

The reflection on the group discussion demonstrated a democratic leadership style. The democratic approach was successful encouraging participation from all individuals with effective communication and relationships that developed a motivated and creative team (Lindon and Lindon, 2011). Fiaz et al (2017) agrees a democratic style places more importance on the team encouraging positive interactions to develop into a successful and friendly exercise.

The leader skilfully guided members of the team towards positive interactions of ideas and planning to develop the team's outcomes (Khan et al ,2015). The group discussion provided evidence suggesting the democratic was an effective leadership, including each member of the team and valuing everyone equally but at the same time setting excellent standards (Johnson, 2015). Aubery (2011) agrees stating an effective leader focuses on the team, the children, families and the community. According to Khan et al (2015) the democratic leadership is the most important and effective style in the early years setting, emphasising communication is crucial to building an effective team, a democratic leader interacts with the team to encourage high moral, motivation.

The group discussion allowed all members of the team to clarify the final decisions by encouraging positive and negative feedback to plan the next steps (Johnson, 2015). The leadership style included all members of the team to be part of the decision-making process, creating a happy atmosphere and raised self-esteem. According to Fiaz et al (2017) a democratic approach is a positive style to increase motivation and promote effective relationships. Each member of the team worked hard to produce high quality outcomes for the presentation, Newstead and Isles-Buck (2013) states this was achieved as everyone was included and was valued as part of the team. The chair leader of the group was central of the discussion creating opportunities for each individual to give opinions and ideas to contribute to final decisions, with discussions of suitable dates and times for further meetings to be arranged (Module team (2014).

During the group discussion several policies and procedures were discussed to protect the children, staff and the organisation. There was a debate following policies and procedures with an input of own beliefs and values from knowledge and experienced members to produce the best care for the children. The discussion informed everyone at the same time

of the ideas and allowed members of the team to give positive or negative feedback to improve on the quality of the work (Johnson, 2015).

However, during the preparation for the group discussion individuals focused more on developing their own topic opposed to others and developed into a long process with no forward progress towards a resolution. Although, the situation was treated fairly a final decision was made by the leader (Newstead and Isles-Buck, 2013). According to Lindon and Lindon (2011) and Newstead and Isles-Buck (2013) it is important that the leader gathers ideas from the team although the members should be aware the leader will take everything into consideration, but they will be the one who makes final decision. According to B863 module team (2014) it is difficult to carry out a democratic approach as a large team where more time is spent discussing rather than moving forward. The lengthy discussions can also cause the team to separate into smaller groups with reducing the interaction as a whole team.

In conclusion Khan et al (2015) and Gastill (1994) state the democratic leadership is the most effective style, where individuals have an opportunity to share knowledge and skills to contribute to ideas and achieve excellent results. Although, the democratic style was effective during the planning and preparation of the group discussion, all members of the group were female, where Djigic and Stojiljkovic (2011) and Dunlop (2008) state all female early years practitioners prefer a democratic approach because it builds a friendly, warm and understanding team.

According to Dunlop (2008) the leadership style between male and female gender are different, males visualise leadership as leading and completing tasks to a high standard. Where the females' perspectives of leadership are contributing towards positive relationships, team building, sharing of information and progression.

However, Lindon and Lindon (2011) state the most effective style in the early years is the distributed style. Although according to Aubery (2007) cited in O'Sullivan (2015) no specific leadership style is effective for every early year's provision and leaders should adapt several leadership styles to achieve the overall best performance.

The chosen model Laissez-faire is different from the style discussed in the group reflection. Laissez-faire leadership style is also known as delegative leadership and is completely opposite to the autocratic leadership style. An autocratic leader is always in charge of

everything focusing on high standards and little importance on the individuals in the team, where the laissez faire leader delegates responsibilities and allows freedom for members of the team to make the final decisions (Fiaz et al, 2017).

However, Khan et al (2015) states a successful leader skilfully guides members of the team towards positive outcomes and encourages them to reach goals through interaction, planning and a developmental process. Khan et al (2015) describes an effective leadership style as a mixture of both the autocratic and laissez-faire, where the democratic leadership style does not micromanage or detach themselves from the team. Johnson (2015) explains early years practitioners resent autocratic and laissez-faire leaders as they are never seen, and an effective leader must model good leadership practice for practitioners to imitate and deliver high quality practice. However, Lindon and Lindon (2011) state female early years practitioners prefer a democratic and laissez faire style compared to an autocratic, where practitioners feel trustworthy and empowered to demonstrate skills and knowledge to complete a task without continuous control.

