

Autocratic-democratic continuum model



Leadership

This review begins with various definitions of ‘ leadership’. It then introduces different styles of leadership from a variety of authors.

The issue of leadership is an important issue that has intrigued many theoreticians and practitioners over the years, leading to much research and study. There is no one accepted definition of leadership, although there are many opinions put forward. Sergiovanni, (2001) suggests a moral substance to leadership, ‘ leadership is, after all, a struggle – a quest to do the right thing’. Yukl describes the bigger picture regarding the leadership of one person over many ‘ Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or group] over other people [or groups] to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization’. (1994, p3)

The group plays an important part in leadership theory, which i will discuss in more detail later in the chapter. Bass gives leadership a positive connotation and defines it as ‘ an instrument of goal achievement’ where leadership is viewed as constructive behaviours pursuing group goals. (1990, p15-16) This is developed further with an autocratic perspective by (Gardner, 1990; Riches, 1994, 1997) suggesting that ‘ Leadership is the process in which a person exerts influence over individuals and groups through goal setting or activities’. Smircich and Morgan develop the group thinking by highlighting the active involvement of ‘ followers’ in allowing leaders to take on an influencing role. They state ‘ Leadership is an obligation or perceived right on the part of certain individuals to define the reality of others’. (1982, p258)

In modern society organisations have become more accountable, organisational leadership has come to the forefront and is one of the most researched and analysed topics in the area of organisational development (Chapman, 1993). Research found that good leadership plays a vital role in creating the culture that enhances learning in schools (Brundrett & Terrell, 2004). Successful leadership is invariably linked to school effectiveness. In the many lists produced by researchers, ‘firm’ leadership (Reynolds 1991), ‘professional’ leadership (Sammons et al. 1995) and ‘outstanding’ leadership (Levine & Lezotte 1990) are identified as major factors contributing to school effectiveness. Leadership has also been shown to have an impact upon school improvement processes (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1993; Stoll & Fink, 1996) and an effect upon school outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Southworth, 2001).

For schools, the qualities of leadership and management are a crucial element in striving for effectiveness (Sammones, Thomas, Mortimore, Owen, Pennell and Hilman, 1994). Teddlie and Reynolds indicate that leadership is usually provided by the headteacher or principal, they found that ‘leadership is now centrally synonymous with school effectiveness for many, including many operating within school improvement paradigm...’ (Teddlie & Reynolyds, 2000: 141). As such, the ability to set clear organisational goals has been found to be a relevant variable linking leadership and school effectiveness.

Leadership Theories – Development through history

They are many theories on leadership which have been developed over the years and surely many more to follow. Here is a brief summary of the theory

behind the subject. The individual leader, they are people who have always been scrutinised throughout history, this scrutiny has brought about “ The great man” theory, the view that leaders are born and not made, this implies that the process of selection of leaders is crucial, and that training and development in leadership has no outcome.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, a series of qualitative reviews of these studies (e. g., Bird, 1940[8]; Stogdill, 1948[9]; Mann, 1959[10]) prompted researchers to take a drastically different view of the driving forces behind leadership. In reviewing the extant literature, Stogdill and Mann found that while some traits were common across a number of studies, the overall evidence suggested that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations. Subsequently, leadership was no longer characterized as an enduring individual trait, as situational approaches (see alternative leadership theories below) posited that individuals can be effective in certain situations, but not others. This approach dominated much of the leadership theory and research for the next few decades.

Trait Theory, this claims that certain personality traits determine success in leadership. Stogdill (1969) found that some personality traits were common to successful leaders, there has been difficulty in identifying them consistently and agreeing definitions of personality traits.

Situation theory is based on the view that leadership cannot be examined away from the group over which leadership is being exercised. The view is that leadership is a group phenomenon which will vary according to

situations and over time. Also, leadership is not a one way process of influence. Leaders are influenced by followers as well as vice versa. The studies that were carried out tended to be in small ad hoc groups in controlled settings (eg Lippett and White).

Leadership styles, there are two ways of analysing styles of leadership: one is on the range from autocratic to democratic, which i jave chosen as my focus for my action research project, and is associated with the work of Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973). The other is based on the relative dominance in a leader of “ concern for people and relationships” or “ concern for production or results”; this theory is associated with Blake and Mouton (1964). They also explained that “ The point to be emphasised here is that managerial styles are not fixed. They are not unchanging. They are determined by a range of factors. Many are subject to modification through formal instruction or self training.” (Blake and Mouton, 1964 p. 13)

Behaviour theory is based on ten work of Halpin who suggests that leaders do two main things:

Initiate structures: establish goals, set up channels of communication, establish procedures and review processes.

