Abstract

Purpose
By comparing "leaders" with "non-leaders" the current research attempts to shed light on the impact of early experiences on leaders' development.

Design/methodology/approach
The study is presented in two parts, quantitative and qualitative. In the first (quantitative) part, a group of soldiers perceived as leaders was compared with a group of soldiers perceived as non-leaders, in order to examine the hypothesis that leaders have had more leadership experiences than non-leaders. Confirmation of this hypothesis led to the qualitative part, in which the sense in which the reported experiences had contributed to leadership development was explored.

Findings
The leaders proved to have had more leadership experiences than non-leaders in their youth. Such experiences impact on self-perception as a leader, the development of self-efficacy in leadership, and the accumulation of psychological and behavioral knowledge related to the manifestation of leadership.

Practical implications
Conceptually, the study adds knowledge regarding leadership development via natural experiences, particularly experiences that occur in early periods of life. Practically, the study adds knowledge that can improve selection processes of leaders, as well as knowledge that can be applied to leaders' development, particularly reflective methods.

Originality/value
The contributions of this study are methodological, conceptual, and practical. The study offers methods and instruments to assess leadership and distinguish leaders from non-leaders.

Keywords
Leadership  Leadership development  Experiential learning  Youth

Citation

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The leaders proved to have had more leadership experiences than non-leaders in their youth. Such experiences impact on self-perception as a leader, the development of self-efficacy in leadership, and the accumulation of psychological and behavioral knowledge related to the manifestation of leadership. Practical implications — Conceptually, the study adds knowledge regarding leadership development via natural experiences, particularly experiences that occur in early periods of life. Practically, the study adds knowledge that can improve selection processes of leaders, as well as knowledge th Theory of Leadership # 1. Trait Theory of Leadership: In the 1940s, most early leadership studies concentrated on trying to determine the traits of a leader. The trait theory was the result of the first systematic effort of psychologists and other researchers to understand leadership. Professor Rensis Likert and his associates at the University of Michigan studied the patterns and styles of leaders and managers over three decades and developed certain ideas and approaches for understanding leadership behavior. Likert considers an effective manager as one who is strongly oriented to subordinates and relies on communication to a great extent in order to keep all the departments or individuals working in unison. Learn eight leadership theories with pros and cons. Which type of leader are you? Discover leadership styles with traits and characteristics. Some of the first leadership theories developed were focused on specific qualities that differentiated between leaders and followers. Newer theories explored other variables like skill levels and situational factors. Given the complexities of this topic, I thought it might be helpful to create an easy resource that helps you to better understand the current constructs, broken down into eight main leadership theories.