A Laissez-faire leader provides the information and resources needed to start a project and allows the team to complete the task with the knowledge given. However, while the laissez faire style indicates a complete hands-off approach with no involvement, the majority of leaders are available to give advice and feedback to enable members of the team to be motivated to complete tasks (khan et al, 2015).

The Laisse faire style is often said to be the least effective with poor outcomes. However, Laisse faire is effective in organisations with highly skilled employees who are experts in a specific area with knowledge and are capable to work independently can achieve excellent results (skogstad, 2007). According to O'Sullivan (2015) employees are given a large amount of space and freedom to be inspired to develop skills with little oversight and have a vision to create something exceptional. Lindon and Lindon (2011) agrees discussing laissez faire encourages practitioners to develop skills and personal carer development. However, Javed and Chaudhry (2012) states when a leader is not involved and lacks interaction with the team there will be less respect and assumption that the leader is careless, and practitioners may imitate the careless leadership style and be less motivated

to perform tasks to their highest levels. Suggesting the laissez faire style is not effective to motivate practitioners compared to other leadership styles.

Although Fiaz et al (2017) disagrees explaining both laissez-faire and democratic leadership styles provide positive relationships and autocratic leadership has poor relationships with the team who are less valued and motivated to work to fulfil direct commands. Encouraging employees to be motivated and empowered with the freedom to demonstrate knowledge and skills, experiencing satisfaction in the performance and participation within the team. A motivated and committed team is the core to success in any organisation.

According to Aubery (2011) and Fiaz et al (2017) a leader's role is to insure employees' complete tasks, but an effective leader considers the importance of the interactions and shared group decisions. The leader has a hands-on approach guiding and supporting individuals that encourages inspiration to develop and achieve new goals, providing a positive working environment.

Kurt Lewin's study report 1939 cited in Khan et al (2015) provides clear evidence of the autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles. During the study Lewin identified that a democratic approach was most effective where leaders participated in the task and gathered ideas from the whole team, but the leader made the final decision. However democratic style was not as productive as the autocratic style, but there was a great deal of participation, guidance and interaction with ideas and decision making. The laissez faire approach was the least effective where the members of the group were expected to solve problems with little guidance and were less motivated that resulted in poor performance and outcomes.

According to White (2008) employees need a small amount of stress to increase levels of motivation, the balance of stress and motivation is successful to assists performance. However too much stress or motivation can also result in poor performance. Research suggests employees do become comfortable and contented in their area of work known as the 'comfort zone', individuals who are in the comfort zone produce constant and steady performance. However, these individuals refuse change as it increases high levels of stress

and where there is rejection to allow change the levels of stress increase resulting in either high or low performance.

Sutcliffe (1997) and the Module team (2014) explain the laissez faire approach can cause frustration within a team where practitioners are confused with their role or the roles of their team members. According to Skogstad et al (2007) the laissez faire style demonstrates weakness in the authority of the leader and causes pressure and strain to build up in a team. Team members are proven to exclude individuals by becoming competitive to be recognised and gain satisfaction, resulting in bullying. The negative behaviour is not intended but leads to bullying due to high levels of strain and frustration created by poor leadership with non-existent involvement, feedback, rewards and motivation to satisfy members of the team. Newstead and Isles-Buck (2013) and Sutcliffe (1997) explains the importance to interact with practitioners and discuss the process to achieve goals and to develop a strong, focused and motivated team. Lack of interaction can cause a high number of absence or even resignation resulting in a turn-over in staff.

The Bruce Tuckman's theory cited in White (2008) indicates individuals move through five stages to develop a successful team, the five stages are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The team begin the process of team building at the forming stage planning, collecting information and start to bond as a team. Secondly the storming stage is where the relationships develop and during the third stage norming, each member of the team trust and accept one another. The ideas, relationships and contribution of the whole team develops into the performing stage producing high quality performance by collaborative team work. However, the adjourning stage occurs where there is a turn over or change in staff, lowering the team's self-esteem, motivation and performance. The whole process of building a successful team will start all over again at the forming stage. Aubery (2011) agrees stating early years practitioners recognise the importance to develop relationships to contribute as a team providing positive outcomes for the organisation and children. Dunlop (2008) states effective leadership in early years is central for the success for pupil's achievement, built on vision, motivation and shared values.