Consider others: create a climate of trust, respect and warmth

Halpin suggests that effective leadership is associated with high performance on both points.

Contingency theories are complex, they recognise the interaction of leaders and their environments. They are two models:

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The model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) identifies both directive and supportive behaviour in a leader, which can be modified according to the level of development, experience and commitment of the subordinate.

The model developed by Fiedler (1967) combines an analysis of the leader's style (people or production?) with an analysis of three variables of the situation which can be seen as favourable or unfavourable to the leader, e. g. the level of formal authority. Fiedler's research indicates that a task orientated leader is best suited to a situation that is particularly favourable or unfavourable and that a people orientated leader is more effective where the situation is not particularly favourable or unfavourable.

Action Leadership was developed from Contingency Theory by Adair (1984) who suggested that there were three main dimensions to leadership. These were; a concern for task, a concern for the team or group and a concern for individuals. Effective leaders will pay attention to all three dimensions. Adair then identifies a set of key actions which all leaders must perform in respect of each of these three dimensions.

Leadership and Management

Leadership tends to be equated with vision and values and management with processes and structures:

“ Leadership and management are not synonymous terms. One can be a leader without being a manager. One can, for example, fulfil many of the symbolic, inspirational educational and normative functions of a leader and thus represent what an organization stands for without carrying any of the

formal burdens of management. Conversely, one can manage without leading. An individual can monitor and control organizational activities, make decisions, and allocate resources without fulfilling the symbolic, normative, inspirational, or educational functions of leadership.” (Schon, 1984, p. 36)

Here the differentiation is not intended to distinguish between roles. Schon goes on to say that since we generally expect managers to lead, it may be permissible to treat management and leadership as one, although he does identify the concepts of: management as science and the art of managing. This latter concept may have more in common with leadership.

In the classic research of Lewin et al. (1939) at the University of Iowa, three leadership behaviours, or styles, were examined: the autocratic, the democratic, and the laissez-faire. It was found that the autocratic style tends to centralise authority and dictate work methods, while the democratic style tends to involve employees in decision making, delegate authority, encourage participation, and use feedback to coach employees. Of the three, the laissez-faire style was found to be ineffective in every performance criterion.

This original research of Lewin’s greatly influenced other studies conducted after World War II. The most significant of these studies were performed by the Ohio State Group (Shartle, 1949, 1950; Fleishman, 1953; Halpin and Winer, 1957; Hemphill and Coons, 1957), as well as took place at the University of Michigan (Katz, Maccoby and Morse, 1950; Katz, Maccoby, Gurin and Floor, 1951; Katz and Kahn, 1952). All these studies found that

leadership displaying concern for people produced better results than that displaying concern for production.

The Ohio State Group formulated dimensions of consideration and initiating structure. The first of these signifies the extent that the working relationships a leader has with subordinates is characterised by mutual trust and respect for group members' ideas and feelings. The latter signifies the extent that a leader is likely to define and structure her/his role and the roles of group members for the sake of seeking goal attainment. The Michigan studies spoke of employee orientation and production orientation. The former emphasises the extent that a leader values interpersonal relationships and accepts individual differences among subordinates; this is associated with high group productivity. The second emphasises the extent to which a leader values the technical or task aspects of the job and is concerned with accomplishing the group's tasks; this is associated with low group productivity and low job satisfaction.

Autocratic leadership

The Autocratic Leadership Style was first described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White in 1938, along with the democratic leadership and the laissez-faire leadership styles. The autocratic leadership style is sometimes referred to as the directive leadership style.

Autocratic leadership can be said to be synonymous to dictatorship where only one person has the authority over the followers or workers. Their decision has to be taken as the golden rule and should never be questioned. They plan out everything and order their subordinates to work according to

their rules. For instance, if a company has an autocratic leader as the Managing Director, the employees in the company would have to work as per the rules set down by him. They would not be expected to make any contribution from their side, which may actually help in enhancing the productivity of the company. In short, the autocratic leader has full control of those around him and believes to have the complete authority to treat them as he wants.

The premise of the autocratic management style is the belief that in most cases the worker cannot make a contribution to their own work, and that even if they could, they would not. According to Douglas McGregor this belief system leads to the mindset of Theory X (Dessler 37). McGregor believes Theory X workers have no interest in work in general, including the quality of their work. Professor Henry Daryanto interprets McGregor's theory as managers dealing with this theory by using "carrots and sticks." The carrot is usually a monetary incentive, such as piece-rate pay schemes while the stick is docking pay for poor quality or missed production targets (Daryanto). It appears only money and threats can motivate the lazy, disinterested worker.

