



AUTHENTICITY AND THE ROLE OF THE LEADER

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Table of Contents

Component 1: Critically Evaluate Five Different Leadership Theories and Relevance in the Workplace.	3
Introduction.....	3
Critical Analysis of Different Leadership Models.....	3
McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y	3
Theory X: The Conventional View.....	3
The other needs: Physiological, Safety, Ego and Social.....	4
The Carrot and Stick Approach	4
Theory Y	4
Authentic Leadership.....	5
Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership	6
Transformational and Transactional Leadership.....	9
Servant Leadership.....	10
Component 2: Reflection on Personal Leadership style and Development	11
References	18
Appendix 1	21
Appendix 2	22

Component 1: Critically Evaluate Five Different Leadership Theories and Relevance in the Workplace.

Introduction

Leadership is defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2019). Barrow (1977) defines leadership as *“the behavioural process of influencing individuals or groups towards set goals, and leadership effectiveness will be defined by how well these goals are achieved”*. An effective and efficient leadership is the backbone of an organisation success (Barrow, 1977). The main reason why leaders exist is not to lead but to serve first. To put it in simpler context a leader should operate on the assumption that *“I am the leader, therefore I serve”* rather than *“I am the leader therefore I lead”* (Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002). Over the past several decades, an abundance of research has been conducted on leadership styles, behaviours, theories, and effectiveness. In today’s challenging and complex climate, it is difficult to pinpoint which one type of leadership style would be appropriate.

The rest of this article aims to introduce various leadership theories that relates to being an Authentic leader. Below is the list of theories that are more conventional and emerging leadership philosophies.

- McGregor's Theory X Theory Y
- Transactional Analysis
- Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership
- Servant Leadership
- Transformational Leadership
- Authentic Leadership
- Ethical Leadership
- Social Leadership

Critical Analysis of Different Leadership Models

In this section, the author would critically evaluate five of leadership theories and relevance in the workplace.

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y was first published under the title “The Human Side of Enterprise” (McGregor, 1957). The theory underpins that *“the fundamental know-how to utilize physical science and technology for the material benefit of mankind, and that we must now learn how to utilize the social sciences to make our human organizations truly effective”* (McGregor, 1957). The theories hypothesizes that the employees would influence the selection of leadership method.

Theory X: The Conventional View

The conventional view of management's task to organizational requirements in harnessing human energy can be stated broadly in terms of three schemes.

1. In the interest of economic ends, management is responsible for organising money, equipment, materials and people, the elements of productive enterprise.
2. With respect to people, it is a process of directing their efforts, motivating them, modifying their behaviour, and controlling their action to fit the needs of the organisation.

3. Without an active intervention by management, people would be inactive and resistant to organisational needs. Therefore, people should be persuaded, controlled, rewarded, and punished and their activities must be directed. The management's task is to manage subordinate managers or workers.

The Theory X harness human energy to organisational requirements – micromanaging and relies on external control of human behaviour.

This style of management assumes that workers:

- ✓ Dislike their work.
- ✓ Avoid responsibility
- ✓ Need constant direction
- ✓ Must be controlled, forced, and threatened to deliver work.
- ✓ Need to be supervised at every step.
- ✓ Have no incentive to work or ambition, and therefore need to be enticed by rewards to achieve goals (McGregor, 1957; Foster, Hawking and Zhu, 2008)

The other needs: Physiological, Safety, Ego and Social

Humans are wanting animals, as soon as one is satisfied, another one appears in its place. It is organised in a series of levels – a hierarchical model. The physiological needs are at the lowest level but foremost importance when they are thwarted. When one's physiological needs are reasonably satisfied, the next higher-level need begin to dominate their behaviour. These are called safety needs, for protection against threat, danger, deprivation. Humans' behaviour is dominated and motivated by these. When the physiological and safety needs are satisfied, the social needs become an important motivator. This includes for belonging, for acceptance, for association, for giving and receiving love and friendship. When social and safety needs are thwarted, the humans behave in ways which tends to triumph over organisational objectives. Above all these needs is the ego needs. There are two kinds; needs that relate to one's self-esteem and needs that relate to one's reputation. Unlike the lower needs, the ego needs are rarely satisfied (McGregor, 1957).

The Carrot and Stick Approach

The motivation theory of Carrot and Stick approach works reasonably well under certain circumstances. It means satisfying one's physiological and safety needs (within limits) provided or withheld by the organisation. But the theory does not work when certain level is reached and primarily motivated by higher needs. The management cannot provide people with self-respect or respect of his/her colleagues but can create conditions such that he/she is encouraged and enabled to seek such satisfaction for him/herself.

Theory Y

Theory Y is based on adequate assumptions about human motivation and nature. Whilst Theory X places reliance upon external control of human behaviour, the theory Y relies on human self-direction and self-control. By nature, people are not passive or resistant to organisational needs, but they become one as a result of experience within an organisation. This theory see people are optimistic, positive, decentralises and participative in management style. The manager trusts their people and allow to take ownership. (McGregor, 1957; Foster, Hawking and Zhu, 2008)

This style of management assumes that workers are:

- ✓ Happy to work on their own initiative.
- ✓ More involved in decision making.
- ✓ Self-motivated to complete their tasks.
- ✓ Enjoy taking ownership of their work.
- ✓ Seek and accept responsibility, and need little direction.
- ✓ View work as fulfilling and challenging.
- ✓ Solve problems creatively and imaginatively.

