

*Critical leadership:
Theoretical and practical perspectives*

Week 2 – Session 1

Traditional leader and leadership theories part 1

Objective

- By the end of this session you will be able to outline and critique some of the “traditional” approaches to the study of leaders and leadership



Why look at traditional theories?



Approaches to leader(ship) study

Traditional

- Qualities or traits approach
- Leadership as a behavioural category and functional leadership
- Styles of leadership
- The situational approach & contingency models
- *Transactional and transformational leadership*

Newer

- *Transactional and transformational*
- ‘Inspirational’ and charismatic
- Followership approaches
 - Distributed
 - LMX
 - Servant p
- Implicit and the romance of leadership
- Negative leadership
- Sustainable/responsible leadership

Activity

- Stage 1:
 - In groups of **THREE students**
 - Based on your pre-reading and materials supplied **`Critically review`** your allocated **`Traditional`** theory
- Stage 2:
 - Join with other groups looking at the same theory as you and prepare a short (5-6 minute) learning session for the rest of the class on your **`critical review`**



Critical reviews

- Using multiple sources:
 - Explore
 - Analyse
 - Describe
 - Compare
 - Contrast
 - Evaluate
- Research questions:
 - How might this theory affect the way leaders are recruited and developed in practice?
 - How well does this describe the reality of leaders and leadership within organisations or other contexts?

Traits approach - Who you are

"Congratulations Mrs Jones you have a leader"



Some of the more common Leadership Traits

- Self confidence
- Charisma
- Intelligence
- Decisiveness
- Enthusiasm and energy
- Integrity.

Trait theory issues!

- How many different traits do we have?
- Were people born with these traits or have they been developed?
- How would you know this anyway?
- How would you measure these traits?
- Could these traits be trained?
- Can leadership really not be learned?

Traits

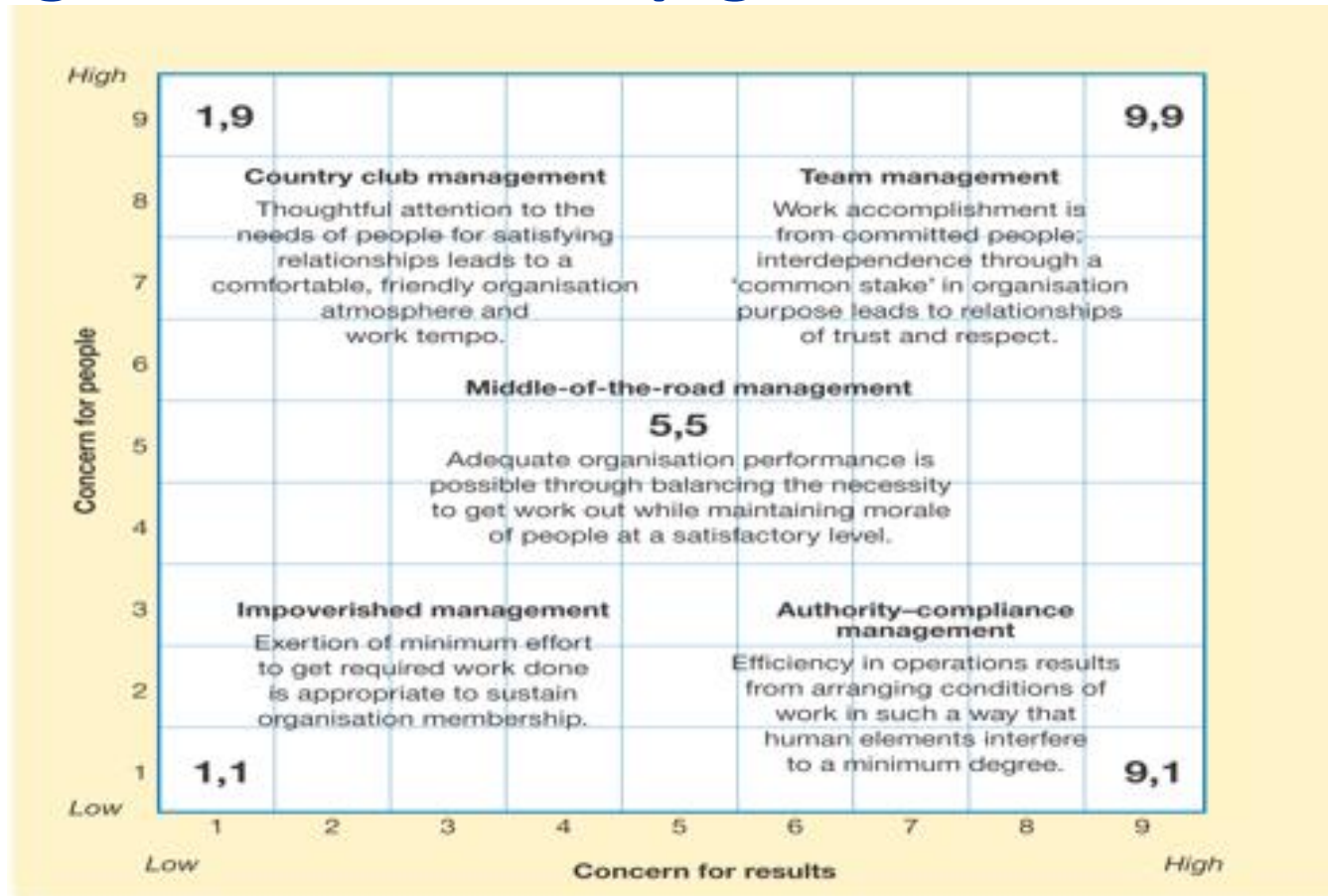
“Traits do a better job at predicting the emergence of leaders and the appearance of leadership than in actually distinguishing between effective and ineffective leaders”