The natural management style for a manager with this Theory X belief system would be to favour is the autocratic management style. Autocratic managers attempt to control work to the maximum extent possible. A major threat to control is complexity. Complex jobs are more difficult to learn and workers who master such jobs are scarce and possess a certain amount of control over how the job is done. An autocratic managers attempt to simplify work to gain maximum control. Autocratic managers prefer a strict top-down; chain-of-command approach to management be practiced.

Management style is a term that refers to the nature of the relationship between managers and non-managerial employees. It includes not only the personal relationship between people but also the style of communication and the attitudes that managers have of employees and the attitudes they generate in employees. The term “ leadership” is sometimes used. This refers to the ways in which managers achieve the attitudes and actions of their employees. Usually the actions desired are those which lead to the achievement of organizational objectives. A form of leadership therefore implies a style of management.

One particular style of management is autocratic, which our learning team sometimes refers to it as “ antiquated.” The autocratic style of management is based on the use of coercion as a means of control in an attempt to force employees to behave in a particular way. The response of employees to such coercion is seen to be extremely authoritative, that is they will do as they are told because the alternative may be unemployment. Another reaction by an employee to this autocratic style is they might only do the absolute minimum required of them to retain their jobs. Clearly productivity in such an organization will not be very high. Military and law enforcement organizations historically operate within an autocratic style of management, but this is seen as necessary in the situation in which they operate. Because of this acceptance resentment should not arise since there is an accepted style of management in these organizational forms.

Our learning team believes not only should a style of management be chosen according to the type of organization, it should be chosen to suit the particular situation in a given organization. For example the means of

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dealing with a disciplinary matter will differ from that used in a problem-solving situation. The style of management of routine day to day activities will differ from the management of project and design activities. Managers must therefore choose a management style to suit the situation. Our team also criticizes the autocratic style and suggests that such a style will lead to conflict, low motivation and low productivity. We all advocate a more democratic style of management. This does not mean management by committee or making decisions by democratic voting, it means involving people in organizations in some aspects of the running of the organization.

The communication style of an autocratic leader is usually described as one way. They tell you exactly what they want done. The feedback you would get from this type of leader would generally be unplanned. They would simply tell you when you've made a mistake. The decision making process is usually unilateral and they accomplish goals by directing people. Now that might not sound like the type of leader you'd follow, but there are actually situations when this style is effective.

In the workplace, some conditions may simply call for urgent action, and in these cases an autocratic style of leadership may be best style to adopt. Surprisingly, most workers have already worked for an autocratic leader and therefore have little trouble adapting to that style. In fact, in times of stress or emergency some subordinates may actually prefer an autocratic style – they prefer to be told exactly what to do. So to summarize – the autocratic leadership style is very effective when times are stressful, but very stressful during those times when the pressure is off the followers or coworkers.

Though autocratic leadership style is tyrannical, it has proved to be very efficient during certain situations and conditions. Autocratic leadership works positively during emergency and stressful situations. When such situations arise in a company or organization, most people are confused and are not able to reach a common solution. During such times, having an autocratic leader would be great as he would take the reins in his hand and would direct the workers or employees to move forward. For instance, there is a terrorist attack at some place and the soldiers have to rescue innocent people from there. If many people try to give solutions, it may take time and the mission may end in failure. In such situations, having one autocratic person to command the rest of the group on how to go about with the mission can lead to success.

Another situation where the autocratic leadership style proves appropriate is while doing group projects. Many group projects tend to fail because group members depend on each other to make decisions. Such situations demand the need of an authoritative leader who can make decisions for the group. The leader should determine the ways in which the project would be done, divide the job among the members, and also set a deadline for completion of the project.

Autocratic leadership may have its benefits, however, in most cases it is seen as something that is undesirable. Autocratic leadership style promotes a one sided conversation and due to this the creative and leadership skills of the employees become restrictive. As the leader would have all the authority, there is a chance that he would exploit his employees. There have been cases where an authoritative employer has fired employees because

they showed the courage of disagreeing with him. It is also said that having an autocratic leader hinders workplace communication and socialization. It is very important to have a cordial work environment, where everyone is friendly. It can also give rise to disagreements and conflicts, if a group or company is led by an autocratic leader.

In the military and other urgent circumstances, people may prefer the ability to be told what to do next. According to Money Zine, “ In fact, in times of stress or emergency, some subordinates may actually prefer an autocratic style– they prefer to be told exactly what to do. ... The autocratic leadership style is very effective when times are stressful.”

