



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Leadership and Management Theory and Practice (LCBB 6022 BIRM)

Session 2

Styles of Leadership and Leadership Traits

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Learning Objectives

Introduce
Leadership Styles

Explore
Leadership traits

Identify your own
style and traits

Traits and styles

Leadership is a central concept in organisations, shaping how people are motivated, how decisions are made, and how effectively goals are achieved.

Over time, scholars have sought to understand leadership from two key perspectives: leadership traits and leadership styles.

Leadership trait theories: the personal qualities of leaders, such as confidence, intelligence, and emotional stability, and whether these traits help people become effective leaders.

Leadership style theories: what leaders do, including how they behave toward others, how they make decisions, and how they adjust their approach in different situations

Leadership Style Continuum:

❖ Authoritarian/autocratic/directive

Focus of power with leader

❖ Democratic/consultative/participative

Focus of power more group-based

❖ Laissez-faire/delegative/

Focus of power with followers

Kurt Lewin
(Lewin et al 1939)

Classifications of Leadership Style

- ❖ Authoritarian or **Autocratic** style.
- ❖ **Democratic** style.
- ❖ **Laissez-faire** or Genuine style.



Autocratic Leaders

- Make decisions without much consultation from the subordinates. The followers have a high dependency on the leader to perform any actions. Autocratic style of leadership has absolute control over a group.
- Autocratic leaders will make choices based on their personal ideas and judgments instead of following a framework or taking any advice from the followers. This style of leadership, alongside generating results, can result in de-motivation and alienation of team members.
- Autocratic leadership is useful in situations when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting a large group of people. Some situations require strong leadership styles in order to produce results and accomplishment of the tasks.

Autocratic Leader

- Centralises authority
- Dictates work methods
- Limits employee participation
- Makes and imposes unilateral decisions

Advantages - Autocratic

- Faster decision-making
- When there is no need for input and when any input will not strengthen the outcomes of the decision
- During times of uncertainty and ambiguity and when people make be looking for direction and support

Disadvantages - Autocratic

- Employee frustration
- Decisions may not be successfully implemented without the involvement and input of subordinates
- Decisions may even be sabotaged

Discussion – Workshops



Discussion

10 Minutes

Working individually, write down your responses to the following questions;

- 1- Can you think of situations where authoritarian leadership style is most suitable?
- 2- How would you feel as a subordinate if you are not consulted in any decision making and you have to strictly follow the instructions?

Democratic Leaders

- Encourage decision making and creativity by participation from various stakeholders.
- Could be categorised as consultative, where they consult others before taking a decision.
- Democratic leadership is sometimes referred to as rational leadership.
- An individual manifesting this type of leadership recognises each person's self-worth and esteem.
- The leader's actions are based upon trust, integrity, honesty, equality, openness and mutual respect.
- Democratic leadership style may help in motivating the team members by giving them a sense of involvement.
- It can also improve the sharing of ideas and expectations within the organisation.
- However, this style of leadership may result in delayed decision making as the leader awaits input from others.



Democratic Leader

- Involves employees in decision-making
- Delegates authority
- Encourages participation in deciding work methods and goals
- Adopts a wholly consultative approach
- Uses feedback as opportunity to coach employees

Advantages - Democratic

- Participation sometimes results in higher satisfaction when leaders do not have full insight into the consequences of a specific decision and when the involvement of subordinates may strengthen the outcome of the decision
- Enrichment of a decision
- It may be that the subordinates feel better motivated through the consultation and involvement

Disadvantages - Democratic

- 1. Decision-making is slow**
- 2. Difficult to reach a consensus**

Laissez-Faire leaders



- ❖ Share responsibility with all.
- ❖ This can help in sharing creative ideas and can be highly motivating for team members.
- ❖ Leaders act like facilitators rather than dictators.
- ❖ According to Mullins (2016), a laissez-faire style is where the manager observes that members of the group are working well on their own.
- ❖ The manager consciously makes a decision to pass the focus of power to members, to allow them freedom of action 'to do as they think best', and not to interfere; but is readily available if help is needed.

