The style of leadership in the Tunisian certified ISO 9001 enterprises

Raoudha KAMMOUN[#1]

#Department of Management

Faculty of Economics and Management of Sfax (FSEGS). MODILS Research Unit, University of Sfax, Tunisia.

[1]*E-mail:* raouda.kammoun@fsegs.usf.tn

Slaheddine BAKLOUTI[#2]

#Department of Management

Faculty of Economics and Management of Sfax (FSEGS). MODILS Research Unit, University of Sfax, Tunisia.

[1]*E-mail:* slaheddine.baklouti@fsegs.usf.tn

*Abstract-*Nowadays, face to the economic challenges and the aggressive competition, the leader will gain a lot enhancing his skills to allowsuccess to his company.

The paper aims to describe the style of leadership and its main characteristics in the context of Tunisian enterprises. It is based on a literature review about the main theories of leadership and an empirical survey conducted about 82 leaders.

The literature review reveals many models, which specify the leadership style. For instance, the Gallup model (2001) is based on thirty-four talents whileManfred F. R. KETS de VRIES one (2011) specifieseight characteristics. Based on these later models and taking into account the characteristic of Risk Taker (ISO 9001-2015 norm), we propose a model of leadership style with ten leadership characteristics related to four leadership skills groups: strategic thinking, relationship building, influencing and executing. The ten key characteristics are Strategic, Communicator, Competitor, Achiever, Innovator, Responsible, Maximizer, Change facilitator, Empathic and Risk taker. The proposed model is tested about a sample of 82 Tunisian leaders. The survey outlines the main Tunisian leader style based on five main characteristics, which are strategic, responsible, maximizer, risk taker and communicator. Itreveals a gap between the theoretical model and the real characteristics in practice.

Keywords: Leadership, leadership style, Characteristics, Tunisian context, ISO 9001-2015

I. INTRODUCTION

Face to manynational and international challenges such as customers and suppliers structures and cultures, local and foreign regulations, currency exchange and inflation rates, and human resources problems; the Tunisian companies will need to focus on their effectiveness. Since, all stakeholders should be responsible to consider this effectiveness as amain objective. It should be noted that the organization effectiveness is tightly related to the style of leadership, which, is characterized by innate or acquired attributes or talents. Thus, leaders should play a major role to contribute to reach this objective. As concluded by Madanchian et *al.* (2017),"Theeffectiveleader createsthesituationthatis best fortheorganizationthroughthe useofskillsandprocesses…That'swhy developing effective leadership by using a consistenttalent management programat all levels across theorganization canmakesignificantbusinessvalue". Heinen and O'Neill (2004) argue that Talent Management can be the best way to create a long-term competitive advantage. It is an instinctive quality demonstrating the capability to make a significant difference to current and future company performance.

Dhar. et al., 2001) found that the most commonly used measure of leader effectiveness is assessing group performance and the scope to which the goals and objectives of the group are reached. It is considered as a strong indicator that leaders could be able to influence their subordinates and lead them to achieving the goals of the organization.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the organization effectiveness is tightly related to the style of leadership, which, is characterized by innate or acquired attributes or talents.

The paper aims to define the style of leadership and its main characteristics in the context of certified ISO9001 enterprises in Tunisia.The choice of the certified ISO 9001 enterprises is justified by the importance of the leadership in the ISO 9001 certification process since leadership is one of the seven principles of the total quality management on which is based the ISO 9000(2015) standard. Besides, the subject is still ongoing and the knowledge is not consolidated in the area yet. Thereby, the paper is structured as follows. After the introduction, the second section presents a literature review on the definitions and characteristics of leadership with a focus on the leadership theories in particular the Gallop model(2001) and the ManfredF.R.KETS de VRIES'sone(2011). The third section concerns the conceptual model while the fourth one shows the methodology used.. The sixth section presents the discussion of the analysis and finally, the seventh section refers to the conclusion and potential future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The leadership definitions:

The leadership concept inspires many researches related to the industrial context as well services. For instance, the Amazon siteoffers nearly 66,000 books and more than 83,000 publications on leadership and the number of references continues to grow rapidly. Universities and business schools worldwide are positioning themselves in this same continuity by offering specific programs and support to senior and executive managers. They have in common the objective of developing management skills by putting the emphasis on leadership practices (Mintzberg, 2009, p.143). However, the results remain very limited due to the complexity of the concept.

