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WEBER'S CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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Abstract

Although some recent studies have shown that charismatic leadership could be learned, subject still remains to be an uncovered area (Fragouli, 2018: 301), accordingly, different point of views were handled in this study.

For instance, Max Weber (1947) collocates the words "supernatural", "superhuman", "exceptional power" and "quality" when applying the term charisma to the individuals who are set apart from ordinary person (Weber, 1947: 358).

The classification of leadership presented in this study is known as charismatic leadership, one of the three types of the leadership put forward by Weber (1947). Charismatic leadership appears to be exhibited in several cases. The aim of the study is to examine one of those cases, the characteristic which is executed in times of crisis. Other related studies are also presented to provide the expression of charismatic leadership in times of crisis.

This study starts with introduction section and continues with the methodology section. The methodology section includes Weber's classification of leadership. The classification includes three types of leadership and the third type of the leadership stated in the classification is embraced in this study. Subsequently, a literature review is conducted in the relevant part of the study. Results, discussion and conclusion sections are also employed in this study.

Keywords: Charisma, Leadership, Weber.

1. Introduction

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The study relies on the consequence that charisma is not something which everybody has, as Weber stated in his works (Muthiah, 2010, 23). After introducing the definition of charisma, definition of leadership and charismatic leadership are also handled in this study. To understand Weber's (1947) charismatic leadership that takes place in his classification of leadership, clarification of those definitions is a must. Consequently, after providing introduction section, charisma, leadership and charismatic leadership definitions are brought together in "Weber's classification of leadership" headline. Last but not least, charismatic leadership in times of crisis is also handled in other relevant studies such as Pillai and Meindl (1991), Halverson, Murphy and Riggio (2004), Kakavoggianni (2009), Karim (2016), Jamal and Abu Bakar (2017). The discussion and conclusion are also employed at the end of the study.

2. Methodology: Weber's Classification of Leadership

Max Weber is an important figure in a variety of disciplines that could be seen in some researchers' works like Diehl (1923), Eliaeson (2005), Turner (2006) or Özlem (2017). This reality shows us that his life and his works have been enhanced not only by several researchers but also represents that these works have been conducted in a fairly wide period.

The classification includes three types of leadership (or pure types of legitimate authority). The first one has a rational ground, the second one is traditional and the third one is charismatic/hero leadership. The first type which is also stands on bureaucratic administrative staff is about having the legal authority and a belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and also the right of those with authority under such rules to issue commands. The second one which is called as traditional has an attribute of the belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them. The third one which is called as charismatic/hero leadership stands on individual and exceptional heroism, holiness or representative character of a singular figure (Weber, 1947, 328, 329). The third type of the leadership stated in classification is embraced in this study.

Leadership styles may have arisen from diverse meanings such as cultural or morally neutral. Considering the following example about aim and the leader, leadership could be effective even as in the case of the aim of the endeavor or its leader are devil or corrupt. In addition, it can be said that leadership could derive its meaning from the context that is used in (Wilens, 2006, 15).

The concept of classification of leadership put into words here does not reflect alternative styles of leadership programs¹ or other classifications² which are handled by distinct researchers or variety of evaluations irrelevant to this study. This paper focuses only on the classification of the aforementioned researcher, Weber.

2.1. Charisma

The word called charisma is derived from Greek. Charis was one of the Greek goddesses of total beauty and charity (Mortensen, 2010, 5).

Some questions have arisen about teaching of leadership and charisma, such as whether charisma can be learned or not, in some publications (Antonakis, Fenley and Liechti, 2011, 374). Although some recent studies have shown that charismatic leadership could be learned, subject still remains to be an uncovered area (Fragouli, 2018: 301), accordingly, different points of views were handled in this study.

To begin with the statement of Weber, it is interpreted that Weber in no way comments on charisma as something which all the people have (Muthiah, 2010, 23). Weber (1947) collocates the words "supernatural",

¹Leadership programs are also one of the development programs that has a tremendously increasing popularity which are related to a wide range of purposes or learning objectives of the term leadership (Klinborg and Moore, 2006, 281).