Laissez-faire Leader

- Gives employees complete freedom to make decisions and complete their work in their own way
- Minimises involvement in decision making
- Provides materials and resources and answers employees' questions

Advantages - Laissez Faire

- Employees have all the decision making power to make decisions within the realm of expertise
- Subordinates may feel motivated by this devolution of power = enrichment of their jobs and improved performance

Disadvantages – Laissez Faire

- 1. Employees are not coordinated**
- 2. Work may be unstructured**
- 3. Little direction in order to coordinate and structure**

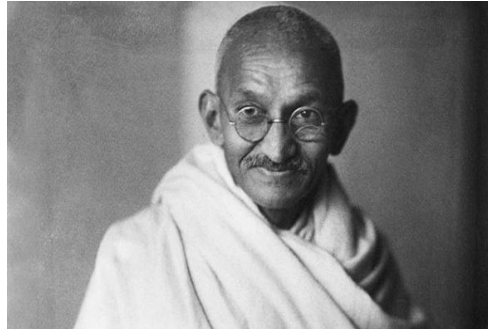
Comparison of Leadership Styles

<u>Leadership Style</u>	<u>Key Characteristics</u>	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>	<u>Most Effective When</u>
Autocratic	Leader makes decisions alone; high control; clear instructions; limited employee input	Fast decision-making; clear direction; useful in crises or high-risk situations	Low morale; reduced creativity; dependency on leader	Time-critical situations; inexperienced teams; emergency or military contexts
Democratic	Shared decision-making; open communication; leader facilitates participation	Higher engagement; better quality decisions; increased commitment	Slower decisions; potential conflict; less effective in emergencies	Skilled teams; complex problem-solving; organisations valuing participation
Laissez-faire	Hands-off approach; high autonomy; minimal supervision	Encourages innovation; empowers experts; high job satisfaction for self-motivated staff	Role ambiguity; lack of accountability; poor performance if guidance is needed	Highly skilled, motivated teams; creative or research environments

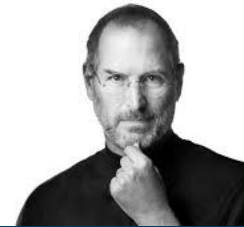
What is your style of leadership?

- Complete the leadership style questionnaire.

Some Famous/Infamous Transformational Leaders



What do you think? How do you view these people? Can you think of different examples?



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

Situational and Contingency Leadership Approaches

Situational Leadership

Situational leadership argues that no single leadership style is best.

Instead, leaders should adapt their behaviour (e.g., directive vs. supportive) to the readiness, competence, and commitment of followers.



Four Leadership Styles (S1–S4)

Style	Leadership Behaviour	Description
S1 – Telling / Directing	High task, low relationship	Leader provides clear instructions and closely supervises
S2 – Selling / Coaching	High task, high relationship	Leader explains decisions, encourages questions, motivates
S3 – Participating / Supporting	Low task, high relationship	Leader shares decision-making and supports follower confidence
S4 – Delegating	Low task, low relationship	Leader entrusts responsibility and monitors from a distance

Four Follower Readiness States (R1–R4)

Readiness Level	Follower Characteristics	Appropriate Leadership Style
R1	Low competence, high commitment (enthusiastic beginner)	S1 - Telling/Directing
R2	Some competence, low commitment (disillusioned learner)	S2 – Selling / Coaching
R3	High competence, variable commitment (capable but cautious)	S3 – Participating/Supporting
R4	High competence, high commitment (self-reliant achiever)	S4 - Delegating

Situational Leadership

Strengths

- Highly practical and intuitive
- Emphasises flexibility and follower development
- Useful in dynamic, people-centred environments (e.g., education, healthcare, project teams)

Criticisms

- Limited empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness
- Assumes leaders can accurately assess follower readiness, which is often subjective
- Underplays organisational constraints (e.g., culture, power, systems)

Contingency Leadership

Contingency leadership suggests that leadership effectiveness depends on the fit between a leader's style and the situation, but unlike situational leadership, it assumes leaders' styles are relatively fixed.



Contingency Leadership

Strengths

- Stronger theoretical rigour and empirical testing than situational models.
- Highlights that context matters as much as leader behaviour.
- Useful for leader selection and role assignment

Criticisms

- Offers limited guidance for leaders to adapt or develop.
- Can be overly deterministic, implying leaders must be changed rather than situations improved.