Bennis (1997) and Bennis and Nannus (2003) underline the difficulty todefine leadership using some appropriate metaphors as "... leadership islike the Abominable Snowman, whose foot prints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen ". However, despite the proliferation of sometimes-divergent researches, the greatest consensus has relatively formed around the definition of leadership as "a process by which an individual (the leader) influences a group of individuals (the followers)in order to achieve a common goal "(Northouse, 2010: 12). Also JM Plane, 2015) did provide a more precise definition on leadership as being "a process of decisive orientation and influence of a person on the action of a human group with a view to putting in place a policy and achieving a certainty.

The two mentioned definitions above are the synthesis of successive leadership theories related tothe leadership styles that knew a chronological evolution.

B. The evolution of leadership theories and styles:

The theories and styles related to the leadership know relevant evolution. The first theory was associated with the personality Era (Great Man theory late 1800's and 1990's). It is based on the hypothesis that true leaders are born not made, and the best example is the Great Man Theory (Bowden, 1927; Carlyle, 1841; Galton, 1869). Then appeared the Trait Period mainly represented by the Trait Theory of (Bingham, 1927). This latter considers that leaders have extra capacity to rise when needed through their charisma, wisdom, intelligence or other natural qualities. Then, appeared the behavioral theory, which, focuses on how leaders act. It argues that the success of a leader is based on their behavior rather than their natural attributes. Behavioral leadership theory involves observing and evaluating a leader's actions and behaviors when they are responding to a specific situation.

The most notorious theories are the Ohio State studies (Fleishman, Harris, and Burtt, 1955), then the early behavioral theory ((Reinforced Change Theory (Bass, 1960)) which gave four states of business success and no success, and effective or ineffective people. The Michigan State Studies, (Likert, 1961) and the late behavior Period Managerial Grid Model (Blake and Mouton, 1964), which focuses on two axis, the concern for people and the concern for results. The other related theories, such as the Four-Factor Theory (Bowers and Seashore, 1966) Action Theory of Leadership (Argyris, 1976) Theory X and Y (McGregor, 1960, 1966) Operant Period (Sims, 1977; Ashour and Johns, 1983) focused on two orientations, the production and the people. For above theories, the factor "environment" was not taken into account, then came the Situational and contingency theories, which began by the environment Approach (Hook, 1943), then the Open-Systems Model (Katz and Kahn, 1978), followed by the Social Status Period with Role Attainment Theory (Stogdill, 1959), Leader Role Theory (Homans, 1959) . The Contingency theories are contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1964), Path-Goal Theory (Evans, 1970; House, 1971), Multiple Linkage Model (Yukl, 1971; 1989), Normative Theory (Vroom and Yetton, 1973 and Vroomand Jago, 1988). This later theory is an organizational one that claims that there is no best way to organize or lead a company, or to make decisions. Any action should take into account the internal and the external situations.

The transactional theories began by the Emergent Leadership (Hollander, 1958), then the Social Exchange Leadership (Hollander, 1958, Jacobs, 1970), Vertical Dyad linkage/Leader Member Exchange Theory (Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975), the Reciprocal Influence Approach (Greene, 1975), so the Social Exchange Theory (Hollander, 1979; and the Role Making Model (Graen and Cashman, 1975). Between the 1980s and 2000, the Transformational theories with the charismatic Theory (House, 1977) , the Transforming Leadership Theory

(Burns, 1978), the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Period SFP Leader Theory (Field, 1989; Eden, 1984) and the Performance Beyond Expectations Approach (Bass,1985). We note that the transactional leadership works within set established objectives and organizational boundaries, and is mainly oriented performance, so evaluate tasks and reward the outcomes. The transformational approach challenges the status quo and is more future-oriented.