Lengthy debate has no place in many work environments, and this form of leadership limits arguments. It allows employees to have one task, and that is to work, which could mean that the employees master their tasks and become proficient enough to help grow the company.

This method of leadership may lead to more pressure from the boss on the rest of the employees, who then push back against the management method. Theft and other issues may arise because of a lack of workplace satisfaction. According to Smart Entrepreneur, “ This is one of the least desirable when it comes to building trusting relationships and making friends. In this system, one person has control over all of the workers or followers.”

Making friends is an important part of life, and if this is destroyed, it can create an unhappy environment. This translates to the quality of work, and not being seen as human can cause more resistance to new aspects of the

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job. A little autonomy and social appeal can make a difference in retaining good workers.

1.3 Participatory Leadership

The premise of the participatory management style is the belief that the worker can make a contribution to the design of their own work. The belief system that lead managers to this conclusion was originally put forth as a management theory by McGregor, who called it Theory Y. Theory Y advocates believe that workers are internally motivated. They take satisfaction in their work, and would like to perform at their best. Symptoms of indifference are a result of the modern workplace, which restricts what a worker can do and separates him from the final results of his efforts. It is management's job to change the workplace so that the worker can, once again, recapture his pride of workmanship. Elements of Theory Y are evident in Deming's discussion of the role of a manager of people, presented earlier.

Managers who practice the participatory style of management tend to engage in certain types of behaviour. To engage the workers they establish and communicate the purpose and direction of the organization. This is used to help develop a shared vision of what the organization should be, which is used to develop a set of shared plans for achieving the vision. The manager's role is that of a leader. By her actions and words she shows the way to her employees. She is also a coach, evaluating the results of her people's efforts and helping them use the results to improve their processes. She works with the leaders above her in the organization to improve the organization's systems and the organization as a whole.

1. 4 Democratic Leadership

The Democratic Leadership Style was first described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White in 1938 along with the autocratic leadership and the laissez-faire leadership styles. They distinguished democratic leadership from autocratic and laissez-faire styles, arguing that democratic leaders relied upon group decision making, active member involvement honest praise and criticism, and a degree of comradeship. By contrast, leaders using the other styles were either domineering or uninvolved. Kariel (1956) argues that Lewin's notion of democracy is manipulative and elitist and not democratic.

The dynamics of democratic leadership, however, are not well understood. In fact, there is no clear and well-developed definition of the term within academia. In a classic review, Gibb (1969, p258) lamented the fact that “ the basic psychological meaning” of democratic leadership had “ nowhere been spelled out”. Twenty years later, Miriam Lewin (1987) agreed. repeating Kurt Lewin's earlier “ call for a better understanding of the detailed nature of democratic leadership and followership through social science research” (p. 138). The democratic style was also included by Daniel Goleman in 2002 as one of his six leadership styles.

In Bass (1990, 19-20) handbook on leadership a definition is provided:

Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members...Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of teh group can exhibit some amount of leadership...

Bass further argues that Leadership is behaviour, not position and this can be said of the democratic method of leadership.

The democratic leader gives followers a vote in nearly every decision the team makes. The process involved with being a democratic leader is very time consuming because decisions are nearly always made together.

The democratic leadership style is able to quickly build flexibility and responsibility and can help identify new ways to do things. This leadership style is best used when the followers are knowledgeable about the organization's process and change is needed. For example, this style is used when the leader needs to introduce fresh ideas into the organization to help with an old process.

Lewin, Lippitt and White were one of the first to categorize leadership styles in terms of behavioral characteristics. Prior to their work, leadership traits were the focus of leadership studies.

Under democratic leadership, the people have a more participatory role in the decision making process. One person retains final say over all decisions but allows others to share insight and ideas. Most of all, democratic leaders must seek to make members into leaders (Theilen & Poole, 1986).

This is often a highly effective form of leadership. People are more likely to excel in their positions and develop more skills when they feel empowered, and people are empowered when they are involved in the decision-making process.

Although it may take some time to achieve full participation from a group, the end result will be rewarding if you can manage to establish a power-sharing environment in your group project. You will find that democratic practices often lead to a more productive and higher quality work group.

Examples of democratic leadership:

Asking all group members for ideas and input.

Voting on the best course of action in a project.

Asking group members to work with their strengths and provide input on how to divide the work. [li]Enabling members to work at their own pace and set their own deadlines.

- Pitfalls of Democratic Leadership

It doesn't take too much imagination to think of ways that democratic leadership could backfire during a group project. As you probably know, some members of a group will work well on their own and complete all work in a timely fashion. But there are other workers who will procrastinate-and that can lead to disaster.