²One of the classifications falling under this category can be seen in Oshagbemi and Oholi (2005)'s paper. Directive leadership, consultative leadership, participative leadership, delegative leadership, laissez-faire leadership, management-by-exception leadership, contingent reward leadership, individualised consideration leadership, intellectual stimulation leadership, inspirational motivation leadership and idealised influence leadership are the leadership styles that Bass (1974) Bass, Farrow, Valenzi and Solomon (1975), Bass and Avolio (1990) have used (Oshagbemi and Oholi, 2005: 748-749). Bass's theory of leadership is also detailed in another research explaining how people become leaders, clarifying that it happens in three basic ways (Stogdill, 1989 and Bass, 1990 as cited in Sharma and Jain, 2013, 311).



“superhuman”, “exceptional power” and “quality” when applying the term charisma to the individuals who are set apart from ordinary person (Weber, 1947, 358).

Originally, charisma had the meaning of a gift of God's grace enabling a human being to perform exceptional tasks, as a theological concept (Lepsius, 1986, 53). This explains why Weber thinks that charisma is not dedicated to everybody.

The term charisma, that had an initial meaning of symbolising “gift” is generally reserved for a leader who by his or her influence can cause followers to bring off exclusive achievements (House, 1976, 4).

The point of views accepted in this study are, particularly the explanations in Muthiah (2010), Weber (1947), Lepsius (1986) and House (1976).

As Mortensen (2010) explicates his view of charisma, he implies a similarity appraisal between charisma and gravity. According to Mortensen, the charisma is not something that can be described as good or bad, but it can be said that it is neutral like gravity. The style that he or she uses the power may also be described as good or bad. This explains some leaders have charisma but indicates the lack of some tools of charisma. In addition to these, some people may have charisma and sundry tools of charisma, but they may use them in an unethical manner (Mortensen, 2010, 5-6).

2.2. Leadership

The leader is aware of the impact and importance of external audiences of the organization's system. He or she represents the organization to external audiences in such a way that they have a pure impression of the organization's targets and objectives. So they can clearly see the objectives and targets the leader has experienced in his life (Winston and Patterson, 2006, 8).

One of the most prevailing and actual theories on leadership takes into account the leadership as a process in which leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers, but known as members of a community of practice (Takala, 2005, 45).

Some researchers presumes that leadership is not different from social influence processes. These social influence processes emerge amongst all members of a group. Others believe that leadership covers everything that someone does in order to lead in an effective manner (Bohoris and Vorria, 2008, 1).

There are four major factors in leadership which can be classified as leader itself, followers, communication and situation (U.S. Army, 1983 as cited in Sharma and Jain, 2013, 310-311).

Therefore, historical traits of a leader can be mentioned. Trait theory, behavior theory and situational theory and values theory can be adressed from this perspective (Fairholm and Fairholm, 2009, 6).

2.3. Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leadership embraces the leaders who influence their followers due to certain personal characteristics. Those characteristics may be high selfconfidence, empathy and use interpersonal skills to give followers a sense of competency and empowerment (Sharma and Sharma, 2010, 98).

Charismatic leadership is observably viewed as more effective by both superios and followers than others like non-charismatic leaders or transactional leaders (Pillai and Meindl, 1991, 235).

Charismatic leader use his or her power over his or her followers. In addition to this, his or her followers have power over charismatic leader. By this way, this relationship is interactive because of its nature (Nikoloski, 2015, 18).

The community or social group formed around charismatic leadership is an emotional community bound by personal devotion toward the leader. Group is organized by his or her agents, whom the leader chooses according to charismatic qualities (Lepsius, 1986, 54).

Therefore, the legitimate use of charisma or charismatic leadership is psychologically or sociologically assigned to the belief of his or her followers. Therewithal, this use is independent of the quality of the leader (Takala, 2005, 49).



Correspondingly, in traditional societies (ancient and feudal) the manoeuvring abilities of people are determined by the anonymous fabric of society. The individual surrenders to the commandments, imposition and sanctions of individuals (owners of charisma and power) on behalf of this anonymous tissue (Doğan, 2007, 355).

Weber draws attention to the routinization of charisma as a specific problem. With the occurrence of the rule that based on charismatic authority, the problem of succession always arises. Weber suggested to routinize the rule by directing it to legal principles, abstract laws, governing the social relations. A major example of this can be considered as the modern state (Clegg, 1997, 34).

3. Literature Review

Literature review below includes the studies of some researchers chronologically from 1991 to 2017.

Pillai and Meindl (1991) focused on the effect of a crisis on the emergence of charismatic leadership in a laboratory study (Pillai and Meindl, 1991).