Authentic Leadership

To build healthier work environments and empower leader-follower relationships an Authentic Leader is essential (Wong and Laschinger, 2013). The current pandemic and challenges have called for stronger leadership. An Authentic leadership is desirable and effective for advancement of human enterprise or organisations that achieves positive and enduring outcomes (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Authors (Leroy *et al.*, 2015) states “*An Authentic leadership occurs when individuals enact their true selves in their role as leader*”. An Authentic leader is being honest to themselves, being sincere with others, and behaving in a way that reflects their personal values. Previous research (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008) shows that the followers’ performance and organisational citizenship behaviour directly relates to Authentic leadership, with follower feeling empowerment and identification with the leader or organisation. Furthermore, the Authentic leadership relates to group or teamwork, their authenticity, performance, and behaviour through the system of trust and positive psychology (Leroy *et al.*, 2015).

The concept of authenticity has its Greek philosophy roots; “*To thine own self to be true*”. The Authentic leadership approach promotes positive psychological capabilities and ethical climate that foster greater self-awareness, transparency, boost moral perspective and self-development with subordinates. An Authentic leader is a confident, genuine, optimistic, trustworthy, ethical, develop future leaders, and true to him/herself (Rahimnia and Sharifirad, 2015). Authors (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008) proposed four distinct components: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalised moral perspective as construct for Authentic leaders. Self-awareness is demonstration of comprehensive nature of the self and understanding of one’s strengths and weaknesses. This includes gaining insight into the self through and being mindful on one’s impact on others. Relational transparency refers to presenting one’s authentic self to others. This behaviour promotes trust through disclosure of thoughts, feelings and openly sharing information. Balanced processing refers to leader who make decision by objectively analysing all relevant data. Such leaders seek views that challenge their deeply held positions. The internalised moral perspective refers to an integrated and internalised form of self-regulation. This is guided by internal moral, values, organisational and societal pressures. The decision making and behaviours are as a result of expression of these internalised values (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008).

Authentic leadership results in followers’ positive outcomes because the leader is able to foster positive psychological capacities of the follower. Specifically, they have the ability to remain trustworthy and hopeful, enhance followers’ hope by including positive aspects to pursue directions to enhance followers’ self-efficacy. The authentic leader qualities are strongly visible on the followers’ as they internalise their leader’s values and belief. Followers view authentic leader as being driven by high moral standards, honesty, fairness, and integrity. As a result, these values are simulated by the followers’ and reciprocated in their behaviours (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Authors (Rego *et al.*, 2012) studied

four dimensions of Authentic leadership: 1. Self-awareness – in which he/she is aware of strengths, weakness, how others see them, and how they impact others. 2. Balanced processing – in which the leader analytically analysis all relevant data before making a decision and seeks challenging views. 3. Internalised moral perspective – in which the leader's action are guided by their internal moral standards and value, sets high standard for ethical and moral conduct, and their decision making are influenced by those values. 4. Relational transparency – in which the leader presents authentic him/herself, openly shares information, expresses true feelings and thoughts, and by reinforcing openness to provide opportunities to the followers to come forward with their ideas, suggestions, and opinions (Rego *et al.*, 2012).

Authors (Leroy *et al.*, 2015) conducted research on effects of self-determination theory of human motivation on authentic leadership and followership. The 'followership' implies that the followers are not only passive leader's influence recipients but instead takes active part in leader-follower relationship. Self-determination theory has been applied successfully to predict human behaviour in different life domains such as education, health, sports, and work. The authors further add that because the Authentic leaders are open and honest, they are not forced to protect their fragile ego or status, they do not feel threatened and allow followers to maintain autonomy. This does not imply that the authentic leader hides inconvenient truths but provide followers with honest and supportive feedback. Authentic followship is described as a process where followers experience autonomous motivation. Follower who can enact their true self at work are likely to feel work-related activities as autonomously motivated. But it may also have negative impact on those who see their abilities so not align with the demand may attempt to change the situation or leave working for the organisation. However, Authentic follower are more likely to internalise those demands into their existing role as they posses an open and non-defensive attitude towards demands and challenges. In other words, Authentic follower do not feel the necessity to hide their fragile ego and are less likely to show frustration (Leroy *et al.*, 2015).

Authors (Alvesson and Einola, 2019) presented a critical review of flaws or warning against current fashion of excessive positivity. Authentic leadership "*represents a problematic mixture of different and possibly unrelated ideals*" The four dimensions of Authentic leadership presented earlier form something unique and distinctive but there is no reason to assume that they align together and form a concept or construct. Inconsistency is unavoidable between actions and beliefs, to express such consistency would require maintaining low or moderate level of transparency. At many workplaces, it may be wise to hold back strong personal views as more often organisations are place for ethical closure, that is, more or less in systematic denial. For some, being an authentic person may be an effective career-stopper in organisational settings. It can be problematic for authentic leaders to be true-self, open and honest as disclosing every single feeling and though could be risky and unrealistic. Although they focused mainly on Authentic leadership, their criticism was also applicable to most of conventional and emerging leadership theories (Alvesson and Einola, 2019).

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) developed the situational leadership approach based on Reddin's (1967) 3-Dimensional management style theory that posits the importance of a leader's relationship and task orientation in conjunction with effectiveness (Northouse, 2019; Vecchio, 1987). It has gained widespread acceptance and used in many

management trainings, particularly the Blanchard 1985 version (Irgens, 1995). The Situational leadership theory predicts that an ideal style of supervision can be recommended for given level of subordinate maturity. The specific form of this relationship between leader behaviour and subordinate attribute can be stated as follows; for subordinates who are in their early stages of employment, leaders should consider low level of relationship orientation coupled with higher task structuring; but as subordinates gain in maturity, the need for social-emotional supervisory support increases while the need for task structuring decreases and then subsequently diminish as subordinates achieve high-level maturity (Vecchio, 1987; Thompson and Glasø, 2015). The leadership style consists of both directive behaviours and supportive behaviours of a person who endeavours to influence others. As the name implies, directive behaviour helps the team to accomplish goals by giving direct directions, setting roles and timelines, establishing goals, showing how to achieve the goals, and methods of evaluation. Often it is one-way communication, leaders say what and how it is to be done and who is responsible for doing it. On the other hand, supportive behaviours help team members to feel comfortable about themselves, their colleagues, task, and the situation. It is a two-way communication that shows social and emotional support to others (Northouse, 2019). The leadership style is further classified in to four categories: *S1*, *S2*, *S3* and *S4* (Figure 1).

