

BEHAVIOURAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Behavioural Leadership Theories are developed scientifically by behaviour-focused studies of a leader's behaviour in a conditioned situation that one can have a specific response to specific stimuli. Behavioural Leadership Theories are developed by scientifically studying the behaviours of leaders and the effects of them on the workforce and environment.

Some of the important contributions in this regard include Michigan University Studies and Ohio State Studies.

The behavioural scientists don't concentrate on the traits of leaders, rather they study the activities of leaders to identify their behavioural patterns.

- What are the Behavioural Leadership Theories?

The two most common theories will come up every time we talk about Behavioural Leadership Theories, Michigan Leadership Studies, and Ohio State Leadership Studies.

- **MICHIGAN LEADERSHIP STUDIES**

Michigan Leadership Studies is a behavioural Leadership theory that indicates the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan conducted empirical studies to identify styles of leader behaviour that results in higher performance and satisfaction of a group.

The value of Michigan Leadership Studies lies in the analysis of 2 leadership styles task and employee-oriented styles. Instead of restricting to traits of leaders, they concentrated on the behaviour of leaders.

The studies identified two distinct styles of leadership;

- a. **Job-centred Leadership:** Managers using job-centred leader behaviour pay close attention to subordinates' work, explain work procedures and are keenly interested in performance.
- b. **Employee-centred Leadership:** Managers using employee-centred leader behaviour are interested in developing a cohesive workgroup and ensuring that employees are satisfied with their jobs. The Michigan Leadership Studies found that both the styles of leadership led to an increase in production, but it was slightly more in case of production of job-centred style.

However, the use of direct pressure and close supervision led to decreased satisfaction and increased turnover and absenteeism.

The employee-centred approach led to the improved work-flow procedure and more cohesion in interactions resulting in increased satisfaction and decreased turnover and absenteeism.

This suggested the superiority of the employee-centred leadership style.

The Michigan Leadership Studies were conducted around the same time as the Ohio State Leadership Studies, which also identified the focus on tasks and people.

The Michigan Leadership Studies added “Participative leadership” to the Ohio findings, moving the debate further into the question of leading teams rather than just individuals.

The value of Michigan Leadership Studies lies in the analysis of two leadership styles—task and employee-oriented styles. Instead of restricting to traits of leaders, they concentrated on the behavior of leaders.

DEMERITS:

- The Michigan Leadership Studies failed to suggest whether leader behaviour is a cause or effect. They did not clarify whether the employee-centred leadership makes the group productive or whether the highly productive group induces the leader to be employee-centred.
- The Michigan Leadership Studies did not consider the nature of the subordinates’ tasks or their characteristics. Group characteristics and other situational variables were also ignored.
- The behavioural styles suggested by Michigan Leadership Studies have been termed as static. A leader is supposed to follow either of the two styles, viz., task orientation and employee orientation. But in practice, a practical style may succeed in one situation and fail in another.
- Moreover, leaders don’t restrict themselves to a particular style. They adopt both the orientations in varying degrees to suit the particular situation.

- **OHIO STATE LEADERSHIP STUDIES**

Ohio State Leadership Studies is Behavioural Leadership Theory.

A series of studies on leadership was done by Ohio State University in 1945 to identify observable behaviours of leaders instead of focusing on their traits. Ohio State Leadership Studies showed that initiating structure and consideration are two distinct dimensions and not mutually exclusive. They found these two critical characteristics of leadership either of which could be high or low or independent of one another.

The research was based on questionnaires to leaders and subordinates of the organizations.

A low score on one does not require a high score on the other. Consideration is the people-orientation and initiating structure is the task orientation. The Ohio State studies were conducted around the same time as the Michigan Leadership Studies, which also identified as critical the focus on tasks and people.

These are known as the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) and the Supervisor Behaviour Description Questionnaire (SBDQ).

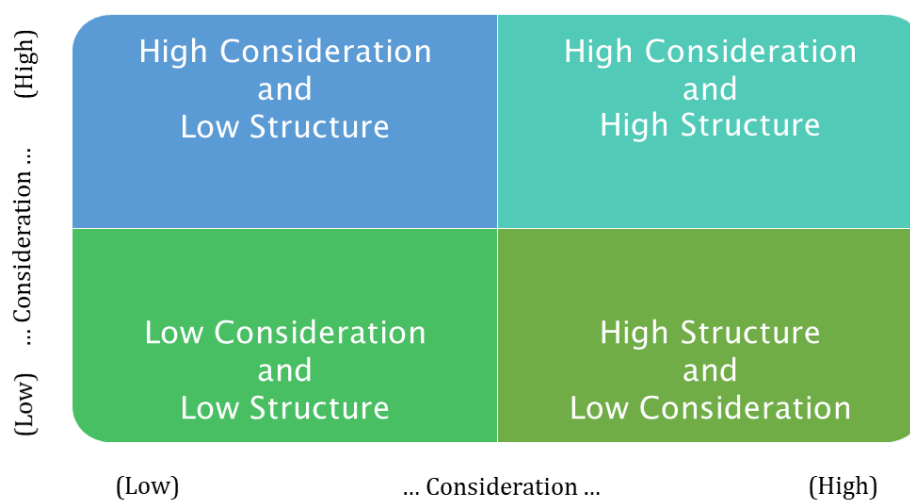
Ultimately, these studies narrowed the description of leader behaviour into two dimensions:

- **Initiating Structure Behaviour:** The behaviour of leaders who define the leader-subordinate role so that everyone knows what is expected, establish formal lines of communication, and determine how tasks will be performed.
- **Consideration Behaviour:** The behaviour of leaders who are concerned for subordinates and attempt to establish a warm, friendly, and supportive climate.

The Ohio State Leadership Studies also showed that initiating structure and consideration are two distinct dimensions and not mutually exclusive.

A low score on one does not require a high score on the other.

Hence, leadership behaviour can be plotted on two separate axes rather than on a single continuum, as shown in the following quadrant:



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Ohio State Leadership Studies

Dimensions of Leader Behavior

The 4 quadrants in the above figure show various considerations of initiating structure and consideration.

In each quadrant, there is a relative mixture of initiating structure and consideration and a manager can adopt any one style.

Although an early study, this is still often referenced.

Notably, the two factors correlate with the people task division that appears in other studies and as preferences.

The findings of Ohio State Leadership Studies suggest that effective leaders possess a strong ability to work with others and build a cohesive team that is balanced with the capability to create structure within which activities can be accomplished.