

**Critically evaluate the different approaches to leadership and their effectiveness
within the hospitality industry**

Name: Jusna Khanom
Student ID number: 2218814
Module title: Management and Organisational Behaviour
Module code: BMIH5004
Lecturer's name: Lola Villard-Coles
Date: 10th May 2024
Word Count: 2200

Effective management is paramount in navigating the intricacies of the hospitality industry, where success hinges on delivering exceptional guest experiences and maintaining operational excellence. This assignment embarks on a critical evaluation of various leadership approaches and their efficacy within the context of hospitality management. Drawing upon a diverse range of theories, including the Great Man Theory, and McGregor's X and Y Theory, to Adaptive and Transformational leadership, this assignment aims to assess the applicability and effectiveness of different leadership paradigms in addressing the unique challenges faced by hospitality professionals.

Managers play a crucial role in organisational functioning, serving six key purposes (Mintzberg, 1979). Firstly, they ensure that the organisation fulfils its fundamental objectives. Secondly, managers are responsible for designing and maintaining operational stability. Thirdly, they oversee strategy development and facilitate adaptation to evolving environments. Additionally, managers ensure that the organisation aligns with the interests of its stakeholders. They also serve as the primary conduit of information exchange between the organisation and its external surroundings. Lastly, managers wield formal authority, effectively operating the organisation's hierarchical structure.

More recently, based on his research findings, Santos (2015) suggests a growing recognition among managers of the importance of integrating scientific methods into decision-making processes, particularly in light of the increasing complexity of the business environment. He discovered that 53% of managers frequently utilise historical methods in their decision-making process. Additionally, his study revealed that 58% of managers rely on experimentation or past experiences to support their

decisions. This indicates the significance of understanding past trends and their potential impact on future outcomes.

Mintzberg's and Santo's delineation underscores the multifaceted responsibilities integral to managerial roles, emphasising their crucial significance in organisational management and success. Moreover, the existence of various theories on different types of managers further underscores the complexity and diversity within managerial roles.

Early research on leadership primarily focused on successful leaders, often aristocratic rulers, fostering the perception of leadership as innate. The Great Man Theory of leadership, associated with Thomas Carlyle from the 19th century (Spector, 2015), suggests that exceptional leaders possess inherent qualities.

However, this theory can perpetuate elitist notions, potentially excluding others from leadership opportunities. Herbert Spencer (1874), a prominent philosopher and sociologist, argued against the Great Man Theory, rejecting the notion that exceptional leaders are born with innate qualities. Instead, he emphasised the significant role of societal and environmental factors in shaping individuals and their leadership abilities.

The Trait Theory of leadership, like the Great Man Theory, accentuates the importance of individual traits in effective leadership. Characteristics such as intelligence, confidence, charisma, and decisiveness are deemed pivotal in distinguishing successful leaders, again suggesting that leadership abilities are innate rather than acquired. Whilst these traits may sound like qualities a good leader should possess, both theories disregard the impact of situational factors and

learned skills on leadership capabilities. Consequently, their applicability in the hospitality industry is limited.

Within the hospitality sector, leaders must navigate multifaceted landscapes influenced by societal shifts, technological progress, and cultural diversity (Mullins, 2019). In this dynamic context, Spencer's critique gains significance, advocating for a comprehensive consideration of broader societal and environmental factors in shaping effective leadership within the hospitality industry.

McGregor (1960), a distinguished management theorist, introduced Theory X and Theory Y as contrasting perspectives on human motivation and behaviour in the workplace. Theory X asserts that employees are inherently lazy and necessitate strict control and supervision, whereas Theory Y contends that employees are self-motivated and capable of taking initiative when provided with opportunities. In practical terms, Theory X resonates with autocratic leadership, emphasising control, while Theory Y aligns with democratic and laissez-faire leadership, promoting autonomy and empowerment.

Al-Ababneh (2013) reports that in the hospitality industry, the autocratic leadership style is prevalent due to unpredictable demands, a sentiment echoed by Khan (2019).

However, this perspective seems outdated in today's developed culture. Nonetheless, the autocratic leadership approach can be effective in specific environments such as standardised budget chains like Travelodge. In these settings, where maintaining efficiency and consistency is paramount, centralised decision-making and strict adherence to established procedures are valued. For

example, when implementing new operational standards across the hotel chain, this approach may involve imposing guidelines without soliciting input from staff and expecting strict compliance from all employees. It also entails maintaining tight control over daily operations, closely monitoring performance metrics, and promptly addressing any deviations from prescribed standards.