As from the 2000s, the Integrated Leader-manager and adaptive leadership theories came with many styles.
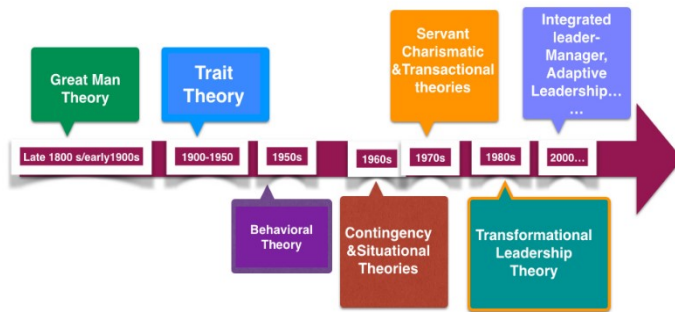
The graph here below summarizes this evolution

Fig 1: The chronological evolution of the leadership theories

The models of leadership styles developed after the year 2K are multiple. Our choice went to two models, the Gallup one that enunciates 34 possible talents a leader can possess, and the Manfred K. De VRIES with its eight characteristics, that may be innate or acquired. Our choice to mix the two models will allow us to emphasize the possible characteristics that may build an "ideal" model of leadership style.The Gallup and M.Kets DE VRIES models:

Here are the descriptions of the two models used in our study

1)The Gallup model (2001):

In 2001, Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton, both working for the Gallup Institute in the USA, published the results of their research, based on a strong premise "The best way to move forward in your career and to be satisfied in your work is to develop your strengths".

Using polls and surveys carried out around the world (all sectors combined) on a sample of more than 10 million people, they succeeded in isolating 34 themes related to the strengths and talents that enable these people to achieve success. .

The 34 talents were divided into four groups 1) Strategic thinking defined as people with dominant strategic thinking themes help teams consider what could be. The talents under this group are Strategic, Futuristic,

Intellection, Ideation, Analytical, Input, Learner, and Context. 2) Relationship building defined as people with dominant relationship building themes have the ability to build strong relationships that can hold a team together and make the team greater than the sum of its parts. The talents under this group are Developer, Relator, Empathy, Harmony, Adaptability, Connectedness, Positivity and Individualization. 3) Influencing defined as people with dominant influencing themes know how to take charge, speak up and make sure the team is heard. The talents under this group are Activator, Command, Communication, Competition, Maximizer, Self-Assurance; Significance and Woo. 4) Executing defined; as people with dominant themes know how to make things happen. The talents under this group are Achiever, Arranger, Belief, Consistency, Deliberative, Discipline, Focus, Responsibility and Restorative.

2)The Manfred Kets De VRIES model (2011) :

This model is composed by eight characteristics: 1) The strategist: leadership as a game of chess. These people are good at dealing with developments in the organization's environment. They provide vision, strategic direction and outside the box, thinking to create new organizational forms and generate future growth. 2) The communicator: leadership as stage management. These executives are great influencers, and have a considerable impact on their surroundings. 3) The change-catalyst: leadership as a turnaround activity. These executives love messy situations. They are masters at re-engineering and creating new organizational «blueprints.". 4) The transactor: leadership as deal making. These executives are great dealmakers. Skilled at identifying and tackling new opportunities, they thrive on negotiations. 5) The builder: leadership as an entrepreneurial activity. These executives dream of creating something and have the talent and determination to make their dream come true. 6) The innovator: leadership as creative idea generation. These people are focused on the new. They possess a great capacity to solve extremely difficult problems. 7) The processor: leadership as an exercise in efficiency. These executives like organizations to be smoothly running, well-oiled machines. They are very effective at setting up the structures and systems needed to support an organization's objectives. 8) The coach: leadership as a form of people development. These executives know how to get the best out of people, thus creating high performance cultures.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Research question and Objectives

Our research question is "What are the leadership main characteristics of decision makers in ISO 9001 certified Tunisiancompanies". This question was studied before,

but not for the Tunisian context. In fact, R. Ashkenas and B. Manville (2018) identified six leadership skills, based on interviews of successful leaders of large corporations, startups, and non-profits companies to get to know their view about what it takes to become a leader. Based on their research, these skills are: 1) shaping a vision for focusing and challenging the team; 2) translating the vision into clear strategy about what action to take and what not; 3) recruiting, developing and rewarding a team of great people; 4) focusing on measurable results; 5) promoting innovation and learning to sustain the team or organization and 6) leading yourself.

