



THE MANCHESTER ARENA ATTACK

Leadership Theories in Action BMPL6004

Chelsea Pelosi (2015581)
[Email address]

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Effective leaders are essential, especially within front line jobs such as police officers. Leaders need to be able to lead effectively, especially under pressure and during an emergency crisis. Effective leaders need to be able to communicate effectively and make decisions whilst being under pressure. The Manchester Arena Attack had involved several front-line sectors, such as police, paramedics and transport, meaning communication was key. By analysing the leadership styles used, it can give an insight to what worked and what went wrong during the Manchester Arena Attack in order for sectors to improve and to not make the same mistakes, restoring trust within the community.

On 22nd May 2017 at 22:30pm, the catastrophic event of The Manchester Arena attack had taken place during an Ariana Grande Concert, where 14,000 people had attended. The attack was planned by Salem Abedi and his younger brother Hashem Abedi where they intended to hurt as many people as possible. The attack took place when suicide bomber, Salam Abedi entered the City Room of Manchester Arena, detonating the Improvised Explosive Device (IED), with the purpose of killing himself in the process (Saunders, 2017). The event had a significant impact on the community with the death of 22 people including children and leaving community to deal with emotional and psychological trauma, including significant injuries (Greater Manchester Police, 2022).

In order for the attack to be controlled and maintained it was vital that all sectors worked together, communicating effectively, demonstrating effective leadership styles. In order for emergency services to be prepared for an emergency crisis the procedure of communication, cooperation and effective communication would need to be carried out, demonstrating Multi-Agency Emergency Management. This is set out and highlighted under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 for Category 1 and Category 2 Responders (Deeming, 2018). The JESIP framework has been put into place for organisations to collaborate during incidents by the application of five key concepts such as Co Location, Communication, Coordination, Joint Understanding of Risk and shared Situational Awareness (JESIP, 2023). According to (Saunders, 2022), 2 minutes after the bomb was detonated by Salem Abedi, The British Transport Police (BTP) had made their way to the venue after hearing the bomb and entered the City Room where the bomb had gone off, by doing so, the officers of The BTP had demonstrated to be Emergent Leaders. Emergent leaders usually take the lead without being appointed to lead. They are able to undertake a leader role by offering clarity and guidance amidst uncertain circumstances, whilst interpreting. By fostering shared emotions and collective action within the group, they enhance group unity (Pescosolido, 2002). The officers of BTP had undertaken the role of an Emergent leader, by taking an independent initiative approach to enter the City Room, where it was unsafe, for them to have a better understanding of what had happened, whilst assisting and helping the public, showing bravery and emotional understanding.

According to (Carriker, 1990) a person who demonstrates the Emergent leadership style would have diminished authority or reduced command and present skills such as being empathetic, working well in a team whilst having diverse viewpoints and prioritising doing the right thing by making effective decisions. An Emergent Leader may undergo a Morphogenetic transition, where change is evolutionary and spontaneous. Diverse elements interact with each other and the environment they are in, leading to the emergence of new, unforeseen outcomes (Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979).

Although the Emergent leadership style demonstrates an effective approach to unanticipated occurrences, by demonstrating empathy and adapting to a role of a leader, during a critical period whilst being under pressure, on the contrary the emergent leadership style also presents negative elements. Using an Emergent Leadership style may involve a diversion from the organization's overarching strategic objectives and a neglect to thoroughly assess all pertinent options before decision-making (Plowman & Duchon, 2007). BTP had adapted and responded immediately in a high-pressure situation, there is room for scrutiny regarding the assessment of the scenario. The decision to enter the City Room 2 minutes after the bomb detonation may be seen as impulsive, due to not fully assessing the situation and if there was still a risk. The Kerslake Report (Deeming, 2018) emphasized a victim's observation, noting the immediate response and apparent clarity in their strategy. Although BTP may not have thoroughly considered alternative options before entering the room, it is evident that they had a well-defined strategy.

