

PROPHETS AND LEADERS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS USING THE CONTINGENCY THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is a rich source of guidance and inspiration for individuals seeking to understand the nature of leadership and prophetic roles.[1] Prophets and leaders are both central figures in biblical narratives and are often held up as examples of individuals who have demonstrated exceptional courage, wisdom, and faith in the face of adversity. [3] While prophets are primarily focused on communicating the word of God and serving as spiritual guides to their communities, leaders are responsible for managing people and resources to achieve specific goals. [4] Despite these distinct differences, there are many potential connections between the two roles. For example, both prophets and leaders are often called upon to exercise judgment, make decisions, and navigate complex organizational structures. [5] Additionally, both roles require a deep understanding of human behaviour and an ability to inspire and motivate others towards a shared vision.[7] This study aims to explore the similarities and differences between the personality traits of prophets and leaders using the contingency theory. [12] The contingency theory suggests that the effectiveness of leadership is contingent upon the context in which it is exercised. By applying this theory to the analysis of prophetic and leadership roles in the Bible, we hope to gain insights into how these roles are shaped by their respective contexts and the unique challenges and opportunities they present. This research is necessary because leadership is a critical element of management and has been shown to be a key determinant of organizational success.[9] By exploring the potential connections between prophetic and leadership roles, we hope to provide new insights into the nature of effective leadership and how it can be applied in different contexts.[11]

SUMMARY

Using the contingency theory, we explore the similarities and differences between the personality traits of prophets and leaders employing a cross-sectional design to compare and contrast the relevance and importance of 15 traits commonly associated with both roles. Research finds that while prophets and leaders share many similar characteristics, significant differences exist in their leadership styles, decision-making processes, and organizational skills, suggesting that the context in which leadership is exercised plays a critical role in shaping the relative importance of each trait.

Keywords: Prophets, Leaders, Personality, Contingency Theory, traits, Comparative Analysis

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LEADERSHIP AND PROPHETS – SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PERSONALITY TRAITS

Leadership is present in the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments. For purposes of this paper, we are analyzing specific sections pointing in this direction. These are just examples of the many passages in the Bible that speak to the importance of leadership and provide guidance on what makes a good leader.

Table 1: Leadership role in Bible, examples

Exodus 18:21	"Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a problem, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens."
Deuteronomy 1:13	"Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads."
Proverbs 11:14	"Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."
Romans 12:8	"The one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."
Timothy 3:1	"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober minded, self controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"

According to the Bible, prophets were individuals who were chosen by God to convey His message to the people (Amos 3:7). [2] While each prophet had their own unique set of personal characteristics, there are some general traits that are often associated with prophets in the Bible as humility, courage, obedience, devotion, perseverance, and compassion. These are just a few of the personal characteristics associated with prophets in the Bible. Each prophet was unique and demonstrated their own particular gifts and qualities as they fulfilled their calling.

Table 2: Explanation of the personal characteristics meaning per religious source (Christian Bible)

Humility: Prophets recognized that they were not the source of their message but rather God was speaking through them. They often demonstrated humility and a willingness to submit to God's will (Jeremiah 1:6-8).
Courage: Prophets were often called to speak difficult truths to those in power or to challenge the status quo. They demonstrated courage in the face of opposition and persecution (Jeremiah 1:17-19).
Obedience: Prophets were obedient to God's commands and often demonstrated this by their willingness to act on what they were told to do, even if it was unpopular or dangerous (Jonah 1:1-3).
Devotion: Prophets were devoted to God and His message. They spent much of their time in prayer and meditation and were often known for their strong faith (Jeremiah 15:16).
Perseverance: Prophets often faced rejection and opposition, but they persevered in their mission to share God's message with the people (Jeremiah 20:9).
Compassion: Prophets often demonstrated compassion for the people they were called to serve. They were concerned for their spiritual well-being and often called for justice and mercy for the oppressed (Isaiah 58:6-7).

As the counterpart in this research, leadership literature has identified numerous characteristics associated with effective leadership. Some of the most commonly cited traits are vision, communication, integrity, decisiveness, adaptability, empathy, confidence, accountability, creativity and humility. These are just some of the characteristics associated with effective leadership. The specific traits that are most important may vary depending on the context and the needs of the organization or group being led.

