and unfortunately her actions. Dolly may have not stood up or communicated this statement but because of her tragic actions not only was a National Campaign started but also a National inquiry into bullying. A leader is not just someone who stands up and can voice their opinions but it’s a person who can get people to believe their message and that’s exactly what Dolly has done, she was not been able to handle the bullying anymore but has started a conversation about the effects and how world-wide and deadly it can be. This is a clear demonstration of a transformational leadership style. This leadership style leads to a positive change in people who are followers (Northouse, n.d). Although a transformational leader is considered to be energetic, enthusiastic and passionate I don’t believe that you could argue against the fact that Dolly was in one of another a transformational leader who encompassed these aspects (Nine News, 2019) Dolly, only 14 years old was a transformational leader who started a conversation and not only managed to get a Nation but the world talking about bullying, an important issue which occurs to anyone of any age. It’s this reason why Dolly should be considered a transformational leader, her ability to voice her opinion and get a conversation started are strong dimensions of transformational leadership. This quote demonstrates how words can speak louder than actions. Dolly’s message will be remembered for years to come just like Hitler’s actions and Jacinda Arden’s response to the Christchurch mass shooting.

To be fair, to compare the actions of Dolly Everett to those of Hitler may not be correct. It’s debatable that not one leadership style is better than the other but rather its more about the individual and the matter at hand. Dolly’s story is the perfect example, Dolly was not able to stand up to her bullies but left behind a powerful message which lead to a National campaign and inquiry into bullying, whereas Hitler stood up and strongly voiced his opinions and was a positive change that his followers needed, at the time. What sets Dolly aside as a transformational leader, was the positive change her message had, not only on her followers but the Nation. It’s this position here, why I believe that leadership has no age or barriers, although Hitler’s action had a greater impact on the world. Dolly’s message also hit home to many individuals. Jacinda, Dolly and Hitler are arguably three of the best leaders that the world has ever seen, as it was their messages which sparked a change in their followers and left people talking. There words and actions will never be forgotten. Hitler reigned in 1941 and to

this day people are not only still talking about him but also studying him in all educated forums. It’s only a matter of time until Jacinda Arden and her response to the Christchurch mass shooting is studied and Dolly has sparked conversations at schools and will continue to do so. It’s implausible to argue that one leadership style is better than another but rather how the leader conducts the leadership style which is more important. Anyone can be a leader but it takes a person with the right leadership style to be a leader who is listened to.

In conclusion, I don’t believe that one leadership style is better than the other nor do I consider one to be more powerful than the other. Leadership can be summarised as the ability of a person to inspire confidence, support and understanding amongst people who are required or desire to require certain goals or outcomes (Northouse, n.d). In my opinion, it’s about how an individual reacts or acts to a certain situation which defines their leadership style. It’s this right here which is important in remembering and differentiating a leader from a role model. It could be said that a leadership style is only as good as the person who uses it. All leadership styles have their advantages and disadvantages and just because one leadership style works for one organisation or person, doesn’t mean it will work for another. Dolly Everett was only 14 years old and sparked a national campaign. It goes to show that the leadership style is only as good as an individual allows it to be. There are many and varying styles of Leadership in our society today, that inspire people to innovate and create change that assists to grow and shape the future of the world. Leadership styles will continue to vary according to the personalities of the people who wish to be leaders and who wish for their views and opinions to be announced.