According to the authors, the main points to develop proficiency of these leader skills are based on continual practice and real experience, rather than just reading books or attending courses or seminars. This confirms what Kouzes and Posner (1995) stated, "leadership is a learnable set of practices".

B. Conceptual model

As stated before, and as we are at the integrated leader-manager, Adaptive leadership era; hence, the theoretical model needs to be derived from characteristics models as from Y2K, and the following models were identified 1) the Gallup's set of 34 talents model (2001), 2) the Manfred F. R. KETS de VRIES's 8 characteristics (2011) and 3) the characteristic of Risk Taker (ISO 9000-2015 norm).

1. The proposed model

We propose a model derived from the two above models, and added the risk taker characteristic taken from the ISO 9001-2015 norm.In fact, and According to ISO 9001, planning for risk is a form of quality management and doing so contextually ensures that the business' quality management system is able to achieve its intended results by preventing or reducing the risk and mitigating any of the potential side effects of an undesired outcome, thus by improving the identification of opportunities and threats and effectively allocate and use resources for risk treatment.

Table 1 summarizes the proposed model and its main characteristics.

Gallup Model (Group)	M. K. De VRIES Model	Proposed Model	Principle characteristics of the talent
Strategic (Strategic thinking)	Strategist	Strategic	This talent allows the leaders to identify the best route for his company taking into account the vision, the mission, the common values and strategic objectives
Communicator (Influencing)	Communicator	Communicator	This talent allows the leader the capacity to communicate the needed information to the stakeholders that internally and externally by various means.
Adaptability (Relashionship building)	Change catalyst	Change facilitator	This talent allows the leader to act a businessperson who is the trusted confidante of both employees and leadership team. He need to be flexible and adaptable to stay productive when exposed to different directions work flows
Competition (Influencing)	Transactor	Competitor	This talent allows the leader to keep his company's performance comparable to the competition, and have the appropriate negotiation skills to close the deals.
Achiever (Executing)	Processor	Achiever	This talent allows the leader to possess a great deal of stamina, and a constant need for attainment, through smooth operations running and efficient resolutions of problems, as well as constant results orientation.
Intellection & Ideation (Strategic thinking)	Innovator	Innovator	This talent allows the leader to exploit his mental activity that depends on the other strengths The leader will need to generate creative ideas and implement them as well as having a great capacity of difficult problems solving
Responsible (Executing)	Builder	Responsible	This talent allows the leader to take psychological ownership for anything he commits to, and whether large or small, he feels emotionally bound to follow it through to completion. He makes things happen and still accountable for his actions
Developer & Includer (Relashionship building)	Coach & People development	Maximizer	This talent allows to transform something strong into better. He creates and maintain high performance through high standards

| Empathy (Relashionship building) | - | Empathic | This talent allows the leader to sense the emotions of people's around him; hence he will be able to see the world through their eyes and share their perspective by understanding their needs and raise their motivation |
| ------ | ------ | Risk Taker | This talent allows the leader to identify the risks, work to eliminate or address them, and at least mitigate those risks |

Table 1: The theoretical proposed model

ISO 9001-2015 certified companies. We will consider the expected ten characteristics identified above into the proposed model. Our objective is to specify the profile of Tunisian leaders according to following characteristics (Strategic, Communicator, Competitor, Achiever, Innovator, Responsible, Maximizer, Change facilitator, Empathic and Risk taker

Thus, the theoretical leadership style is represented according to the following equation : $Y = A + ßi \times Xi$, where Y is the dependent variable "Leadership style" and Xi are the independent variables "the characteristics".