Halverson, Murphy and Riggio (2004) evaluated charismatic leadership in crisis situations. They analysed a laboratory investigation of stress and crisis (Halverson, Murphy, Riggio, 2004).

Kakavoggianni (2009) examined charismatic leadership and its emergence under crisis conditions. A case study in airline industry is also employed (Kakavoggianni, 2009).

Karim (2016) investigated the indispensable styles, characteristics and skills for charismatic leadership in times of crisis in his study (Karim, 2016).

Jamal and Abu Bakar (2017) studied the mediating role of charismatic leadership communication in a crisis. The study covers a Malaysian example (Jamal and Abu Bakar, 2017).

Researchers (Year)	Explanation
Pillai and Meindl (1991)	The effect of a crisis on the emergence of charismatic leadership in a laboratory study
Halverson, Murphy and Riggio (2004)	Charismatic leadership in crisis situations
Kakavoggianni (2009)	Charismatic leadership and its emergence under crisis conditions
Karim (2016)	Indispensable styles, characteristics and skills for charismatic leadership in times of crisis
Jamal and Abu Bakar (2017)	The mediating role of charismatic leadership communication in a crisis

Table 1. Literature Review

4. Results: Charismatic Leadership in Times of Crisis

Organizations are assumed to be susceptible to exhibition of crises. Every organization has different attitudes on different types of threats and it is obvious that organizations do not have only one way to manage crisis. This case helps to grasp what distinguishes a crisis situation from an unfortunate or unpleasant business challenge (James and Wooten, 2005, 142). In addition to organizations, there are many other points or circumstances that they can also face with the crisis.

Also nations face with crises in every sudden depression. Besides, they can also encounter with the crises in times of inflation or when nations are exposed to attacks by other nations. It can be summarized that a crisis can be defined as a generic social experience (Hamblin, 1958, 322).

To broadly describe the crisis, it is essential to point out that it is related to an event or revelation or allegation or some set of circumstances that threat integrity or reputation. Furthermore, these facts also threat the survival of an organization. It defies the sense of safety of the public, its values or its appropriateness. In those cases, the actual harm or potential detriment over the organization is substantial. Moreover, the organization can not put an urgent end to this situation by its own effort (Sapriel, 2003, 348).



Crisis management can be defined as the overall coordination of an organization in its response to a crisis. The coordination in question here should ensure that all arrangements are held in an effective and timely manner to avoid or minimize the damage. In this context, profitability, reputation or ability to function are the points subject to damage. Crisis management often involves the need to make quick decisions for the cases which covers uncertain or incomplete information (UIC, 2017, 1).

In an organization, crisis management should consist of systematic approaches which are related to dealing with real crises. Consequently, the organization continues to operate as usual as possible (Heller, 2012, 22).

Charismatic leadership points out what to expect from both leaders and his or her followers. Leaders occupies themselves with extraordinary behaviors and display substantial expertise. In crisis or other important cases, an atmosphere that is conducive for the emergence of charismatic leadership occurs. These extraordinary behaviors cause the followers to react as part of the greater situational context and attribute charisma to the leader (Bell, 2013, 66).

Thompson and Tuden (1959), consistent with Weber, explicates that charismatic leaders are more likely to rise in crisis situations. In other words, when conventional goals are being challenged and established procedures do not work, charismatic leaders emerges (Scott, 2003, 305; Thompson and Tuden, 1959 as cited in Scott, 2003: 305).

5. Discussion

It can be pointed that charismatic leadership is found in several cases. Those cases can be observed in most studies, but this study relies on one case, crisis. Researchers should be aware of the point that other cases and studies related to charismatic leadership are open to work on. This study's recommendation for researchers can be defined as focusing on other cases related to charismatic leadership which are not mentioned here.

6. Conclusion

In this study presented, after the introduction, Weber's (1947) classification of leadership was handled. The concept of classification of leadership put into words here does not reflect alternative styles of leadership programs or other classifications which are handled by distinct researchers or variety of evaluations irrelevant to this study. This paper focuses only on the classification of the aforementioned researcher, Weber.

Charisma, leadership and charismatic leadership are the subsections of the mentioned section. Moreover, five studies which were dealt with charismatic leadership are also handled in the literature review section. Moreover, charismatic leadership in times of crisis section was also given.

This study focuses on the charismatic leadership in times of crisis. The section named charismatic leadership in crises covers the definition of crisis and the crisis management. In addition to these, information about charismatic leadership in times of crisis is also provided.

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