The first style **S1**, is a directing style; high directive – low supportive style. In this approach the leader focusses on achievement of goal, gives instructions on how and what is to be achieved the team and supervise them closely. Very limited time is spent for supportive behaviour. The second style **S2** is called Coaching approach; high directive-high supportive style. In this approach, the leader focusses on both achieving the goal and team members' socioemotional needs. In coaching style, the leader involves themselves with team members by giving encouragement and listening to their inputs. However, the leader makes the final decision on what and how the goal is to be achieved. The third style **S3**, is a supporting approach; high supportive – low directive style. The leader does not focus on goal but uses supportive behaviour such as listening, feedback, praising, and asking for input to bring out team members' skills and knowledge around the goal to be achieved. The team have control of day-to-day decisions, but the leader remains available to facilitate discussion and problem solving. The last style **S4**, is a delegating style; low supportive – low directive. In this approach the leader offers less input about the goal and social support, however the leader facilitates confidence and motivation in reference to the goal. The team takes full responsibilities for delivering the goal as the delegative leader's involvement in planning, setting, details, and control are minimum. (Northouse, 2019)(Irgens, 1995; Norris and Vecchio, 1992; Vecchio, 1987)

Since original version, the SLT has gone through several revisions with the most recently restated theory in (Blanchard, 2007) labelled as SLT II. Whilst the underlying dimensions used in SLT I to define follower maturity/readiness that is competence and commitment rests, they are no longer treated in additive fashion. Instead, follower dimensions are used to create a discrete topology of follower style. The most direct difference to SLT II from SLT I is in relabelling of the most desirable development end-state of follower. SLT II suggests that the delegation that indicates optimal leader style maybe combination of low directiveness and low supportiveness (Blanchard, 2007; Thompson and Glasø, 2015).

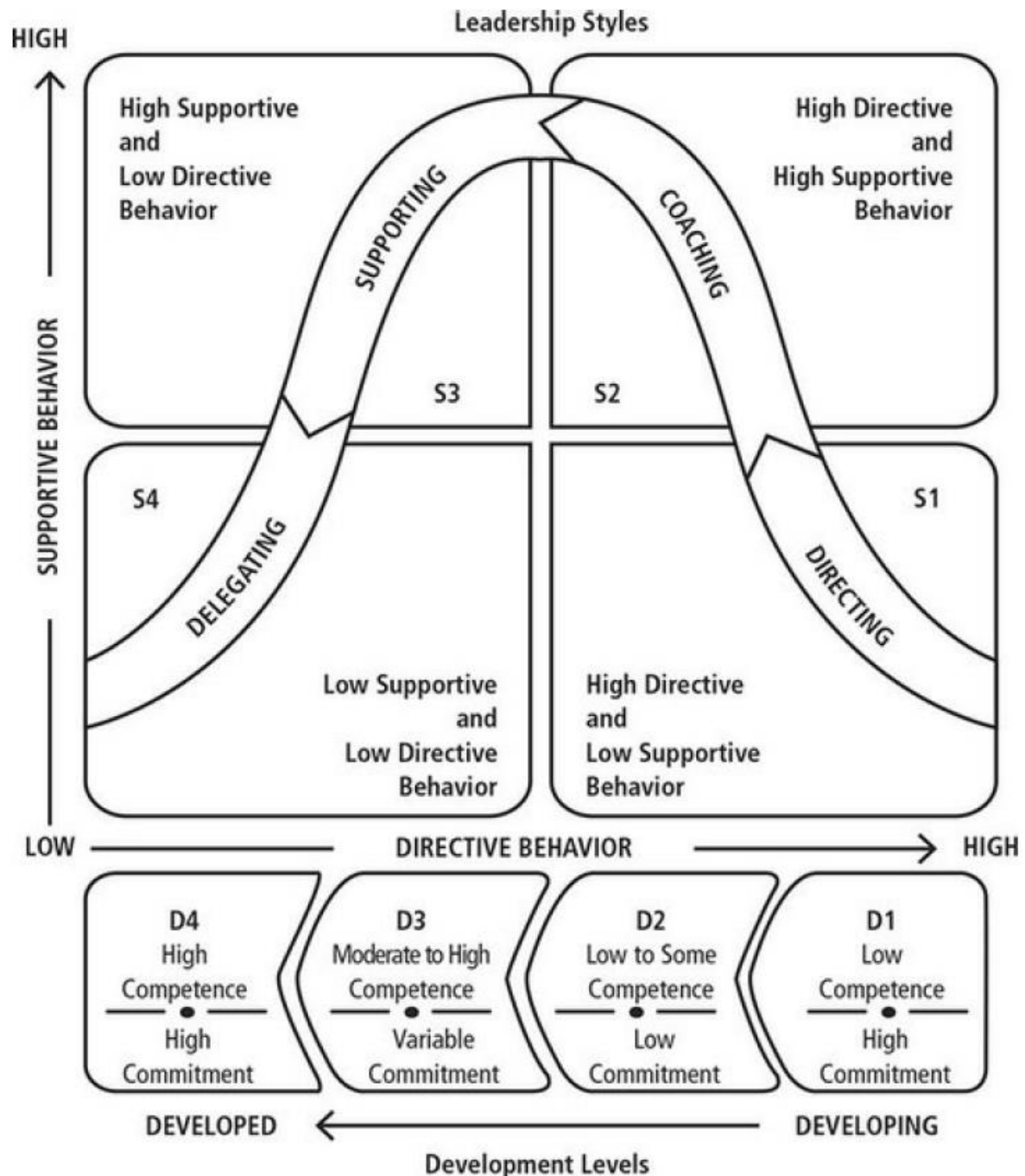


Figure 1 Situational Leadership II Model (Northouse, 2019)