We did itemize the variables as per the following table:

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the following methodology which is structured on the following steps:

A. Variables itemization:

Aspresentedinthe firstsection,theobjectiveofthisresearchistoidentifykeyl eadershipcharacteristics within the context of the Tunisian

Variables (Characteristics)	Items	Criterions
Strategic	+ Vision + Mission + Values + Strategic objectives	+ Enunciation & clarity + Enunciation & clarity + Enunciation & clarity + Enunciation & clarity
Communicator	+ Internal and/or external + Items communicated + Means of communication + Stakeholders (Recipients)	+ Whom's + All strategic items + Efficiency + Whom needed to be informed
Change facilitator	+ Adaptability + Flexibility + Change sponsor	+ When needed + When needed + In case of change
Competitor	+ Competitive advantage + Company positioning + Deals negotiations	+ Consciousness + Consciousness + Capability
Achiever	+ Smooth operations running + Problems solving + Results oriented	+ Smoothness + Resolution + Results attainment
Innovator	+ Creative ideas generation + New ideas implementation + Great capacity of difficult problems solving	+ Generation + Implementation + Resolution
Responsible	+ Accountability for his actions + Making things happen	+ Accountability + Concretization
Maximizer	+ Create high performance culture + Create high performance standards + People development	+ Team members federation and common values share + SMART objectives setting and challenging results attainment + Investment in Human resources
Risk Taker	+ Risks identification	+ Clear procedures

		Address risks		Risks elimination
		Mitigate risks		Risks impact attenuated
Empathic		Ability to understand people's needs		Peoples needs identified and answered
		People motivation		High motivation within the employees

Table2: Variables itemization

B. Questionnaire design:

The research was conducted through a questionnaire .

Itcontains qualitative questions derived from the leadership characteristics of the proposed model. Itwasdividedintotwosections:inthe firstsection,interviewees wereaskedthegeneralquestions,inordertoobtainbasicinfo rmationnecessary todefinecompaniesprofile and the respondent identity and responsibilitieswhile the second section considered the identification of the 10 characteristics of leadership and composed by 20 questions:

- ➢ Some of them are close-ended (yes or no).
- ➢ Some other questions are partial open-ended (multiple-choice with 'other' option),
- ➢ The remaining ones are ranking questions (Likert scale),

C. Survey Sample

The questionnaire was proposedto700 enterprises that have a clear e-mail address among the list of 1,004 ISO 9001-2015 certified enterprises provided to us by the A.P.I.I. (Agence de la promotion de l'Investissement et de l'Innovation, a government body responsible to promote the investments and the innovation in Tunisia).

We conducted the survey during the period between december 2019 and april 2020. The response ratio was very low. We sent it again, february 2020, and only 82 responded. The response rate reached finally 11,7%. The respondents distributionis made up of 60 leaders from industry (Metalic, Wood, Textiles, food …); 12 leaders from the energy and oil services field, 6 leaders from the real estate domain and and 4 contractors.

V. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	A	Standard Error	Bêta		

Descriptive methods were used to test construct validity and scale reliability. The validity of the construct (which brings together convergent validity and discriminant validity) was tested within the framework of the PCA analysis carried out on the items concerned. The reliability of the scales, carried out within the framework of this study using the SPSS 20.0 software, is tested using Cronbach's Alpha in accordance with the recommendations of Evrard et al. (2003). To validate the internal structure of the model and the research hypotheses, we used the test which is based on the linear regression method (Evrard et al. Op. Cit.). According to Evrard et *al.* (2003), multiple regression aims to isolate a relationship between a variable to be explained and several explanatory variables and put them into equation. This relation is expressed in the form of a regression equation which presents the variable to be explained as the sum of the explanatory variables affected by their regression coefficients to which is added a constant regression term.

VI. RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results analysis

The following linear regression table shows the ten variables (Leadership characteristics) with their corresponding significance. The coefficient R=0,844 indicates a positive correlation coefficient is positive and > 0.8, therefore, a direct and strong correlation. The R square= 0,712 indicates that 71,2% of total variation in Leader is explained by variation in the independent variables and 28,8% are explained by the otherwise . The ANOVA table shows a significance equal to 0,000, then < 0.05 then equation is significant and can be used for prediction.

According to the results, it seems that the Tunisian leadership style is determined by the combination of the following characteristics (Strategic, Responsible, Maximizer, Risk taker and Communicator).

