Chapter 08 - Leadership

Answers to end of chapter questions

1. Are leaders born rather than made?

Leaders are both born and made. Some of the traits associated with good leadership are believed to be formed through social interaction; others are believed to be genetic.

2. To what extent are the main traits associated with effective leadership well established?

The research literature seems to support the idea that certain traits are associated with effectiveness. There is a fair amount of consensus about which traits correlate with leadership effectiveness.

3. What features of the situation interact with a leader’s style?

Through research, it has rapidly become clear that the effects of consideration and structure on the variables of productivity and job satisfaction were moderated by intervening variables such as the type or size of the work unit. For example, an early study by Fleishman and Harris (1955) found that merit ratings for supervisors by their managers were positively related to their level of structure in manufacturing departments but negatively related for supervisors in service departments.

4. To what extent is it possible to be a democratic leader?

A major problem with democratic leadership styles is the extent to which senior managers are willing to give up power. Power and control in the workplace are complex and highly contested issues. This often makes democratic approaches to leadership extremely problematic.

5. To what extent does leadership research support the idea of ‘one best way’ in leadership style?

Leadership research does not support the idea of ‘one best way’ in leadership style. It shows that leadership styles needs to take various factors into consideration such as the local culture, politics and history.

6. Is there a difference between a leader and a manager?

The difference between a leader and a manager is that a manager is placed within a hierarchy of an organization and this is their position. It does not necessarily mean that they are a leader as the idea of a leader.
7. Is charisma a trait?

It is possible that while many treat charisma as a trait, it is not really a trait at all. From this perspective, central to the notion of charisma are the two-way processes of projection and transference.

8. In what sense can leaders be trained or developed?

We have seen that leadership research has essentially provided us with a composite picture of effective leaders. On the one hand, they need to display interpersonal sensitivity, whilst on the other handling effectively the practical demands of the task.

They are also, according to situational theory, sensitive to key contingency variables and able to either modify the situation to suit them or select an appropriate leadership style to suit the situation.