Research conducted by (Thompson and Vecchio, 2009) studied three versions of Situational leadership: the original from 1972, revised 2007 and an alternative theory. The alternate statement of SLT states that the followers' response will be different to "autonomy afforded by the leader" in combination with "follower development level". The leader's autonomy can be measured directly from follower's description of how their leader behaves towards them on the relevant behavioural dimension. The research tested three hypotheses (see publication for full details), but the findings of the study did not provide clear support for SLT. The authors argue that it is difficult to endorse Situational leadership training model without compelling evidence, but it may offer

framework for discussing interpersonal relations. At best, the original theory provides some evidence for dealing with new employees who would benefit from greater directiveness and substituting direction with support as the employee's maturity increases (Thompson and Vecchio, 2009). The Situational leadership model is a useful tool to measure task and relationship behaviour of the leader and the readiness level of the followers. The leader should be ready to select a best way that suits situation and readiness of followers (Raza, Sikandar and Scholar, 2018).

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Since 1980s the Transformational leadership approach has been one of the most popular approaches that gives more attention to charismatic and affective elements of leadership (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leadership was introduced James Burns (1978) in his research on political leaders. It is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social system. Burns states as it is a process in which *“leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation”*. Transformational leadership is an ideal method to bring positive changes among followers with an end goal of developing them into leaders. Authors Bass and Riggio (2006) suggested that popularity of transformational leadership in today's work groups might be due to its prominence on underlying motivation and follower development, who want to be inspired and empowered to succeed at times of uncertainties. A Transactional leadership is different from Transformational leadership as it does not focus on their personal development or individualise the needs of followers. A Transformational leader offer “a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on higher order intrinsic needs” whereas a Transactional leader “focus on the proper exchange of resources” (Judge and Piccolo, 2004) The core function of both leadership style is to encourage individuals to simulate their innovative and proactive abilities and to take risks. Both styles found to be complementing each other to achieve desired goals and outcomes (Afsar *et al.*, 2017) Over the years, the theory has undergone so many revisions and in the most recent version, there are four dimensions of Transformational leadership, three dimensions of Transactional leadership and a non-leadership dimension (Bono and Judge, 2004; Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Northouse, 2019). These are

Idealised influence – in which a leader who behave in admirable ways, have high standards of ethics and moral conduct.

Inspirational motivation – in which a leader who articulates a strong vision based on future that is inspiring and appealing to the followers. Idealised influence and Inspirational motivation correlate highly with each other and sometimes combined to form charisma (Bono and Judge, 2004).

Intellectual stimulation – in which a leader who challenges organisational norms, takes risks, solicit followers' ideas, and encourage them to develop innovative strategies.

Individualised consideration – in which a leader recognises each followers growth and needs, act as a coach or mentor, and consult with them.

Contingent reward – in which a leader focus on exchange of resources or set up constructive transactions with the followers. The leader clarifies expectations, offer tangible or intangible support and reward for meeting those expectations.

Management by exception-active – in which a leader monitor follower behaviour and performance and take corrective action as required before it creates serious problems.

Management by exception-passive – in which a leader intervenes only when the problem become serious.

Laissez-faire – a final form of leadership in which leadership is absence or the avoidance of responsibilities (Bono and Judge, 2004; Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

The research conducted by (Afsar *et al.*, 2017) looked at psychological empowerment as a moderating parameter to determine the impact of transformational leadership on employees' behaviours such as job satisfaction, motivation, organisational commitment, and workplace aggression. For transformational leaders to act on inspiration, a high level of psychological empowerment is essential. Employees tend to more produce more creative actions to enhance their job performance when they feel that they are in control of decision making, able to influence others, freedom, flexibility and see more meaning of the work. The authors found that relationships of transformational and transactional leaderships are moderated by psychological empowerment by utilising creativity and innovative work behaviours. The trail and error method are key to the success and failure of searching, exploring new opportunities and proposing creative problem-solving tasks. Employee may generate higher level of entrepreneurial behaviour that meets organisation's expectation when they do not fear about bureaucratic rules and regulations (Afsar *et al.*, 2017).

Servant Leadership

The idea behind Servant leadership is ancient but it was Robert K Greenleaf (Greenleaf, 1970) who first articulated the notion of our time in 1977. A Servant leader is a servant first with a natural feeling to serve and conscious feeling brings one to aspire to lead. They put other's needs, aspirations, and interest above their own (Greenleaf, 1970; Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002). Servant leadership focusses on personal integrity and social responsibilities that are rarely seen in more traditional leadership methods (Lee *et al.*, 2020). This leadership requires that managers to involve their subordinates in decision making, demonstrate ethical and caring behaviour, to encourage teamworking, and enhance personal growth of the employees. The servant leader are seen primarily as stewards of their employees, however, they work in much wider context to serve the community and by inspiring others to work as a team towards common goal (Qiu and Dooley, 2019). Based on Greenleaf's work, Larry C Spears (1995) articulated ten characteristics of a servant leader such as "*listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community*". Further research by (Russell and Gregory Stone, 2002) on servant leadership identified twenty distinguishable attributes, categorised into functional and accompanying attributes. Servant leadership that runs counter to common sense that do not coincide with traditional beliefs of leaders influence and servants follow. How can a person be both leader and servant? Although Servant leadership seems contradictory to traditional methods it offers a unique perspective (Northouse, 2019).