(Constante)	1,145	,317		3,610	,001
Strategic	,679	,057	,679	12,006	,000

a. Dependent Variable : Leader

b. Predictors : (constants), Strategic, communicator, competitor, Achiever, Responsible, Maximizer, Innovator, Change facilitator, Risk taker , Empathic

Table3: Empiric study results (SPSS)

According to above, the Tunisian leadership style could e formulated as:__Tunisian Leadership style__ = **1,145 + 0,679 Strategic* + 0,209 Responsible* + 0,431 Maximizer** + 0,117 Risk Taker** + 0,279 Communicator*****

* significant at 1% ; ** significant at 5% ; *** significant at 10%

Communicator	,162	,090	,278	1,801	,081
Competitor	,057	,174	,117	,327	,745
Achiever	,088	,126	,168	,698	,490
Responsible	,209	,059	,209	3,557	,001
Maximizer	,238	,109	,431	2,188	,036
Innovator	,101	,124	,230	,819	,419
Change facilitator	,097	,106	,197	,913	,368
Risk taker	,117	,052	,117	2,269	,026
Empathic	,009	,030	,008	,312	,756

a. Dependent variable : Leader   b. All requested variables entered

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square
1	,844[a]	,712	,634

ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Squa re	F	Sig.
1 Regression	24,945	9	2,772	9,077	,000[b]
Residual	10,077	33	,305		
Total	35,021	342			

B. Results discussion

The results of the descriptive statistics and the correlation analysis using the Cronbach's Alpha (greater than 0.8) give a strong support to the conclusion that the Tunisian leadership style is highly dependent on the main characteristics, with different significance. Our survey reveals that the Tunisian leadership style is highly dependent on the strategic talent. The strategic leaders must therefore create the future by constantly evaluating the business environment and analyzing the actions taken to make the best decisions. They do not hesitate to question their position and seek different points of view, even the most divergent, in order to ensure that they have "covered the issue" by developing a macro perspective of the situation (Goldman , 2012; Goldman, Scott and Follman, 2015; Sigter and Cooper, 2015).

Indeed, the first step that the leaders need to undertake is to establish why the organization exists and what it wants to achieve. If they do not clarify and communicate the vision and mission, they cannot be effective. They also should involve their leadership team in evolving the vision and mission in order to develop their commitment.

Indeed, the results reveal that the leaders should be responsible, and accountable for their actions.The third characteristic ismaximizer who creates high performance culture, high performance standards. The fourth characteristic is risk-taker, so the leader is the person who identifies both internal and external risks. the leader is required to demonstrate leadership and commit to ensuring that risks and opportunities that can affect the conformity of a product or service are determined and addressed". The last characteristic iscommunicator who needs to establish a channel of information exchange with his team to reinforce the vision, mission, values and culture and to ensure that the organization is working together as a consolidated team. In addition, he needs to know who are the different external stakeholders groups in order to develop approaches allowing him to understand, anticipate and respond to their different needs and expectations.

The five remaining characteristics revealed non-significant, that are competitor, achiever, innovator, change facilitator and empathic should be enhanced by the Tunisian leader, and if we take into account the statement of Kouzes and Posner (1995), leadership is a

learnable set of practices, then leadership can be developed by practice.

VII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The objective of this research was to present a shape of the Tunisian leadership style, with its characteristics, considering a literature review that allowed us to propose a theoreticalstyle, taking mainly into account the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015; and an empirical survey conducted over 700 Tunisian certified ISO 9001:2015 enterprises, with only 82 respondents.Based on this association, five main characteristics, among ten identified by the theoretical model were revealed. We can consider that a development of some skills related to the non-significant characteristics may allow the Tunisian leader succeed to develop them, and be as effective as the theoretical model.

A limitation of this paper is that the empirical leadership style is a snapshot within the present context of post-revolution, pandemic COVID-19, and a three dimensions turbulent environment, economic, social and political. In addition, the response ratio is very low, and this is mainly due to the Tunisian culture that does not pay the due importance to the academic researches, and a certain skepticism or/and fear of indiscretion.
Then, and due to the above reasons, this result cannot be generalized, and needs to be deepen.

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