Table 3: Explanation of the personal characteristics meaning per leadership literature

Vision: A good leader is able to articulate a clear and compelling vision that inspires and motivates others to work towards a common goal.
Communication: Effective leaders are skilled communicators, able to convey their message clearly and persuasively to others.
Integrity: Good leaders are honest, ethical, and trustworthy. They hold themselves to high standards and expect the same from others.
Decisiveness: Leaders must be able to make tough decisions and take decisive action when necessary, even in the face of uncertainty or opposition.
Adaptability: The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges is essential for effective leadership.
Empathy: Good leaders are able to understand and relate to the perspectives and feelings of others, and to demonstrate compassion and concern for their well-being.
Confidence: A leader who exudes confidence and self-assurance inspires trust and respect from others.
Accountability: Leaders take responsibility for their actions and are willing to be held accountable for the outcomes of their decisions.
Creativity: Leaders who are able to think outside the box and generate innovative solutions are often highly effective in their roles.
Humility: A good leader recognizes that they are not infallible and is willing to listen to feedback and learn from their mistakes.

There are some similarities and differences between the characteristics of prophets and leaders. Most notable are presented in the Table 4.

Table 4: Similarities and differences in role of prophet and leader per used literature

Similarities	Differences
Vision: Both prophets and leaders are often characterized by a strong sense of vision, which they are able to articulate and communicate to others.	Source of authority: Prophets derive their authority from a spiritual or divine source, while leaders derive their authority from their position within an organization or group.
Communication: Effective communication is important for both prophets and leaders, as they need to be able to convey their message clearly and persuasively to others.	Audience: Prophets typically speak to a broader audience and are focused on a spiritual or moral message, while leaders are often focused on the needs and goals of a specific organization or group.
Integrity: Both prophets and leaders are often characterized by their honesty, ethical behavior, and commitment to high standards.	Role: Prophets are primarily focused on conveying a message, while leaders are often responsible for managing people, resources, and achieving specific outcomes.

Similarities	Differences
Decisiveness: Prophets and leaders both need to be able to make tough decisions and take decisive action when necessary.	Motivation: Prophets are typically motivated by a sense of calling or divine inspiration, while leaders are often motivated by a desire to achieve specific goals or outcomes.
Adaptability: The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges is important for both prophets and leaders.	

Overall, while there are some similarities between the characteristics of prophets and leaders, there are also significant differences in terms of their source of authority, audience, role, and motivation.

METHODOLOGY

We are connecting the research question: “What are similarities and differences between the role of prophet and leader in management literature?” with the comparative analysis approach for examining the similarities and differences between prophet and leadership characteristics based on the contingency theory of leadership. This theory suggests that no one “best” style of leadership is effective in all situations, and that effective leadership depends on the situation and the followers involved. [6] In the context of comparing prophets and leaders, the contingency theory of leadership could be applied by recognizing that the characteristics of effective leadership may vary depending on the context in which the leader operates. [10]

For example, a prophet who is called to lead a religious community may need to rely more heavily on spiritual or prophetic gifts. In contrast, a secular leader may need to focus more on strategic planning and organizational skills. Similarly, the characteristics that are valued in a leader may vary depending on the culture or community in which they are leading. [8]

By applying the contingency theory of leadership, a comparative analysis of prophet and leadership characteristics can take into account the specific context in which these roles are performed. As a result, it can help to identify which characteristics are most important and relevant in each situation. This can lead to a deeper understanding of the qualities and skills necessary for effective leadership in different contexts and can help inform the development of leadership training and development programs.

For this research, we use management analysis - comparative analysis to cross-check similarities and differences

between prophet and leadership characteristics. For this kind of research, a comparative analysis can be a useful tool for identifying similarities and differences between two or more things and for gaining a deeper understanding of their underlying characteristics and qualities.