In contrast, leaders like Sir Richard Branson embody a leadership approach aligned with McGregor's Theory Y, which emphasises empowering employees and fostering a supportive work environment. Branson believes, "The more you free your people to think for themselves, the more they can help you". This notion underscores fostering initiative and passion among team members, is conducive to success (Wilson, 2018).

However, according to Drucker (1993), the contrast between Theory X and Theory Y is "largely a sham battle". The rigid nature of Theory X, for instance, may result in demotivation and non-cooperation among employees if the approach is overly authoritarian. This could potentially lead to high staff turnover, a persistent issue that the hospitality industry continually contends with (Mooney, 2016; Robinson et al. 2016). Conversely, embracing a Theory Y approach that grants excessive freedom may risk individuals veering off course from their primary objectives or losing focus. Moreover, less motivated individuals might exploit this relaxed working environment by neglecting their responsibilities (Ibid).

In the hospitality industry, where customer satisfaction and operational efficiency are paramount, the interplay between task orientation and people orientation in leadership is particularly relevant. Managers in hospitality must balance the need to

achieve operational goals while also ensuring the well-being and satisfaction of both customers and staff.

Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (1978) provides a framework for understanding different leadership styles based on concern for people and production. In the hospitality context, this model can help managers assess their leadership approach and identify areas for improvement. For example, a manager who prioritises production over people may risk staff burnout or low morale, which can ultimately impact customer satisfaction. Conversely, a leader who focuses solely on people may struggle to meet operational targets.

However, while the Managerial Grid offers a useful starting point for self-assessment and development, its static nature may not fully capture the dynamic and evolving nature of leadership in modern environments. Hospitality managers often face rapidly changing circumstances, such as fluctuating customer demands, staff turnover, and industry trends. Therefore, a more adaptable and nuanced approach to leadership may be necessary to effectively navigate these complexities.

Luckily, Adair's Model of Action Centred Leadership (ACL) (1979) offers a more dynamic framework that emphasises the importance of balancing three core elements: achieving the task, building the team, and developing individuals. This model seems well-suited to the dynamic and people-centric nature of the hospitality industry, where effective leadership requires balancing operational efficiency with employee development and customer satisfaction.

Marriott International's enduring success has been attributed to its founder's unwavering commitment to prioritising employee welfare, encapsulated in the

mantra, "Take care of associates and they will take care of the customers."
(Marriott.com).

Similarly, Hilton Hotels, under the leadership of their founder, possess similar ethos of nurturing a positive work environment and fostering employee loyalty which ultimately contribute to long-term success. Both Marriott International and Hilton Hotels have earned the esteemed title of "No. 1 Best Place to Work in the World" in recent years, as recognised by Fortune magazine and Great Place to Work (Kanner, 2023).

Marriott and Hilton's management philosophies also align closely with the principles of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970). This principle resonates deeply with the core tenets of servant leadership, where leaders serve and support their employees, empowering them to excel in customer service. Mullins (2019) describes it as "humanistic and spiritual rather than rational and mechanistic".

However, while servant leadership has been lauded for its emphasis on employee empowerment, this concept might challenge traditional power dynamics and require a significant shift in organisational culture, particularly in cultures where leaders are expected to make all decisions. This style of management may pose particular challenges in countries such as China or Malaysia, where power distance is notably high (The Culture Factor Group, 2024).

Servant leadership lays the foundation for transformational leadership, initially introduced by James Burns (1978) and further developed by Bernard Bass (1985). This approach fosters an environment where individuals are inspired to achieve higher levels of performance and morality. Mullins (2019) also underscores the

significance of the transformational leadership style in driving organisational reform and achieving excellence.

In a similar vein, Ron Heifetz (1994) introduced adaptive leadership as a set of strategies and practices to navigate challenges, effect change, and thrive in complex environments. This could manifest as hotel managers adapting their marketing strategies in response to changing travel trends or unforeseen economic fluctuations. For instance, if a hotel manager observes a decrease in bookings he might collaborate with department heads and frontline staff to brainstorm innovative solutions to attract guests and enhance profitability. This adaptive approach allows hotel managers to remain agile and responsive to the ever-evolving landscape of the hospitality industry as well as empower staff to contribute to the decision-making process and foster a culture of collaboration and creativity.

Furthermore, amidst the ongoing challenges brought about by the pandemic, Brexit and the rising cost of living (UK Parliament, 2024), it's crucial for leaders to prioritise the mental health and well-being of their employees, otherwise it can significantly impact the overall morale and productivity of the workforce. As all four generations coexist in the workforce, understanding the preferences and values of each generation becomes crucial too (Meglio, 2023; Mullins, 2019).