The Autocratic Leadership style developed by Kurt Lewin is characterized by a hierarchal structure, where leaders occupy the top positions and employees are positioned at the bottom. This style of leadership can be seen as a one-way communication between managers and employees. It signifies that employees wield minimal authority or influence in the decision-making process (Jihyeon, et al., 2023). Inspector Sexton, serving as the Force Duty Officer (FDO) on the night of the attack, had to assume initial command until other commanders took charge. At 22:47 Inspector Sexton had declared Operation PLATO, a response for a no-notice Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) (Saunders, 2022) which meant he was held accountable for authorizing firearms and implementing tactics. One hour following the incident, 106 authorized Firearms Officers were dispatched to offer immediate assistance in response to the attack, due to the position and authorisation of Inspector Sexton. Inspector Sexton had failed to inform Greater Manchester Fire Rescue Service (GMFRS) and the Northwest Ambulance Service (Nwas) (Deeming, 2018). Inspector Sexton soon found himself overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks he had to handle, which resulted in poor performance of the emergency response. One of the crucial elements within the Joint Doctrine is the M/ETHANE Method, a prevalent approach for transmitting incident information among services (JESIP, 2021). Inspector Sexton had undertaken the role of an Autocratic leader by being in control and taking on the responsibility of multiple roles and having the authority to command employees in departments such as Firearms Unit.

Inspector Sexton failed to communicate with Emergency services by disclosing a Major Incident which remained uncorrected until 01:00am the next morning (Saunders, 2022). It can be seen that the Autocratic leadership style that Inspector Sexton undertook in his role failed to some extent. Being an Autocratic Leader, he had the responsibility to maintain and manage multitude tasks whilst making decisions under pressure with no assistance or input

from employees. (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018) states that poor communication with employees may result in a failure to understand the potential presence of opportunities whilst also failing to derive an accurate assessment and understanding of risks. It is evident that there was little communication between Inspector Sexton and officers on scene which resulted in poor communication between emergency responders declaring a Major Incident.

During an emergency crisis like The Manchester Arena Attack, all responder sectors manage their actions and activities within a Multi-Agency Coordination Structure, following The Joint Doctrine in place. The Joint Doctrine offers responders at all levels guidance and principles for actions to be taken when dealing with multi-agency incidents of any magnitude. At 04:15am GMP force Headquarters held a strategic meeting involving multiple agencies, decided by the GMP Gold commander, ACC Ford (JESIP, 2021). Deeming (2018) states that during emergencies demanding a multi-agency collaboration and response, responders in this case, GMP, BTP, NWS and GMFRS would need to collaborate to combine their management resources, prioritising activities and organized utilization of assets in place. The role of ACC Ford adapted to on behalf of GMP demonstrates Transformational Leadership style.

Transformational Leadership was first recognized by James Macgregor Burns, who articulated that this particular leadership style induced change in employees, enhancing them into leaders by employing various methods to increase group morale, incentive and performance. Transformational leadership relies on characteristics and the capacity to effect change through leading by example, expressing an inspiring vision and setting ambitious goals. Transformational Leadership comprises four key elements, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration and Inspirational Motivation (Deng, et al., 2023).

As explained by Yin-Lin et al., (2019) idealized influence in Transformational leadership entails leaders acting as role models, inspiring followers through their admirable qualities. This fosters trust, admiration and respect among team members. Leaders with idealized influence uphold high moral and ethical standards, showcasing a dedication to values that align with their followers. The leadership style encourages leading by example, with followers inclined to replicate the leader's behaviour due to belief in their integrity and authenticity. Overall, idealized influence plays a pivotal role in establishing a robust connection between the leader and followers, nurturing a positive and trusting dynamic within the team and organisation.

ACC Ford demonstrated the key element of idealized influence within the control room by demonstrating the behaviours and values expected of the team whilst gaining trust and respect among the control room. However, it can be argued that ACC Ford lacked in Transparency and reliability as a transformational leader by failing to hold a multi-agency control room talk on the night without it occurring until 4:15am the following morning. This multi-agency strategic meeting would have allowed effective communication between other agencies, providing a more effective emergency response.

