

Exploring Effective Leadership Styles - An evolution of Situational Leadership Theory

James McDermott, Achieve Intelligence, Oxford, UK

Caroline Phares, Altair, Philadelphia, USA

Jonathan Deacon, Achieve Intelligence, Oxford, UK

1 Abstract

This paper explores the evolution of Situational Leadership Theory, proposing a refined model that assesses leadership styles through a two-dimensional evaluation of followers' capability and confidence. By introducing an ordinal autonomy scale and categorising leadership styles into Directing, Coaching, Supporting, and Delegating, we emphasise the importance of aligning leadership strategies with followers' needs.

2 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to delve into the origins and evolution of Situational Leadership Theory (SLT), emphasising its continued relevance in contemporary leadership practices. By analysing the fundamental principles and critiques of SLT, we aim to present a new approach that better addresses the complexities of leadership dynamics through a new focus on leadership autonomy and follower classifications based on their capability and confidence. Our findings provide actionable insights for leaders, encouraging them to consider their followers in a new light and explore different leadership styles in relation to followers and their autonomy.

3 Origin and History of SLT

The Situational Leadership Theory, developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in the late 1960s, stresses the necessity for leaders to adapt their style according to the maturity and competence of their followers. Initially known as the "Life-Cycle Theory," it later evolved into the Situational Leadership® Model, which posits that effective leadership is contingent upon a leader's ability to modify their approach depending on both the task and the developmental level of their team.

The theory delineates four leadership styles:

- **Telling (S1):** A directive approach suited to followers with low skills or motivation.
- **Selling (S2):** Involves more guidance and persuasion to motivate and engage followers.
- **Participating (S3):** Appropriate for followers with higher competence, involving them in decision-making.
- **Delegating (S4):** A hands-off approach for highly skilled and motivated followers.

These leadership styles correspond with four levels of follower maturity:

- **M1:** Low competence and confidence, necessitating directive leadership.
- **M2:** Willing but lacking ability, requiring more supportive direction.
- **M3:** Competent but hesitant, benefiting from shared decision-making and encouragement.
- **M4:** High competence and confidence, where delegation is most effective.

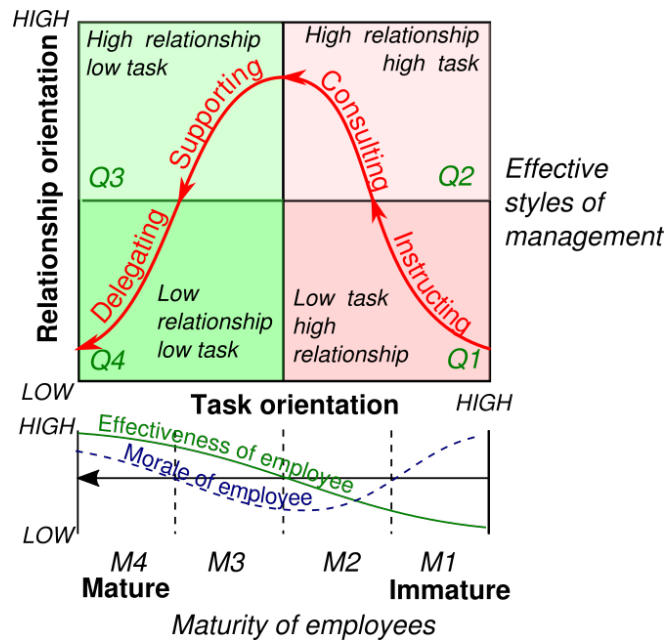


Figure 1: Hersey and Blanchard situational leadership model [1]

Over time the model was further refined, particularly with Blanchard's development of Situational Leadership II (SLII), which provided additional clarity on how leaders can balance directive and supportive behaviours based on the competence and commitment of team members.

At the core of the theory is the principle that no single leadership style is universally effective; leaders must assess each situation and continually adapt their approach based on the followers' readiness and capabilities in order to optimise effectiveness.

4 Criticisms of SLT

Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) has garnered criticism over the years, primarily due to the discrepancy between empirical evidence and its intuitive appeal. While the model is widely accepted in management practice for its adaptability, research has demonstrated that it lacks consistent empirical validation.

One prominent critique lies in the theory's assumption that leadership styles should change according to the maturity levels of followers. However, empirical studies have often failed to corroborate this connection, with results proving inconsistent when testing the prescribed relationship between leadership styles and follower development. Some researchers argue that the theory oversimplifies leadership dynamics, disregarding other critical context factors, such as, regional & organisational culture, and the nature of leader-follower interactions.