According to Cornall's 'coping cycle' cited in White (2008) states a change in staff can impact on the team's self-esteem, the leader's role is to encourage the team to develop confidence to restore performance.

However, a democratic approach with effective communication skills reduces the tension between the leader and the team, where democratic leaders are approachable to address concerns. Communication is crucial to building an effective team and reduces frustration, the democratic approach is effective because employees feel secure in their roles and decreases the chances of a turnover in staff (Kahn et al, 2015).

A laissez faire style is a particularly useful for highly skilled and experienced employees who need little management and still produce high quality results. Delegating decisions to the team provides the leader with additional time to concentrate on other responsibilities according to their role. (Isles-Buck and Newstead, 2003). However, the laissez faire is not effective for individuals who lack knowledge or experience to complete tasks without guidance. research suggests the laissez faire approach is associated with negative outcomes, where they are unable to meet deadlines, deliver poor performance and low satisfaction. According to Khan (2015) the laissez faire leadership style leads to the lowest productivity among group members.

In conclusion the Kurt Lewin's study report 1939 cited in Khan et al (2015) provides evidence that the laissez faire leadership style was the least effective with poor motivation and satisfaction compared to the autocratic and democratic styles. Although several authors suggest laissez faire leaders do not interact with the team, however many leaders are approachable for advice and feedback when required. Although Khan et al (2015) and Lindon and Lindon (2011) emphasis the most effective leadership approach is the democratic style, where each individual is valued as a team member within early years encouraging participation, communication and develops a motivated and creative team to make decisions and to achieve goals.

Although a variety of leadership styles are effective at different stages, the laissez-faire approach may be successful in the first stages when an idea is being developed but then it will be beneficial to change the leadership style to give direction. However, according to Aubery (2007) cited in O'Sullivan (2015) no specific leadership style is effective for every early year's provision and leaders should adapt several leadership styles to achieve the best overall performance.

Reference list

B863 Module Team. (2014) 'Working in groups and teams' <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=20471> OpenLearn url: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/developing-yourskills-hr-professional/content-section-0> [Accessed: 15th January 2019].

Allen, B. and Mathews, G. (2015) *Team-Teach: Working together to safeguard people and services*. London. Aidan Healey O.B.E.

BBC (2017). '£1.4m mental health project to help school pupils' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-41361491> [Accessed: 5th January 2019].

ASD Wales. (No date) 'Primary Schools' <https://www.asdinfowales.co.uk/primary-school> [Darllenwyd: 30 o Ragfyr 2018].

Aubery, C. (2011) *Leading and Managing in the Early Years*. (2nd ed) London: Sage.

Children's Rights Wales (2016). 'Pupil Participation in Wales' <http://www.childrensrights.wales/index.php/participation> [Accessed: 7th January 2019].

Cyngor Sir Gar. (2018) 'Bilingual education' ar gael ar: https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/education-schools/bilingual-education/#.XDs9a8_7St8 [Darllenwyd 9 o Ionawr 2019].

Data Protection and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted> [Accessed 2nd January 2019].

Department for Children's Schools and Families (2008) 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Development Guidance for practitioners working in the Early Years Foundation Stage'

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/SEAD_Guidance_For_Practitioners.pdf [Accessed: 4th January 2019].

Department of Education(DOE)(2018). 'Pupils emotional health and wellbeing'
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/pupils-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>
[Accessed : 12th January 2019].

Dewis Cymru (2018) 'Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY)'
<https://www.dewis.cymru/additional-learning-needs-cyp> [Darllenwyd: 1af o Ionawr 2019].

Djigic, G. and Stojiljkovic, S. (2011) 'International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology', *Classroom management styles, classroom climate and school achievement*, Volume 2, No. 18, pp. 2 – 18. [On-line].
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Snezana_Stojiljkovic/publication/275541811_Classroom_management_styles_classroom_climate_and_school_achievement/links/555527ea08ae6fd2d821bd82/Classroom-management-styles-classroom-climate-and-school-achievement.pdf [Accessed: 15th January 2019].