The Functional attributes are the operative qualities, distinctive features and characteristics of a leader and observed through their behaviour in workplace. Each functional attribute is distinct but still interrelated to one another. The accompanying attributes are supplement and strengthen the functional attributes. They may appear secondary in nature but complementary in nature and in some cases prerequisites to be an effective servant leader (Russell and Gregory Stone, 2002). Authors (Ling, Liu and Wu, 2017) conducted research on comparing Servant and Authentic leadership. They tested seven hypotheses on Servant leadership having more positive effect on employee than Authentic leadership (for full details see publication). The results show that both

leadership styles are similar but distinctive in concepts. Both scored a positive psychology in moral character and authenticity and correlate to have an overall positive effect on group trust and employee work trust. However, both styles can be distinguished through the scale and directions of their effects on employees. The servant leader's distinctiveness in the regards of self-concept and motivation through leadership motivation not only influences employees through typical traits on Authentic leadership but also through philosophies and behaviours to serve, strengthen leader-follower relationship, and motivate followers to dedicate themselves to their work and organisational settings. The authors conclude that the Servant leadership had strong and direct impact on group trust and employee work attitudes than Authentic leadership (Ling, Liu and Wu, 2017).

Component 2: Reflection on Personal Leadership style and Development

In this section, I will reflect on my journey as a leader and as member of a team to explore and apply various leadership theories to gain understanding of my strengths, weakness, and areas to develop. At end of this critical reflection, I shall be able to identify personal developmental needs and how to meet those.

The Future Leaders programme (FLP) has helped me to gain invaluable knowledge and understanding of leadership style. Throughout the academic career, I strive to learn and develop new skills. As a technical minded person, I always saw leadership and management skills as out of my comfort zone. I always wondered what made me to choose a management role. Perhaps it was my 'can do attitude' and not afraid of new challenges gave me the confidence to focus on my new role. Truth to be told, there were many nervous moments at the start, many questions and very few answers. However, it all changed when I had unconditional backing of my line manager, from past and present to put their trust and support. Joining the FLP was added bonus to boost the skills, knowledge and experience. It has given me ample opportunities to develop much needed leadership skills and be prepared.

As outlined in McGregor's *The Human side of Enterprise* (McGregor, 1957), perhaps I was driven by the needs for self-fulfilment. These needs are for achieving one's own potentials and for continued self-development. Another interesting theory only recently came to know of is Maslow's Theory of Motivation (Maslow, 1943). Although it was written during World War II it perfectly fits with any age and time. Maslow identified five needs from bottom up: Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and Love, Esteem and Self-actualisation (Figure 2). The physiological and safety are basic needs, belongingness and love and esteem are psychological needs and finally the self-actualisation is self-fulfilment needs. When a deficit need is met to one's satisfaction it will go away and work towards meeting next set of needs yet to satisfy (McLeod, 2018). The desire to reach self-actualisation within me motivates to continue to grow to reach the highest level.

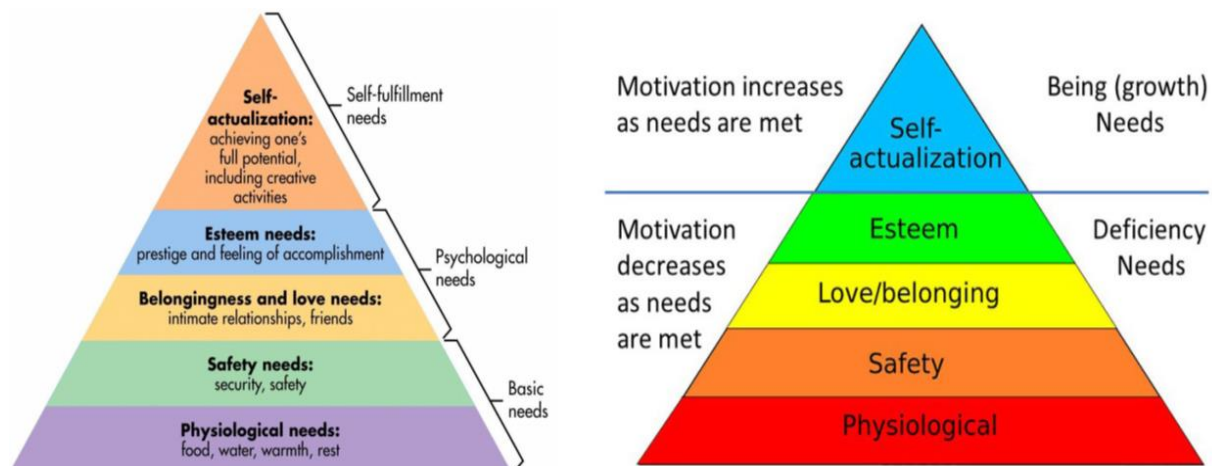


Figure 2: Maslow's Theory of Motivation (Source: McLeod, 2018)

The past 18 months have been the most challenging period but has provided many opportunities to try and do things differently. A self-reflection enables me to connect past, present and future. The focus relies on enhancing self-awareness and self-understanding. It started with The Insight® Discovery personal profile (Insight, 2020) that was created based on my response to the Insights Preference Evaluator. The system is built around Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung's model of personality. The Insight Discovery profile is created by using Jung's typology offer a framework for development, improve communication, decision-making, self-understanding, and performance.

The Insights Discovery Wheel (Figure 3) is a psychometric tool that uses four colours to highlight key personalities. The four colour energies (Figure 3a): Fiery Red, Sunshine Yellow, Earth Green and Cool Blue represent certain personality and behaviours associated with them. The four colour energies form mix of eight personalities as shown in the Figure 3b. The profile is unique and generated from hundred thousand permutations of statements. It provides in depth insight into one's strengths and weakness, value to the team, how effective in communication, management style, time and life management, and learning style. In addition, the profile identifies exactly where one sits within each of the 72 segments on the wheel.