Moreover, the SLT leans heavily on leader intuition rather than measurable criteria, leading to potential subjective biases in applying leadership styles.

5 Our Model

Many researchers have been drawn to the inherent appeal of the theory, leading to the development of various adaptations over time. We have formulated a tailored approach that incorporates a two-dimensional evaluation of followers, grounded in certain quantifiable indicators.

Our model that focuses on the context of the leadership situation, building on the refined model SLII, delineates the same four distinct leadership styles: Directing, Coaching, Supporting, and Delegating.

In our model, rather than "Maturity" from the SLT or "Readiness" from SLII, each style is tailored to a two-dimensional evaluation of the confidence and capability of the followers which we propose is indicative of their preferred level of "Autonomy".

Based on this framework, we aim to influence leadership strategies by having leaders consider different leadership styles based on an assessment of their follower's capability and confidence.

5.1 Autonomy

The dictionary defines autonomy as: “Freedom from external control or influence; independence.” In a leadership context, autonomy refers to the capacity of individuals, teams, or organisations to make decisions and take actions with varying levels of approval or oversight from the leadership. Ensuring that these actions still align with the company’s or organisation’s broader goals and values.

Autonomy in leadership should be balanced with accountability to ensure that while individuals or teams can be given full autonomy, they can never be given total accountability as some will always remain with the leader.

For our model we have established an ordinal autonomy scale from 1 to 4:

Low		Medium		High		Full	
1.00	1.75	1.75	2.50	2.50	3.25	3.25	4.00

Table 1: Ordinal Autonomy Scale

5.2 Capability x Confidence

In the context of situational leadership, the evaluation of followers is grounded in a bidirectional assessment of two key dimensions: **Capability** and **Confidence**.

Capability refers to the amalgamation of a follower’s experience, skill, and knowledge. It encapsulates the competencies necessary to perform tasks effectively. This dimension is critical for determining a follower’s ability to execute specific responsibilities and contribute effectively to organisational goals. To assess this dimension, the leader should consider the specific task at hand and review not only the years of relevant experience but the intensity of that experience and their level of training. The resultant assessment will be classified on a scale of 1-10.

Confidence, on the other hand, integrates two distinct aspects: the follower’s belief in the purpose of the task or organisational mission and their self-belief in their ability to accomplish the tasks at hand. Confidence is essential as it influences a follower’s motivation, resilience, and overall engagement in their roles. This is necessarily a more esoteric measure and will rely on intuition from the leader. Assessing the number of times a person has noticeably put themselves forward to support the task at hand or how confidently the follower presents in team meetings could be a basis for evaluating them. This largely intuitive assessment will also be classified on a scale of 1-10.

As stated, both Capability and Confidence are measured on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 signifies “little or no” presence of the quality and 10 denotes “first class” excellence. To correctly assess each level, we recommend starting with “1” and increasing for any measurable, observable, or intuitive assessment of additional capability.

Figure 2 below shows that a confidence or capability level of 1-5 constitutes “Low” and a level of 6-10 constitutes “High”. This figure also shows how we have mapped this evaluation to our 4-point autonomy scale as an indicator of an autonomy level appropriate for that classification of follower. This is comparable to “Maturity” in the original theory.

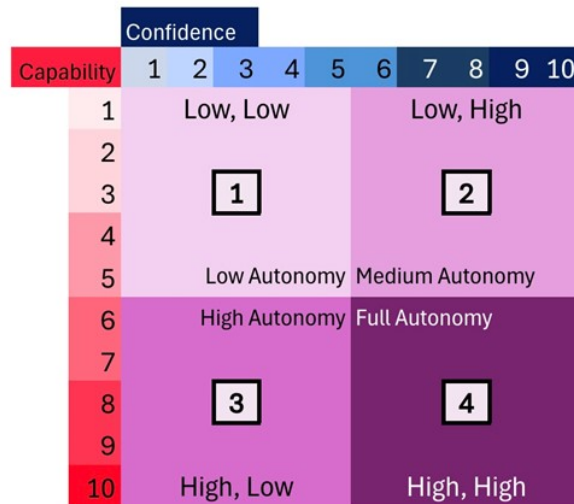


Figure 2: Capability and Confidence Matrix

5.3 Binary vs. Continuous Classification

Converting to a binary scale of high/low introduces an inherent ambiguity or uncertainty. A criticism sometimes raised with respect to other classification tools, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) assessment.