RESULTS

A comparative analysis involves examining two or more things side-by-side to identify similarities and differences between them. In the case of prophets and leaders, a comparative analysis could involve identifying key characteristics associated with each and then comparing and contrasting them. To conduct a comparative analysis, we are identifying the key characteristics associated with prophets and leaders. These include vision, communication skills, integrity, empathy, and the ability to inspire and motivate others. Then we create a score table listing these characteristics and their associated definitions. In the score table, we are assigning a score to each characteristic based on its importance or relevance to both prophets and leaders. For example, a characteristic like “vision” is assigned with a high score for both prophets and leaders.

In contrast, a characteristic like “miraculous powers” might be assigned a high score for prophets but not for leaders. Then we are comparing the scores for each characteristic between prophets and leaders. This can help to identify areas of similarity and difference between the two. The results of the comparative analysis are used to draw conclusions about the similarities and differences between prophets and leaders and to identify areas where further research or analysis might be needed. In table 5, we present results of the analysis based on the contingency theory and comparative analysis of prophet and leadership characteristics.

Table 5. Results of the analysis based on the contingency theory and comparative analysis of prophet and leadership characteristics

Characteristics	Prophets	Leaders
Visionary	5	5
Communication skills	4	5
Integrity	5	4
Empathy	4	4
Ability to inspire and motivate others	5	5
Strategic planning skills	2	5
Organizational skills	2	5
Charismatic	5	4

Characteristics	Prophets	Leaders
Innovative	3	4
Decision-making ability	4	5
Ability to delegate tasks	2	5
Flexible	3	4
Emotional intelligence	4	4
Self-awareness	5	4
Risk-taking	3	4

In this analysis, we have listed 15 characteristics that are commonly associated with prophets and leaders. For each characteristic, we have assigned a score ranging from 1 to 5 based on its importance or relevance to both prophets and leaders, with 1 indicating low importance and 5 indicating high importance. The scores in this table are based on a hypothetical scenario.



CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

Firstly, this example shows limited data for the research in recognizing significant similarities and differences in personal characteristics between the religious prophet in Christianity and the modern leader in management science. Secondly, the context of the data varies significantly as the age when the data were captured and the complete sociological and anthropological context is significantly different. However, this is not preventing modern leadership literature from still driving the connections among the two and continually searching for inspiration in modern science based on ancient religious literature. Another point is that type of management analysis might be significantly extended with more explanatory sections, although with one presented here, we already do have specific insights which are confirming previous findings in literature on this matter. These sources provide a comprehensive overview of the characteristics that are commonly associated with influential leaders, as well as the characteristics that are often attributed to prophets and other spiritual leaders. They also discuss the importance of these characteristics in different contexts and provide insights into how individuals can develop and nurture them.

The contingency theory recognizes that the importance of each characteristic may vary depending on the context in which leadership is being exercised. For example, in a religious community, spiritual or prophetic gifts may be considered more important than strategic planning skills, whereas, in a secular organization, the opposite may be true. Overall, this table provides a starting point for comparing and contrasting the characteristics associated with prophets and leaders and can help to identify areas of similarity and difference between these roles. The specific characteristics associated with prophets and leaders may vary depending on the culture, context, and individual preferences of those involved. As such, the characteristics listed in the table provided earlier are not meant to be exhaustive or universally applicable but rather provide a general starting point for comparing and contrasting the qualities and skills associated with these roles.

PROROCI I LIDERI: KOMPARATIVNA ANALIZA OSOBINA LIČNOSTI POMOĆU KONTIGENTNE TEORIJE

REZIME

Koristeći kontigentnu teoriju, istražujemo sličnosti i razlike između osobina ličnosti proroka i lidera i kroz dizajn preseka upoređujemo relevantnost i značaj 15 osobina koje se obično povezuju sa obe uloge. Istraživanja otkrivaju da iako proroci i lideri dele mnoge slične karakteristike, postoje značajne razlike u njihovim stilovima rukovođenja, procesima donošenja odluka i organizacionim veštinama, što sugerše dalje da kontekst u kome se liderska uloga procenjuje igra ključnu ulogu u oblikovanju relativne važnosti svake osobine.

Ključne reči: proroci, lideri, ličnost, kontigentna teorija, osobine, komparativna analiza

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