Moreover, The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) (2014), sheds light on another critical aspect: the intersection of family dynamics and job satisfaction. An emphasis on work-life balance reflects a broader interest in understanding how labour market dynamics influence individuals' living standards in modern society. Mullins (2019) underscores the increasing significance of women in the workforce,

transitioning from historical childcare responsibilities to pursuing professional careers.

In the hospitality industry, another layer of complexity arises with the need to navigate multicultural work environments. Hotels, serving diverse clientele, often employ staff from various cultural backgrounds. Managing cultural diversity requires sensitivity, cultural competence, and effective communication skills to foster an inclusive workplace culture that celebrates differences while promoting collaboration and understanding among team members (Ibid). Embracing diversity not only enhances employee satisfaction but also fosters innovation and creativity within the organisation.

In line with these considerations, managers in the hospitality sector may face the challenge of overseeing overseas branches and managing diverse teams across different locations. This scenario demands adept cross-cultural management skills, an understanding of local customs and regulations, and the ability to navigate potential language barriers (Ibid). Effective leaders in this context must adapt their leadership approach to accommodate cultural nuances, build trust and rapport with international teams, and foster an inclusive and cohesive team culture across borders to facilitate synergy and success within their global hospitality operations.

Building on the imperative of organisational adaptability, a study cited by MindTools (2023) underscores the importance of organisational adaptability, suggesting agile and flexible businesses consistently exhibit strong and sustainable performances. MindTools advocates for leaders to adopt an adaptive approach alongside a transformational leadership style, positioning them to effectively navigate organisations through turbulent periods of change.

This aligns with the conclusions drawn by scholars such as Kim, Yang, and Lee (2023), Farrell (2022), and Escortell et al. (2020), who emphasise the importance of transformational leadership in managing today's diverse and dynamic workforce within the hotel industry.

In conclusion, effective leadership remains paramount in navigating the multifaceted challenges of the hospitality industry. Throughout this evaluation, various leadership theories, ranging from traditional models like the Great Man Theory to contemporary approaches such as Adaptive and Transformational leadership, have been explored. Each theory offers unique insights into managing hospitality operations, from maintaining guest satisfaction to fostering a supportive work environment for employees.

The discussion highlighted the significance of understanding the diverse demographics of the workforce, including generational differences and the increasing presence of women in the industry. Additionally, the importance of addressing mental health and well-being, particularly in the face of ongoing challenges such as the pandemic, Brexit, and economic uncertainties, was emphasised.

Furthermore, the role of adaptive leadership in managing diverse teams across different locations was examined, emphasising the need for cross-cultural management skills and the ability to navigate complex global environments.

Ultimately, effective leadership in the hospitality industry requires a nuanced understanding of both operational dynamics and human factors. By leveraging a combination of leadership approaches and strategies tailored to the specific

challenges of the industry, hospitality professionals can foster innovation, resilience, and sustainable success in an ever-evolving landscape.

However, it is evident that no single leadership theory can fully address the complex needs of the hospitality industry. Transformational leadership, which encompasses various elements such as inspiring and motivating employees, fostering creativity, and encouraging personal growth, emerges as particularly promising in this context. As the world changes, society evolves, and views shift, what may be considered effective leadership in one country or context may not necessarily translate to success in another. Therefore, hospitality managers must embrace adaptive and transformational leadership strategies that draw from multiple theories and are responsive to the evolving landscape of the industry.

Reference List:

- ADAIR J., (1979). *Action Centered Leadership* . Surrey: Gower Pub Co.
- AL-BABNEH, M., (2013). 'Leadership Style of Managers in Five-Star Hotels and its Relationship with Employee's Job Satisfaction'. *International Journal of Management & Business studies*, vol.3(2), pp. 93-98. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3633072> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- BAILEY, M., MENDEZ, J. and ZHAI, J., (2014). 'Leadership Profile: Conrad Hilton'. *Perspectives in Asian Leisure and Tourism*, vol.2(8). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7275/t95y-6y74> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- BASS, B.M., (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- BLAKE R., M.J., (1978). *The Managerial Grid*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.
- BURNS, J.M., (1978). *Leadership*, Harper and Row.
- CARNEIRO, L. R., (1974). 'Herbert Spencer's "The Study of Sociology" and the Rise of Social Science in America'. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol.118(6). Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/986404> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS INNOVATION & SKILLS, (2014). *The Fourth Work Life Balance Employer Survey 2013*. Department for Business Innovation & Skills. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fourth-work-life-balance-employer-survey-2013> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- DRUCKER, F.,P., (1993). *Management Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. United States: Harper Collins. Available at: <http://www.welchco.com/02/14/01/60/93/01/0101.HTM> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- ESCORTELL, R., BAQUERO, A., DELGADO, B., AND WRIGHT, L. T. (2020). 'The impact of transformational leadership on the job satisfaction of internal employees and outsourced workers'. *Cogent Business & Management*, vol.7(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1837460> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- FARRELL, K., (2022). 'Transformational Leadership for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry' | SpringerLink. *Humanistic Perspectives in Hospitality and Tourism*, vol.1, pp. 273-292. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95671-4_14 (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- GOH, E. and OKUMUS, F., (2020). 'Avoiding the hospitality workforce bubble: Strategies to attract and retain generation Z talent in the hospitality workforce'. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, vol.3 Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7275/t95y-6y74> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- GALANI, A. and GALANAKIS, M., (2022). 'Organizational Psychology on the Rise—McGregor's X and Y Theory: A Systematic Literature Review'. *Psychology*, vol.13(5), pp.782-789. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2022.135051> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- GREAT PLACE TO WORK, (2023). *Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For® 2023*. Available at: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/best-workplaces/100-best/2023> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- GREENLEAF, R., (2015). *What is Servant Leadership?* Available at: <https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).
- HENNELLY, D.S. and SCHURMAN, B., (2023). *Bridging Generational Divides in Your Workplace*. Available at:

<https://hbr.org/2023/01/bridging-generational-divides-in-your-workplace> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

HILTON, (2023), *Hilton Named No. 1 Best Place to Work in the World* | Hilton News.

Available at:

<https://stories.hilton.com/releases/hilton-named-no-1-best-place-to-work-in-the-world>

(Accessed: 6 May 2024).

KANNER, M., (2023). *We Cracked the Top 10 in the Fortune® 100 List & More Workplace Awards*. Available at: <https://careers.marriott.com/en-GB/blog/marriott-workplace-awards/>

KHAN H. Y., (2019). 'Cross cultural leadership and the hospitality industry: a leadership style towards success in organizational goals in France'. *Arts & Humanities Open Access Journal*, vol.3(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.15406/ahoaj.2019.03.00100> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

KIM, J., YANG, J. and LEE, Y., (2023). 'The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Service Employees in the Hotel Industry', *Behavioral Science*, vol.13(19), p.371. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13090731> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, (2024). *Core Values & Heritage*. Available at:

<https://www.marriott.com/en-gb/culture-and-values/core-values.mi#:~:text=Our%20core%20values%20make%20us,integrity%20and%20serving%20our%20world>. (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MEGLIO, F.D., (2023). *Is Gen Z Lazy?*. Available at:

<https://www.hrexchangenetwork.com/employee-engagement/articles/is-gen-z-lazy>

(Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MINDTOOLS TEAM (2023a). *Adaptive Leadership - Evolving to Thrive in Complex Environments*. Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/a9irp3t/adaptive-leadership>

(Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MINDTOOLS TEAM (2023b). *The Blake Mouton Grid - Leading People and Producing Results*. Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/ai9k5cb/the-blake-mouton-grid> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MINDTOOLS TEAM (2023c). *Servant Leadership - Putting Your Team First, and Yourself Second*. Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/ad648ub/servant-leadership> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MINDTOOLS TEAM (2023d). *Theory X and Theory Y - Understanding People's Motivations*. Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/adi3nc1/theory-x-and-theory-y> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MINDTOOLS TEAM (2023e). *Transformational Leadership - Exploring the Theory of Inspirational Leadership*. Available at:

<https://www.mindtools.com/alj9lad/transformational-leadership> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MOONEY, S., (2016). 'Wasted youth in the hospitality industry: Older workers' perceptions and misperceptions about younger workers'. *Hospitality & Society*, vol.6(1), pp.9-30.

Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/hosp.6.1.9_1 (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

MULLINS, L.J., (2019). *Organisational behaviour in the workplace*. 12th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.

MULLINS, L.J. and DOSSOR, P., (2013). *Hospitality management and organisational behaviour*. 5th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.

SANTOS, R., (2015). 'Scientific management methods'. *International Journal of Research in Management & Business Studies*, (4), pp. 23-29. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324602390_Scientific_Management_Methods
(Accessed: 6 May 2024).

SPECTOR, B. A., (2015) 'Carlyle, Freud, and the Great Man Theory more fully considered'. *Leadership*, vol.2(4), pp.250-260. Available at:
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1742715015571392> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

THE CULTURE FACTOR GROUP, (2023). *Country Comparison Tool*. - Geert Hofstede.
Available at: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

UK PARLIAMENT, (2024), *Rising cost of living in the UK*. Available at:
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9428/> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

WILSON, C., (2018). *Sir Richard Branson's Coaching Culture at Virgin*. Available at:
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/sir-richard-bransons-coaching-culture-virgin-carol-wilson/>
(Accessed: 6 May 2024).