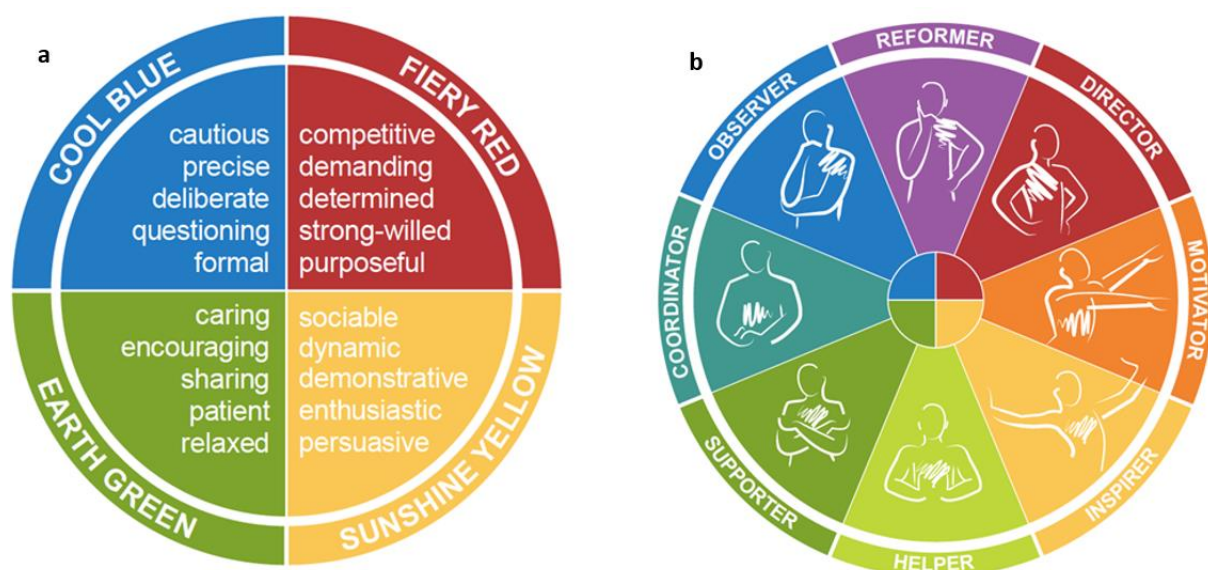


Figure 3: Insights Discovery Wheel (Source: <https://www.wearebowline.com/blog/8-personality-types-a-deeper-dive-into-insights-discovery/>)

The profile identified me as a 'Coordinator' with strong key skills in planning, organising and time management. Strengths include being a keen observer, resilient, resourceful, paying attention to details, good power of concentration, Responsible, methodical and works well with figures and procedures, and Strong and consistent principles. As an objective thinker, I would like to prepare myself for any eventuality. As there are two sides to the coin, have to accept weakness as a by-product of overused strengths. The profile identified number of possible weakness or areas to develop such as over analysing, reluctant to risk new ideas, over dependence on rules and regulations, sensitive to criticism, and lack of confidence on own judgement.

As a structured and organised person, factual accuracy and hands-on approach prefers to be working model of my role. Although I believe that my leadership is at infancy and follow mixture of conventional and contemporary style, transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) style matches more predominantly especially when it comes to decision making. I focus on improving the performance of my team and developing to their fullest potential by gathering information and seeing what solutions are put forward. The trust, commitment, and relationship established with my team excels at maintaining the support to each other and achieving desired outcomes.

The value to team section of the Insight profile revealed the strongest personality. There are some high quality attributes that I bring with team working such as help the team to work more effectively; will not be easily distracted by emotional events; Undertakes routine tasks which others may wish to avoid; Helps foster high quality outputs; Encourages down to earth realism; Likes designing workable systems and enjoys problem solving; Helps avoid mistakes; Encourages a calm environment; Will encourage the team to think through all the possibilities that are aligned with qualities of Transformational leadership. However, I see there is a gap in bring next set of leaders through motivation and being a role model. I would like to focus on developing skills to develop next set of leaders from my team.

In today's HEI, change, resilient and adaptability are essential for development and sustainability. But it does create insecurity and trust issues among staff. Effective communication between managers and staff is one of the major issues. As a mid-level manager my job was to ensure the information follows between senior leaders and staff. In simpler context act as a bridge to close the gap.

The past eighteen months have thrown number of challenges both in personal and professional life. It is essential that I have a healthy balance between personal and professional life. As a leader, I was able to quickly identify staff who were in need of support and motivation to work towards common goal, that was supporting students and successfully completing the academic year. This called for me to follow Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership style at times. Through reflection and feedback, I was able to set realistic goals. Sometimes even took conservative approach to achieving goals that usually not my strongest link.

The past three to four years has been challenging times at University, first with restructuring of academic setting followed by Covid-19 pandemic. Change has been a constant factor during this period. Even though there weren't any staff cutbacks or financial implications, it has resulted in decrease in staff morale and job satisfaction, increase in work-related stress and mental health issues. Change Management, many perceive it as a negative process by organisations or the leaders. The support and acceptance from staff on those changes are critically to the success of any planned organisational changes. Many leaders see change process as a challenging task as it

leads to uncertainties, fear of failure, loss of control and sense in the eyes of stakeholders and individuals' reactions to coping with the change (Herold, Fedor and Caldwell, 2007).

Communication is essential in terms of getting staff on board with changes. To be effective it must be clear, received and understood by staff. For efficient and effective communication, I have developed strategies that works best with my staff. This includes regular and open discussions, factual information, clear differentiation of action and information only, precise, and detailed, allowing sufficient time to prepare and avoid generalities.