The MBTI has faced some academic criticism for its binary categorisation of personality traits over the years. Critics argue that human personality exists on a spectrum, making it overly simplistic to classify individuals strictly into one of two categories for each trait (e.g., Introversion vs. Extroversion). This binary structure fails to capture the complexity and nuance of personality. Research also suggests that traits like these are better understood as continuous dimensions rather than dichotomies, as supported by models like the Big Five Personality Traits, which offer a more nuanced approach. Consequently, the MBTI's binary framework can lead to reduced accuracy, poor predictive validity, and limited reliability in capturing the full range of personality.

While such critiques of binary classification are valid, particularly with regards to the oversimplification of personality assessments, we must also consider the practicality of simplifying complex continuous variables in our model. Despite the inherent loss of precision, a binary classification allows for clearer decision-making within the scope of our framework.

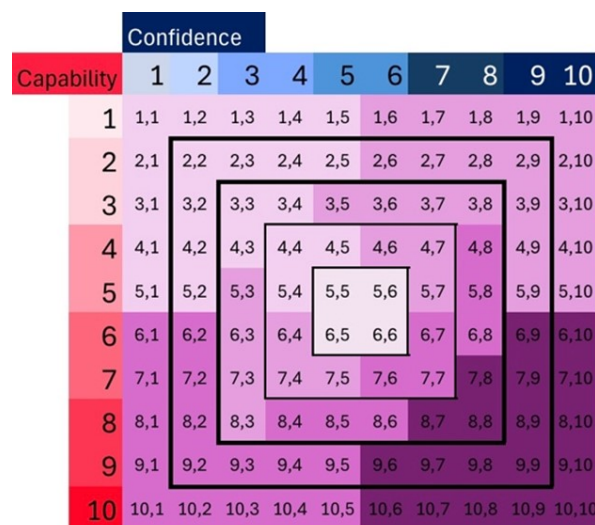


Figure 3: Capability and Confidence Classification

Figure 3 illustrates an example of this precision loss in our dichotomous classification of a 10-point ordinal scale,

where the central region denotes an arbitrary point at which our classification begins to lose specificity. For instance, if a follower is assessed as [1,1], they are clearly identified as having Low Capability and Low Confidence, strongly indicating a low level of autonomy is appropriate. However, if the follower is evaluated as [5,5], this binary assessment still categorises them as having Low Capability and Low Confidence, again indicating a low level of autonomy. Yet, at this point, the classification becomes indeterminate, as a slight shift—such as moving from [5,5] to [6,6]—could drastically alter the attributed level of autonomy.

It is therefore essential to be mindful of the autonomy classification assigned by the model if a followers assessment lies near a boundary between categories. In this situation other factors influencing their autonomy evaluation, such as organisational culture or personal preference, may become more pre-eminent.

5.4 Leadership Style & Follower Classification

Derived from the original paper we have identified 4 classifications of leadership style analogous to the 4 classifications of autonomy level.

The level of autonomy a leader provides through their actions manifests in an overall leadership style. These styles map to an underlying continuous scale representing the level of autonomy a leader provides to their followers. In this case we have assigned these styles to an ordinal scale of 1-4 and labelled them; Directing, Coaching, Supporting & Delegating.

Autonomy Level	1.00 1.75	1.75 2.50	2.50 3.25	3.25 4.00
	1	2	3	4
Autonomy Class	Low	Medium	High	Full
Leader Style	Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Follower Class	LL	LH	HL	HH

Table 2: Autonomy Level, Scale, Class, Leader Style, and Follower Class

In organisations or cultures with well-defined hierarchies, directive leadership often aligns with existing structures, providing clarity and reducing ambiguity. While a leader may naturally lean toward a particular leadership style, it is essential to consider alternative approaches to account for these organisational or cultural dynamics.

6 Autonomy Classes

6.1 Low Autonomy

Low-Low followers & Directing Leadership Style

Followers or groups that fall under this category are characterised by having a low capability and low confidence. This is a level where team members lack the necessary skills or experience, and confidence to perform tasks autonomously and a directing leadership style is the most appropriate.

A directing style involves a leader providing clear, specific instructions while closely supervising the team's work. Offering the necessary guidance and structure, the leader typically makes decisions independently and directs the team's actions towards set goals. This creates an environment for followers that reduces the requirement for them to exercise independent judgment or take the initiative.

