

Style Approach

Background

According to Northouse, the style approach to leadership has roots in three lines of research. In the 1940s, R. M. Stogdill from Ohio State University asserted that leadership research should consider more than just leaders' traits. Research at the University of Michigan explored how leaders functioned in small groups. In the 1960s Blake and Mouton developed the Managerial Grid, which explained how leaders' concern for production and concern for people help an organization reach their goals.

Description

The style approach to leadership focuses on what leaders do (behaviors) rather than who leaders are (intrinsic characteristics) (Northouse).

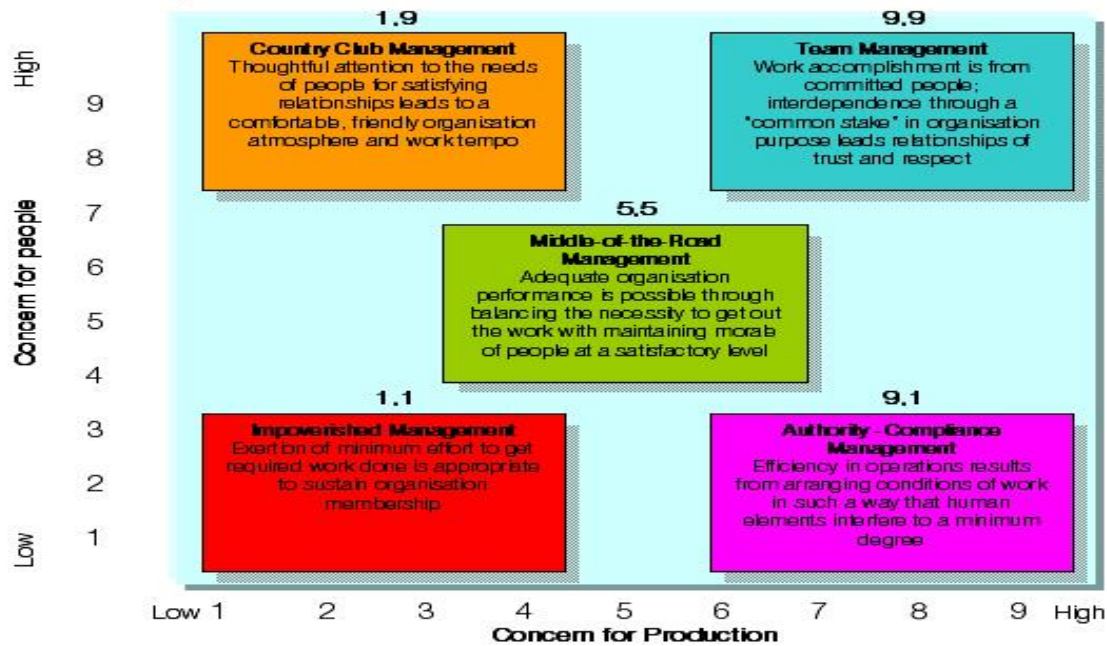
Key Points

- Reminds leaders to be more task oriented or relationship oriented, based on situation.
- Two dimensions of behavior inform leaders, providing an opportunity to improve effectiveness.

Tools

- LBDQ – Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire
- Leadership Grid©, formerly the Managerial Grid – see below

The Leadership Grid



Source: Organisation Development web page: <http://organisationdevelopment.org>

Strengths

- Shifted focus from traits to behaviors
- Is substantiated by multitude of research
- Emphasizes importance of task and relationship behaviors
- Allows leaders to self-assess

Weaknesses

- Does not establish a connection between style and performance outcomes
- Is unable to identify universal style that works best
- Does not show proof that high task and high relationship is most effective

Reference

- Foster, C. (2014, March 6). Managerial Grid. Retrieved from <http://organisationdevelopment.org/the-od-cycle/the-diagnostic-phase/new-example-of-diagnostic-interventions-managerial-grid/>
- Northouse, P. G. (2013). Leadership: Theory and practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.