Action Learning by simple definition – learn by doing. In many organisation, Action Learning has become a most widely used approach in developing leaders. There are many reasons to it; rapidly changing work environment, leadership development to produce substantial outcomes, and recognises people are motivated to learn more when it is relevant to their lives (O'Neil and Marsick, 2007). Action Learning session delivered by Emma Falkner (Falkner, 2021) enabled me to implement the theoretical aspects of AL in practice and reflect on the outcomes. AL emphasis on reflection, listening and asking no directive question to followers. An approach that helps people develop problem solving skills and learn from their action. The key principles of AL are confidentiality, equity, fundamental techniques, facilitator can interrupt, speaking from “I”, action and learning. The toolkit (Toolkit, 2013) provides the mechanism for developing effective leadership skills, simple and quick way to problem solving and less time spent on meetings. It is a continuous learning and reflection process, supported by everyone in the team to get things done, and learning from each other by working on real problems.

The Action Learning experience and my strong preference of hands-on approach usually yields best results. At the same, I understand the importance of groundwork that need to be done before implementing step-by-step practical work. A systematic, organised, and analytical approach (Balanced processing dimension of Authentic leadership (Rego *et al.*, 2012)) forms a strong foundation of planning stages which then leads to actual implementation. I also note the weakness in me to exhibit impatience with someone who is disorganised or inconsistent. It is important that I understand individuals learning and application style and support them unconditionally. Further reading on Transactional leadership style would help to gain deeper understanding and knowledge as a leader. This would foster a strong relationship and trust between I, as a leader and staff to work towards achieving common goals.

Perceptions of ourselves may be different to the perceptions of how others see us. What we project as who we are to the outside world through our “persona” are not always aware of the effect our less conscious behaviours have on others. These less conscious behaviours are termed “Blind Spots”. According to Insight profile, the less conscious wheel position put me as ‘supporting coordinator’ (Insight Profile, 2020). The analysis has provided insight into areas for development that are usually out of sight. A more flexible and open-minded attempts will help prevent from becoming too rigid. To become more effective with other people by directing keen power of observation towards being more sensible and considerate. The way I see the world is in terms of black and white, hands-on, reality, in which I can develop a series of procedures and regulations that will take care of the situation in hand. It is important to work towards becoming more articulated and action-oriented leader and to shred the tendency not to look beyond the moment.

At Institute Management Team I play dual roles as a leader and a follower. It is where a teacher become a student, a great place to learn from other experienced leaders within

the group. The main objectives of the IMT are to develop, implement and monitor strategic priorities for the institute. As a new leader this was an ideal setting for me to develop an understanding, in depth knowledge and seek support and advice. Before becoming an Academic Director, I had some experience in management but mostly leading projects and programme. Leading projects and programme follow different structure to leading an academic discipline. Projects and programme within academic setting are set with fixed outcomes from start and usually delivered by a individuals or small team within fixed timeframe. It is where I started developing key skills to be a leader. Developing essential skills are continuous learning process. It is mixture of theoretical and experiential learning that best suits to achieve my goal and objectives. At IMT, I am able to observe my peers and line managers and openly seek validation. At times, the opportunity to be a follower provides me with chance to reflect and learn.

One of the main elements of Leadership is coaching and mentoring. According to Hersey and Blanchard (1982), coaching means a way of leading and persuading followers to adopt a manager's solution to the situation. In the Higher Education setting coaching and mentoring is an essential part of for many academics' role. Literature defines "Mentor" as a wise and trusted advisor where as "Coach" is helping a person to use their skills and knowledge to reach higher level (Parsloe and Leedham, 2009).

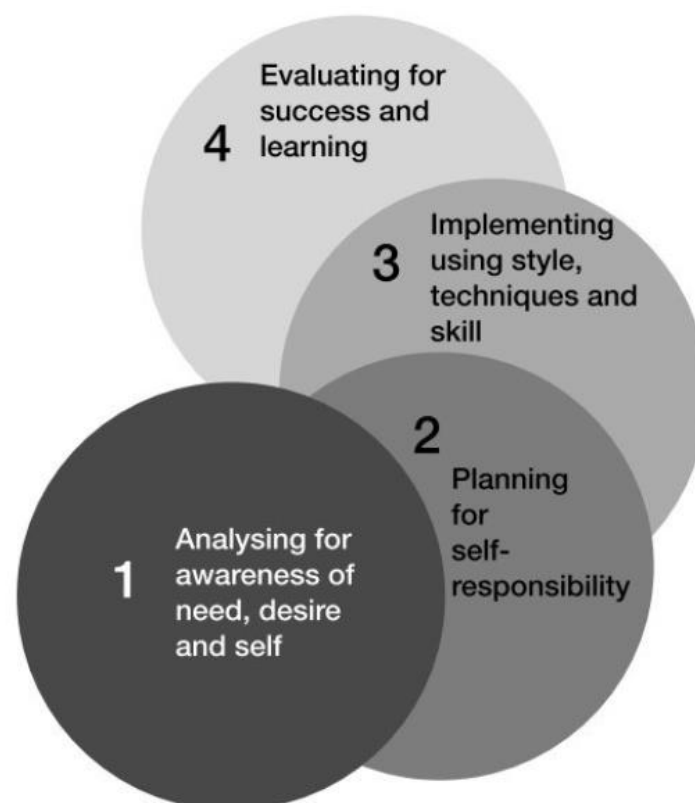


Figure 4: Four stages of the generic coach-mentoring process (Parsloe and Leedham, 2009)