This style can also be valuable in high-pressure situations or crises, where swift and decisive leadership is beneficial. In these environments directive leadership maintains focus, ensuring the team works efficiently towards a unified objective. It can also be effective when motivation is low, offering the direction needed to achieve results.

With a strong emphasis on control, clear expectations, and continuous monitoring, typical actions associated with style are:

- **Comprehensive Training:** Develop detailed instructional materials and training sessions.
- **Short-Term Goals:** Set achievable goals to maintain motivation.
- **Close Monitoring:** Regularly review progress and provide immediate feedback.

6.2 Medium Autonomy

Low-High followers & Coaching Leadership Style

Followers or groups that fall under this category are characterised by having a low capability and high confidence. This is a level where team members may lack the necessary skills or experience to operate autonomously but have the confidence to explore or develop relevant skills with coaching from the leader.

This coaching leadership style is where the leader focuses on guiding and mentoring team members, helping them enhance their skills, build confidence, and achieve long-term personal and professional growth. The leader works more collaboratively with the team, providing feedback, encouragement, and support while fostering a learning environment. This strikes a balance between providing direction and making room for creativity and personal initiative.

This style is especially effective when team members show potential but require further development to reach their full capability. In such situations, coaching leadership offers tailored support to nurture individual strengths, helping followers develop the skills they need for greater autonomy and success.

Coaching leadership promotes growth by setting clear developmental goals, giving regular feedback, and encouraging self-reflection. In teams where creativity and innovation are important, this style prioritises long-term success over immediate results, helping to build resilience and adaptability within the team. It is especially valuable in organisations focused on talent development and succession planning, where ongoing learning and skill development are crucial to the team's success.

Actions Associated with style are:

- **Regular Feedback:** Conduct sessions to provide constructive criticism and praise.
- **Skill Workshops:** Facilitate workshops to boost skills and confidence.
- **Encourage Input:** Seek and incorporate follower feedback.

6.3 High Autonomy

High-Low followers & Supporting Leadership Style

Followers or groups that fall under this category are characterised by having a high capability and low confidence. This is a level where followers possess the necessary skills or experience for the task at hand but lack the confidence to approach activities with full autonomy.

A supporting leadership style endeavours to emphasise encouragement, emotional support, and to foster a positive environment where team members feel confident and valued. The leader takes on a less involved role, offering guidance along with an elevated level of autonomy, with a focus on boosting the morale and self-belief of the followers.

This approach is particularly useful for tasks or goals that thrive on collaborative innovation, reinforcing the team's strengths, addressing concerns, and providing reassurance, helping individuals overcome self-doubt.

Supporting leadership builds trust and allows the team to perform to its full potential. Stepping back to allow the team to determine the best way to achieve outcomes, only intervening to remove obstacles or when significant decisions need to be made, this leadership style is associated with the following actions:

- **Recognition and Praise:** Celebrate achievements to boost morale.
- **Professional Development:** Provide opportunities for further skill enhancement.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Foster a sense of belonging and engagement.

6.4 Full Autonomy

High-High followers & Delegating Leadership Style

Followers or groups under this category are defined by both high capability and high confidence. These individuals possess the necessary skills and experience, as well as the confidence to make autonomous decisions without requiring close supervision. As such, a delegating leadership style becomes most effective.

In this style the leader steps back from day-to-day management, providing minimal oversight and empowering their followers to take full responsibility for their activities. The leader may assign tasks to highly capable and confident team members, allowing them significant autonomy in how they accomplish their goals. This empowers individuals to take responsibility for their outcomes, maximising their potential without being constrained by the

leader's availability or input. The delegation process not only acknowledges the follower's expertise but fosters a sense of trust, encouraging creative solutions, innovation, and independent problem-solving.

Delegating leadership is most effective when the team possesses both the capability and confidence to manage their work independently. This can be particularly advantageous when team members are not only skilled but also tasked with managing larger teams. This level of trust enhances motivation and engagement, as individuals feel valued and empowered, leading to increased job satisfaction and performance. This approach proves especially beneficial in scenarios where leaders may be remote from their teams due to geographical constraints, facilitating effective collaboration despite physical distance.

Delegating leadership establishes an overarching vision and objectives, leaders create a framework within which their team members can exercise their autonomy. This approach not only drives innovation but also builds a culture of accountability, however the leader retains ultimate accountability for the results and must ensure that the followers' work aligns with broader organisational goals.

