

# Article review on leadership and motivation

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## **Article Review: Modern Leadership Theories in Criminal Justice**

This article discusses three modern theories of leadership: trait theory, style theory, and situational leadership theory. Out of the three leadership theories, the author, Caol McKinney favors the situational leadership theory. I disagree. I favor the trait theory. Let me explain why.

Trait theory assumes that good leaders have certain traits in common. I agree. Good leaders have the following traits: the ability to understand and work with a wide variety of personalities, the ability to organize work and people, and the ability to know their own strengths and weaknesses. Knowing their own strengths and weaknesses is important when it comes time to delegate work to team members. Successful delegating assumes leaders recognize the strengths and weaknesses in their team members.

McKinney rejects the trait theory because trait theory believes that leadership cannot be learned. I do agree with that sentiment. Leadership is not learned. People are born with the ability to lead or they are not. Leadership is a mysterious, innate quality that some people possess.

I agree with the author that autocratic leadership is necessary in emergencies. Think about when a paramedic or an emergency room doctor inspects a patient who is seriously injured and has to make an instantaneous decision on treatment. Without making these snap decisions and directing other EMT or emergency room personnel, the patient could die. The same is true in a tense police situation. Someone has to be in charge of the situation. For example, in a hostage situation, someone has to make the decision to

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take the shot to shoot the perpetrator or to try to negotiate with the perpetrator.

I disagree with McKinney when he says the democratic leadership style takes too much time. Perhaps in an emergency democratic leadership takes too much time. When it comes to implementing a policy change, the topic should be open for discussion among various leaders and among the leaders and their team members. Often team members can present a different perspective into how a policy change will affect the day-to-day workings of the office. This insight and input is important to create policies that make sense. The policy can be introduced at a meeting and then the policy can be up for discussion. At the end of the discussion, a vote may be taken on whether to implement the policy or to make amendments to the policy. A time limit can be set for the meeting or for making changes to the policy so that this democratic method does not waste too much time.

I disagree with the author's definition of situational leadership. The author states that in situational leadership, different leadership styles are called for in different situations. My definition of situational leadership is that in various situations, different people step up to take the lead. Who steps up to take the lead depends on who has the most expertise in a situation, who has the courage to take the lead, and who recognizes the problem before everyone else and knows how to solve the problem. This person has to have the courage to speak his or her mind.

## **Works Cited**

McKinney, Caol. “ Modern Leadership Theories in Criminal Justice.”

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