Dunlop, A.W. (2008) 'A literature Review on Leadership in the Early Years' [http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/publications/a ...](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/publications/a...), 2008 - academia.edu [Accessed: 23rd January 2019].

Education. (2002)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/437241/Listening_to_and_involving_children_and_young_people.pdf [Accessed :7th January 2019].

ELSA support. (2013) <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/> [Accessed :7th January2019].

Estyn. (2016) 'Estyn's Health and Wellbeing Policy'
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/document/estyn's-health-and-wellbeing-policy>. [Accessed: December 28th, 2018].

Estyn. (2016) 'Pupil voice' benefits pupils and helps schools to improve'
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/news/'pupil-voice'-benefits-pupils-and-helps-schools-improve> [Accessed :10th January 2019].

Estyn. (2011) 'United Nations Convention or the rights of the Child: Article 12'
www.childrensrights.wales [Accessed: 14th January 2019].

Estyn. (2011) 'United Nations Convention or the rights of the Child; Article 24'
www.childrensrights.wales [Accessed: 10th January 2019].

Estyn. (2011) 'United Nations Convention or the rights of the Child; Article 27'
www.childrensrights.wales [Accessed: 7th January 2019].

Estyn. (2008) 'Inspectorate for Education in Wales. *Data Protection Legislation*'
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/ESTYN%20PRIVACY%20NOTICE%20-%20EXTERNAL%20FACING%20TEMPLATE.pdf> [Accessed: 2nd January 2019].

Estyn. (2017) 'The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales' [http://www.assembly.wales/laid documents/gen-ld11387/gen-ld11387-e.pdf](http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld11387/gen-ld11387-e.pdf) [Darllenwyd 9 o Ionawr 2019].

Estyn (1990) 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child'
http://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf [Accessed: 2nd January 2019].

Fiaz, M., Ikram, Q. S., and Jiaotong, X. (2017) 'The Journal of Developing Areas' *LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION: PERSPECTIVE FROM AN EMERGING ECONOMY*, Volume 51, No. 4, pp.143-157. [On-line]. Available at: <https://web-b-ebshost-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=0a00389c-375a-491d-9eb8-da66ae964c1e%40pdc-v-sessmgr06> [Accessed: 13th January 2019].

Gastill, J. (1994) 'Human Relations', *A Definition and Illustration of Democratic Leadership*, Volume 47, No. 8, pp. 953-972. [On-line]. <http://jgastil.la.psu.edu/pdfs/DefinitionDemocraticLeadership.pdf> [Accessed: 13th January 2019].

Hart, R. (1992) 'UNICEF International children's Development Centre, 'Children's Participation' https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf [Accessed :7th January 2019].

Heads together (2019) 'The Duchess launches Heads together new mental health project for young children' <https://www.headstogether.org.uk/schools/> [Accessed: 12th January 2019].

Health & Social Care Scrutiny Forum (2013) 'Mental Health, How Carmarthenshire is Responding?' http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/EXEB20140203/REP12.HTM#P90_6045 [Accessed :5th January 2019].

Isles-Buck, E. and Newstead, S. (2003) *Essential Skills for managers of child-centred settings*. London: David Fulton.

Jared, H. and Chaudhry, A. Q. (2012) 'International Journal of Business and Social Science', *Impact of Transactional and Laissez Faire Leadership Style on Motivation*, Volume 3, No. 32, April, pp. 28. [On-line]. Available at: http://www.ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_7_April_2012/28.pdf [Accessed: 22nd January 2019].

Johnson, J. (2015) *How to Be a Great Leader in Early Years*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. [e-book]. Available at: <https://www-dawsonera-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/readonline/9781784501808> [Accessed: 16th January 2019].

Johnston, J. and Nahmad-Williams, L. (2014) *Early Childhood Studies: Principles and Practice*. London. Routledge. [e-book]. Available at: <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/lib/trinity/reader.action?docID=1818084> [Accessed: 6th January 2019].

Khan, I., Quereshi, Q. A., Muhammad, I., Rauf, H., Latif, A. and Tahir, M. (2015) 'Public Policy and Administration Research', *The Styles of Leadership: A Critical Review*, Volume 5, No. 3, pp. 87. [On-line].
<https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/PPAR/article/viewFile/20878/21131> [Accessed: 12th January 2019].

Kelvin, R, Dr. (2014). 'Mental health help 'needed in schools'
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-26685550> [Accessed: 5th January 2019].