Robbins, 2005

Behavioural or Functional Approach

- Focus on the functions and activities of leaders, i.e.. What they actually do.
- Assumes therefore that leadership can be taught
- The Ohio state and Michigan state University studies identified 2 axis
 - Concern for production/structure
 - Concern for people

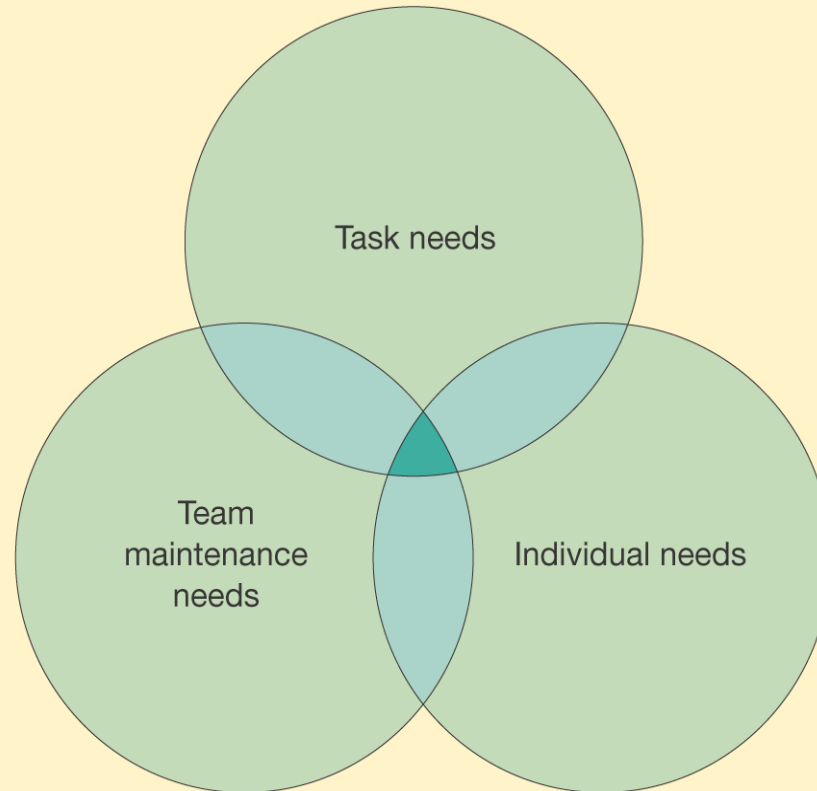
Blake and Mouton's Managerial / leadership grid



Source: Blake, R.R. and McCanse, A.A. (1991) *Leadership Dilemmas – Grid Solutions*, Gulf Publishing Co., Houston (1991), Grid Figure, p.29.

Mullins, 2007, p.448

Action-centred leadership



Source: Adair, J., *Action-Centred Leadership*, Gower Press (1979), p.10

Critique of behaviours/functional

- To what extent can we really narrow down leadership to a list of competencies or skills?
- What level of skill is needed? Is it the same for each?
- Is `WHAT` a leader does the only important thing?
- What is the right balance of: Task, Team and Individual?
- Is this the same for all employees?
- The evidence of outcomes associated with behaviours/functions is mixed

Leadership STYLE theories

- The way in which leadership functions and focus are carried out, the ways in which a leader typically behaves towards group members
- Broad classification:
 - Authoritarian (autocratic) style
 - Democratic style
 - *Laissez-faire* (genuine) style.

More detailed STYLES theories

LIKERT

- **Exploitive authoritative** – decisions imposed on staff & motivation is based on threats
- **Benevolent authoritative** – condescending form of leadership with motivation based on system of rewards
- **Consultative** – some trust in staff, motivation based on rewards & also some Involvement
- **Participative** – involves trust & confidence in staff with motivation based on rewards for achievement of agreed goals.

Tannenbaum & Schmidt

- Tells
- Sells
- Consults
- Joins

Issues with STYLES theories?

- Can a leader display all these different styles?
- Can they be learnt?
- Is there a `best style`?
- The evidence of outcomes associated with styles is mixed

References

- Adair, J. (1979). *Action-Centred Leadership*, London. Gower Press
- Buchanan, D. & Huczynski (2010). *Organizational Behaviour* 7th ed. Harlow. Pearson
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- Mullins, Laurie J; Christy, Gill. (2013). *Management & organisational behaviour* (10th ed). Harlow. Financial Times Prentice Hall
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