If you are a natural democratic leader, it might be necessary to learn some traits of the autocratic or bureaucratic leaders and tap into them as necessary. Always have a backup plan on hand!

Undemocratic leadership styles can result in a variety of undesirable outcomes: dependent and apathetic followers (Barber. 1984 Heifetz & Sinder. 1987; Manz & Sims. 1989; White & Lippitt, 1960). In addition, undemocratic leadership can undermine the pursuit of ethical ideals, such as <https://assignbuster.com/autocratic-democratic-continuum-model/>

self-determination, personal development and democratic decision making (Barber, 1984; Sashkin, 1984).

1. 5 Laissez-faire leadership

Laissez faire style simply means a “ delegate” approach to leadership. Many researchers have found out that those children who grow under laissez-faire leadership establishments, happen to be the less productive in any group.

This was also reinforced by these children making more demands upon their leader, as researchers have come to ascertain, amidst showing little in terms of cooperation as well as the inability to work more independently.

Most laissez faire styles offer no or very little guidance to the members of the same group, amidst leaving the making of decisions to other group members. As much as it could be overtly effective in those situations where most employees or members happen to be highly qualified and skilful in their area experience and know-how, it has often led to poor roles definition plus a sheer lack in motivation.

In this leadership style, the head or leader only sets that overall priority or instruction, where then he gets out of the way so that things can be left to run on their own.

With the usage of this leadership style, the leader just accepts wholesome responsibility for many of the decisions that come into fruition, though the decision-making has been left to his team.

Also, the team members are also left to evaluate, analyse and transform issue and all problems just as they come.

Laissez faire is very appropriate for mature and acute senior teams, which have a track record of proof and have confidence in handling lots of issues. The most pitfall and shortcoming of this type of leadership is strictly failure.

In case of anything going wrong, the leader has no clout to blame his team, but a chance to see his shortcomings.

But in each management style, or leadership style, the motivation towards good leadership and overall output of members or employees are held up within the management theories, that offer a dimension for all leaders to use for the realisation of their utmost goals. Leadership without goals is failure in management.

Some of these theories include the Hawthorne model or experiments, which lay emphasis on human relations. In this model, the work-place lightning did improve the productivity during the experiment and after, that is, within the groups.

It has thus reinforced the fact that individuals are not those rational and covert economic beings as assumed by the classical theorists, as well as the emphasis of social interaction and the improvement of people's work once they have been valued.

Other theories of management include the rule set or bureaucracy, stipulated by Max Weber and gave the world the red tape, since it lays emphasis on rules and overall regulations. Also, the scientific theory of management by Frederick Taylor brought out the notion that each task must be scientifically and also rationally optimised for overall productivity, which

was perfected by the Ford Company and the monetary incentives involved brought perfect results.

Lastly, the process approach theory by Henry Fayol has been clear in leadership styles and in all management levels, even in laissez faire, as it lays much emphasis on planning, organising, coordinating, commanding, controlling and even the staff and line principles. The theories are not leadership styles but they harness the existing leadership and management styles.

Disadvantages of leadership styles

As much as the leadership style known as paternalistic management contains some autocratic dynamism, it comes as being a bit warm and a bit fuzzy within the precincts of its approach.

In its paternal aspect, it harkens in the line of a father being firm though has good intentions in the life of one's children and in the business limelight, the employees.

Just like most paternal beings are, except for those dads who keep saying: "I told you", the typical paternalistic manager most of the times explains the specific reason as to why he has taken certain actions in management and for his employees. He is very far from being autocratic and looks after the harmony within his or her team.

A manager of this calibre tends to provide that environment that is perfectly well rounded for all within his management wing, even including a prior consideration of their personal and social aspects in their lives.

In this respect, there seems to occur some kind of upward communication all the way from the tip to the high ranks, in terms of provision of feedback which could be well used for the transformation of some aspects within the organisation for the achievement of employee satisfaction and avid motivation.

Those in support of paternalistic management style have related to it as providing a huge movement towards the motivation of employees more than an autocratic style, since the employees tends to fill the leadership as considering their welfare and thus do care for them more as people and not just like robots.

Since the objective that comes with keeping the motivation of the employees is highly included in this leadership style, there tends to be an overt probability that is laid towards an increased loyalty of employee and also a minimal turnover.

The overall disadvantage with this leadership style depicts the overall disadvantage of leadership styles, sharing such similarities with those elements of autocratic techniques of management styles, such that they have led to the dependency upon the leader thro