Lindon, J & Lindon, L. (2011) *Leadership and Early Years Professionalism: Linking Theory and Practice*. London: Hodder Education.

Llywodraeth Cymru. (2018) *Additional Learning Needs And Education Tribunal (Wales) Act*. Caerdydd: Llywodreth Cynulliad Cymru.

Llywodraeth Cymru (2019) *Draft Additional Learning Needs Code*. Caerdydd: Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru.

Llywodraeth Cymru. (1993) 'Welsh Language Act 1993' ar gael ar:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1993/38/pdfs/ukpga_19930038_en.pdf
[Darllenwyd 9 o Ionawr 2019].

Meilyr, R. (2017-2018) 'The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief inspector of Education and Training in Wales'

https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/ESTYN_Annual%20Report_Accessible_English__2018.pdf [Accessed: 4th January 2019].

Mental Health Foundation (2019) 'Training (Wales)'

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/training-wales> [Accessed :5th January 2019].

Mental Health (Wales) Measure (2010) Welsh Government Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2010/7/contents> [Accessed: 5th January 2019].

National Assembly for Wales (2006) *Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance Circular Social Inclusion*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

Newstead, S. and Isles-Buck, E. (2013) *Essential Skills for Managers of Child-Centred Settings*. London: Routledge. [e-book]. Available at: <https://www-dawsonera.com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/readonline/9780203805015> [Accessed: 17th January 2019].

NHS. (2018) 'Physical Activity guidelines for children' <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years>. [Accessed: 1st January 2019].

O'Sullivan, J. (2015) *Successful leadership in the early years*. (2nd ed) London, England : Bloomsbury. [e-book]. Available at: <https://www-dawsonera.com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/readonline/9781472919045> [Accessed: 14th January 2019].

Pupil Participation-Good practice Guide (2011) Welsh assembly: Cardiff. Available at :<http://www.childrensrights.wales/index.php/participation/publications/159-good-practice-guide/file> [Accessed :7th January 2019].

Skogstand, A., Einarsen, S., Tosheim, T., Aasland, M. S. and Hetland. H. (2007) 'Journal of Occupational Health Psychology', *The destructiveness of Laissez-Faire Leadership Behaviour*, Volume 12, No. 1, pp.80-92. [On-line]. http://the_destructivness_of_Laissez-faire_lea.pdf [Accessed: 11th January 2019].

Sutcliffe, N. (1997) '*The Role of Leadership in Business Process Reengineering: An Empirical Study of the Relationship Between Leadership Behavior and the Reengineering Outcome*'
http://condor.depaul.edu/nsutcli1/IS%20483%20IS%20Management%20Readings/flamholtz_LE_framework.htm [Accessed: 11th January 2019].

The Charlie Walker Memorial trust (1997) <https://www.cwmt.org.uk/> [Accessed: 12th January].

The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) Programme (no date)
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s81750/Annex%20C%20-%20ELSA%20Programme.pdf> [Accessed :5th January 2019]

The national archives (2006) 'Legislation.gov.uk Education and Inspections Act 2006'
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/93> section 93 [Accessed: 1st January 2019].

Welsh Assembly Government (2010) *Children and Young People's Participation in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

Welsh Government (2012) *Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom: A handbook for classroom teachers in primary schools*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

Welsh Government Health and Safety Code of Practice. *First Aid Legislation* (2017)
<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/health-and-safety-code-of-practice.pdf> [Accessed 3rd January 2019].

Welsh Government (2013) *Safe and effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

Welsh Government (2016). *Significant improvement in children's oral health*. Welsh Assembly Government.

Welsh Government Initiative (2019). *Welcome – Designed to Smile*.

<http://www.designedtosmile.org/welcome-croeso/welcome>. [Accessed: 1st January 2019].

Welsh Government Healthy Schools. (2006) 'Food Hygiene Regulations'

<https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/news/food-hygiene/2017/08/food-legislation-requirements> [Accessed 2nd January 2019].

Welsh Government (2015). *Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.

White, A. (2009) 'From Comfort Zone to Performance Management'

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alasdair_White3/publication/228957278_From_Comfort_Zone_to_Performance_Management/links/5a099e45a6fdcc8b54771870/From-Comfort-Zone-to-Performance-Management.pdf [Accessed: 11th January 2019].