Situational or Contingency

Both approaches made an important shift away from “one best style” leadership. However:

- Situational leadership excels in practice and teaching, but lacks robust evidence.
- Contingency leadership is theoretically stronger, but less adaptable to modern, fluid workplaces.

Modern leadership thinking often integrates both, combining context awareness with leader adaptability, rather than treating style as fixed or entirely flexible.

Hersey & Blanchard's model established four basic leadership styles and four basic followership states:

Leadership styles

S1: Telling

S2: Selling

S3: Participating

S4: Delegating



Followership states:

R1: Unable and unwilling or insecure

R2: Unable but willing or confident

R3: Able but unwilling or insecure

R4: Able and willing or confident

Styles and leadership

- Leadership styles on the continuum: (Tannerbaum and Schmidt, 1973)

Tells *(manager identifies problem, chooses decision and announces it, expects implementation)*

Sells *(manager chooses decision but recognises may be resistance so attempts to persuade subordinates to accept it)*

Consults *(manager identifies problem but does not decide, presents problem to group and listens to their advice which may influence his decision)*

Joins *(manager defines problem and limits within which decision must be chosen, passes to group right to make decisions, with manager as group member/chairperson)*

Leadership Traits & Behaviour



Leadership Traits

Leadership traits are relatively stable personal characteristics that influence how individuals lead others. Trait theories assume that certain qualities increase the likelihood of leadership effectiveness, regardless of situation. Early trait research focused on identifying “great man” qualities, while modern approaches recognise that traits interact with context and skills.

Key Leadership Traits

Personality Traits

Often linked to the Big Five personality framework:

- **Extraversion** – energy, sociability, assertiveness
- **Conscientiousness** – reliability, organisation, self-discipline
- **Openness to experience** – creativity, adaptability
- **Emotional stability** – resilience, stress management
- **Agreeableness** – empathy, cooperation (useful but not always decisive)

Research consistently shows extraversion and conscientiousness as strong predictors of leadership emergence.

Key Leadership Traits

Cognitive and Mental Traits

- **Intelligence** – ability to analyse problems and make sound decisions
- **Critical thinking** – evaluating information objectively
- **Strategic thinking** – long-term vision and planning

Effective leaders tend to be slightly more intelligent than followers, but excessive gaps can reduce communication effectiveness.

Key Leadership Traits

Emotional Traits

- Emotional intelligence (EI) – self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy
- Self-confidence – belief in one's ability to lead
- Resilience – persistence under pressure

EI is particularly important in people-centred and complex organisations.

Key Leadership Traits

Motivational Traits

- **Achievement motivation** – drive to meet goals
- **Power motivation** – desire to influence others (most effective when socialised rather than self-serving)
- **Commitment** – dedication to organisational purpose

Key Leadership Traits

Moral and Social Traits

- **Integrity** – honesty and consistency
- **Ethical orientation** – fairness and responsibility
- **Humility** – openness to feedback and learning

These traits are central to **ethical and authentic leadership** models.

Strengths of Trait-Based Leadership Approaches

- Help identify **leadership potential**
- Useful for **selection, recruitment, and development**
- Supported by **modern personality research**



Criticisms and Limitations

- Traits alone do not guarantee leadership effectiveness
- Overlook **situational and organisational factors**
- Risk of bias in leadership selection (e.g. favouring extraversion)

Modern leadership theory combines traits, behaviours, and context. Traits may predispose individuals to leadership, but skills and experience determine long-term effectiveness.



What are your leadership traits?

- List your own leadership traits.
- What are your main areas of strength?
- What would you like to develop further?

Discuss your responses as a group.

Microsoft CEO

- Watch the interviews with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella
- What leadership traits does he display or talk about?
- What style of leadership does he fit best with?



Summary

- **During the session today we have:**
- **Discussed leadership styles**
- **Discussed traits of leadership.**

Sources

Hersey P & Blanchard K (1988) *Management of Organizational Behaviour: Utilizing Human Resources (5th Edition)*, NJ: Prentice Hall

Huczynski A & Buchanan D (2007) *Organizational Behaviour (6th Edition)*, FT: Prentice Hall

Hughes R Ginnett R, & Curphy G (2002) *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, London: McGraw Hill

Tannebaum R & Schmidt W (1958) 'How to choose a leadership pattern', *Harvard Business Review*, 36(2): 95-102