As a gold commander, ACC Ford also demonstrated Inspirational Motivation as a Transformational leader. Orabi (2016) defined that in Transformational Leadership, Inspirational Motivation involves a leader's skill in inspiring and energizing followers. This is achieved by crafting a compelling vision and cultivating a positive and enthusiastic environment. ACC Ford demonstrated Inspirational Motivation by displaying inspirational

motivation by being in Gold Command, aiming to motivate a vision to control the situation at the Manchester Arena, which was challenging, yet achievable. This aspect of transformational leadership seeks to spark a unified commitment and dedication within the team, fostering a spirit of togetherness and enthusiasm for a shared purpose (Orabi, 2016).

Individualized Consideration was also displayed by ACC Ford as a transformational leader on the night of the Manchester Arena Attack. (Yi-Lin, et al., 2019) stated that Individualized Consideration entails leaders paying attention to and catering to the distinct needs, aspirations and strengths of each team member. Leaders embracing individualized consideration adopt a customized leadership approach, tailoring guidance and support based on the unique characteristics and development objectives of each individual. This may include providing mentorship, creating avenues for professional advancement and attentively addressing individual concerns. The goal is to recognise and appreciate the specific qualities of each follower, fostering a nurturing and empowering atmosphere that promotes both personal and professional development within the team.

During the Manchester Arena Attack the inspector on scene had enacted Transformational Leadership by demonstrating Individualized Consideration. The inspector emphasized coordinating activities within the arena, overseeing the collaboration between GMP and NWAS paramedics to deliver first aid and aid in the evacuation process (Deeming, 2018). The Inspector offered individualized help and assistance to victims and their families, acknowledging the distinct needs and challenges during the attack. The Inspector displayed coordination with stakeholders by using the foyer as a meeting point where he would communicate with other emergency responders such as Ambulance and BTP to discuss actions and progress (Deeming, 2018). By holding a meeting point in the foyer, the Inspector showed collaboration with other agencies to address the specific concerns and requirements of individuals affected by the incident. Employing Individualized Consideration within the role of a police officer can build trust and encourages a more efficient and empathetic response, ultimately creating a positive and supportive atmosphere.

The last element within the Transformational Leadership style would be Intellectual Stimulation Yin-Lin (2019) highlights that Intellectual Stimulation entails leaders motivating and urging followers to engage in creative thinking, challenge assumptions and seek innovative solutions. Leaders prioritising intellectual stimulation aim to foster curiosity, critical thinking and ongoing learning with the team. This aspect of transformational leadership strives to cultivate a culture of innovation and adaptability, empowering individuals to contribute fresh ideas and diverse perspectives. GMP on scene had undertaken the element of Intellectual Stimulation in the process of being a Transformational Leader by encouraging control room operators and on-site personnel to think critically and adaptively in response to the evolving situation, fostering a dynamic approach to problem solving.

In summary, GMP undertook and demonstrated a number of leadership styles during the Manchester Arena Attack. It is clear that the British Transport Police (BTP) exhibited courage and emotional intelligence amid the crisis. Yet, as an emergent leader, their impulsiveness led to a failure in thoroughly evaluating all relevant choices making the decision of entering the City Room 2 minutes after the bomb was detonated. Inspector Sexton undertook the

Autocratic Leadership style by being in control and making decisions unilaterally, without any input from colleagues. Inspector Sexton took on a multitude of tasks, including being responsible for authorizing firearms. Due to the pressure and multitude of tasks Inspector Sexton failed to carry out basic requirements required by The Joint Doctrine, which was to declare a Major Incident, which remained uncorrected until 01:00am the following morning. It is evident Greater Manchester Police were not prepared for an emergency crisis and as a direct resultant, Inspector Sexton was required to enact leadership on a multitude of tasks which in turn creates a lack of adherence to structured protocol with the failure to officially declare a Major Incident. Ultimately, it can be summarised all emergency response authorities presented a variety of leadership styles in response to the incident, with a combination of benefits and weaknesses derived from these styles. However, the presence of a variety of leadership styles across all response authorities led to a lack of direct and clear hierarchy for assumed leadership. Due to this lack of designated responsibility hierarchies, opportunities to enact a coordinated response in line with protocols to potentially maximise the efficiency of emergency responses were missed.

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