I found the Parsloe and Leedham's model (Figure 4) useful to identify the requirement from the person I meant to coach/mentor. It is not a simple process but a constant motion and overlap of stages. As a hands-on person I need listen to learner's reply not to gather accurate information but to sight any hesitation or confidence and confirm he/she has

understood the message clearly. If a situation requires for example a hands-off approach, I switch to questioning methods (Action Learning skill is helpful) to understand response and identify next appropriate step. The theory has been put into practice at few instances during the last year with new members of staff joining Applied Computing team. As a result of restructuring, few staff moved across to Computing from other disciplines within the Institute and few were newly joined UWSTD staff. So, it wasn't one size fits all approach. After having my regular one-to-one meeting with new relocated staff, I was able to identify their anxiety, nervousness, working under new leader who they had no prior interaction, and support requirements (Situational Leadership style). These staff primarily required mentoring and psychological support. Using different platforms and techniques, (mostly from Transactional leadership theory) quite swiftly I was able to establish friendship, trust and relationship. Very soon these staff were at ease 'feel like home' and enjoying working under line management. One of the new members of staff is new to the UK and do not have experience of working within UK HEI setting. This member staff required both coaching and mentoring to fulfil his new role. As this member of staff has same technical (cybersecurity) background and expertise as I, he looks at me for information, guidance, and support or in other words sees me a 'role model' (Authentic leadership). As mentioned previously, it is a constant motion of process having weekly meeting I was able to tailor my support as to when and what is required. In my role and in FLP, I can take the opportunity to be a mentee. It is a great learning experience and to have open discussion with senior leaders is second to none opportunity. Although there are so much of resources available to build and develop leadership skills and knowledge shadowing established leaders and learning from action are best suited for my style of learning.

I should also mention the opportunities created by FLP to learn from peers. The learners' within FLP come from wide range of discipline that provide unique opportunity to brainstorm ideas, share experience, be creative and innovative, team working, and more importantly support each other. I am able to see much wider context of my role within the University and how academic discipline and professional units work together towards one common goal. The opportunities to learn from the VC and other senior leaders by closely following and seeing different leadership styles in practice has given me new perspective and much need confidence.

One of the common tools used to understand one's personal development needs is SWOT analysis. SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis is known for its simplicity helps to gain better insight into achievements and helps to identify future developmental areas. Strengths and weakness are controllable (internal) factors whereas opportunities and threats are uncontrollable (external) factors (Phadermrod, Crowder and Wills, 2019). The SWOT analysis presented in Appendix 1 illustrates the internal and external factors that influences own personal development within the organisation.

Another tool that is most commonly used to develop effective, measurable objectives and goals is SMART; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time related. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education define personal development plan as

"PDP supports the idea that learning is a lifelong and life-wide activity. The process of PDP can strengthen the capacity of learners to reflect upon their own learning and achievement and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development."

This is a core learning process, required throughout the education system and in many employment and continuing professional development contexts."

Personal development planning: guidance for institutional policy and practice in higher education. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), February 2009.

The personal development plan presented in Appendix 2 are formed by focusing on areas of development identified from this self-reflection and SWOT analysis. By applying SMART I was able to create a personal development plan that provides clarity, balance, and manageable. As the ongoing pandemic continue to have an impact on the way we work and live, continuous professional development is going to essential to enhance, reinforce, and develop new skills for the new way of living.

Final remarks: To me, the leadership is having a vision, plan and someone who can understand the team dynamics and take them forward towards a common goal. I do not believe in carrying out all the task by myself. A true leader brings innovation and creativity together to motivate others that results in developing more leaders in that process. By creating opportunities for other to take lead, whether it is small or big, builds trustworthiness, improved communication, taking responsibilities and delegation among the team. This process allows me to learn and understand the strengths and weakness of individuals and to support them as necessary. The success of the leadership is measured by the results achieved as a team than attributes of the leader. An effective leader sets the standards, devise constructive solutions and motivate talented people to work together. It gives me privilege to lead from the front, but it is not about me!

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Appendix 1

SWOT Analysis

Target: Development of Leadership Skills

<u>Internal</u>	<u>Strengths</u> Keen observer. His word is his bond. Resilient and resourceful. Sets high standards for himself and others. Fostering and helping other to avoid mistakes Sets high personal standards of performance. Good powers of concentration. Responsible, methodical and works well with figures and procedures. Attention to detail. Strong and consistent principles. Clam under pressure situations	<u>Weaknesses</u> Over analysis before acting Reluctant to risk new ideas. Over-dependence on rules and procedures. A lack of confidence in his own judgement, although that judgement is often correct. Modesty or reticence may prevent timely interventions. Sensitive to criticism. Lack of objectivity, particularly where rapid change is concerned.
<u>External</u>	<u>Opportunities</u> New learning and development opportunities Career progression opportunities Working with Senior Leaders Exposure to senior management structure	<u>Threats</u> Rapidly changing HE sector Unknown skills and training needs Over committing or not saying 'No' Relationships with new staff Maintaining good personal and professional life balance

Appendix 2

Personal Development Plan

Development Area/Objective	Method for Achieving Objective/ Activity	Resources Required	Measure of Success	Review Method & Review Date
Leadership and staff Development	Future Leaders Programme	Time allocation	Completion of the programme	Sep 2021 and Jan 2022
	Undertaking self-study	Time allocation and literature resources	Increased awareness and knowledge in the field	Continuous process
Management training	Shadowing opportunities	Senior leaders support	Contribution to higher level policies, strategies, regulations	Regular meeting with line manager Appraisal
Emotional aspects: Self-Awareness Empathy Wellbeing Handling stress and pressure situations	Reading and attending related training programme Time for physical/mental exercise Not to be demanding on self and others	Time and access to relevant training	Completion of training Development in depth of knowledge	Regular review with line manager
Delegation	Trusting team member Being flexible	Knowledge building and time	Task completion	Communication Regular meeting and/or progress update
Team building and engagement	Team away day (at least once a semester)	Institute/university management support Staff time Budget Innovative ideas	Staff' takeaway from the away day. Gathering reflection and feedback	Feedback and devising an action plan.
Personal skills: Resiliency	Knowledge development by research and practice	Time: regular short time windows to reflect	Applying theory into practice	End of day, week and monthly
Life-long learner	Application of theory		Review of action plan	Self-assessment
motivation	Reflection and action plan			