Typical actions associated with delegating leadership include:

- **Empowering Projects:** Leaders delegate entire projects to experienced team members, granting them the authority to make decisions and drive initiatives forward.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Providing opportunities for team members to lead initiatives cultivates a sense of ownership and enhances their leadership skills.
- **Trust in Independence:** Leaders encourage subordinates to independently address and resolve challenges, reinforcing their capability to handle responsibilities effectively.

7 Leadership Autonomy Rating Scale (LARS)

The Leadership Autonomy Rating Scale (LARS) is an assessment tool designed to evaluate an individual's leadership style in relation to the capability and confidence of their followers. It provides insights into a leader's preferences regarding the level of autonomy they offer their followers and how this further aligns with our model's classification of followers based on their competence and confidence levels.

7.1 Existing Leadership Assessment Tools

There are several well-known leadership assessment tools, but none that specifically focus on leadership autonomy in the way that LARS does. Some popular tools that assess various aspects of leadership styles include:

- **LPI®: Leadership Practices Inventory® Assessment** – A tool that evaluates leadership behaviours based on five core practices, focusing more on overall leadership effectiveness than autonomy.
- **DiSC® & Five Behaviors™** – Assesses leadership personality and behaviours, offering insights into decision-making, but not explicitly about autonomy.
- **Situational Leadership® Model** – Focuses on matching leadership style with team needs based on maturity level. It touches on aspects like autonomy but not as the primary focus.

7.2 The LARS Questionnaire

An individual's leadership style is inherently subjective and influenced by various factors. Unlike skills or competencies, which can be directly observed and measured, preferences—particularly those related to decision-making autonomy—are more challenging to quantify objectively.

Historically, questionnaires have been a widely accepted tool for assessing subjective qualities such as leadership style. To bridge the gap between subjective preferences and a need for structured evaluation, we developed a questionnaire with 12-questions each with four possible responses. This questionnaire is designed to balance the inherent subjectivity of leadership style with the need for a consistent and repeatable assessment.

We began our design with an analysis of an existing SLII questionnaire, focusing primarily on its approach to categorising responses, question structure, and answer alignment with leadership categories. From this we recognised that the leadership styles formed an ordinal classification with increasing levels of autonomy. We hypothesised that this tendency for autonomy has a theoretical continuous scale underlying it.

Given that there are many proposed factors that could impact the within person heterogeneity of responses, we sought to control for this by asking participants to focus on a specific team they were familiar with. Before starting the questionnaire, participants are asked to reflect on a team they have previously led and answer the questions

with that team in mind. This approach ensures that follower characteristics are anchored in a real-world context, making the responses more relevant and grounded in their actual leadership experiences, while our questionnaire provides situational contexts through the questions themselves.

In addition, participants are asked to rate this team's overall capability and confidence, allowing us to classify the team's autonomy level according to our model. This enables us to draw comparisons between the LARS Questionnaire results and the team's classification, offering deeper insights into the alignment between leadership decisions and team characteristics, and providing a more nuanced understanding of leadership effectiveness.

7.3 Response Categorisation and Leadership Styles

Like SLII, each of the four possible responses in our questions corresponds to one of four distinct leadership styles: Directing, Coaching, Supporting, and Delegating. These categories reflect varying levels of autonomy and allow us to classify leaders based on the autonomy they grant followers in specific contexts:

- **Directing:** Involves specific instructions and close supervision; suitable for followers with low capability and confidence.
- **Coaching:** Focuses on guidance and skill development; appropriate for followers with low capability but high confidence.
- **Supporting:** Emphasises encouragement and assistance, ideal for followers with high capability but low confidence.
- **Delegating:** Grants autonomy to capable and confident followers, who can take full ownership of tasks.

These categories align with our 4-point autonomy scale, ranging from low to full autonomy.

7.4 Developing the Questions

Our questionnaire presents a range of leadership scenarios designed to assess how leaders address varying contexts with the same followers. The key principle is that participants reflect on a team they've previously led, and while the specific team is imagined by the participant, the scenarios are intentionally kept general to apply to a variety of teams. Our design objectives were to:

- **Ensure Generic Scenarios:** The scenarios are crafted to be broadly applicable to a wide range of teams, avoiding conflicts with the specifics of the participants' team.
- **Avoid Bias:** We carefully considered our use of language to ensure all possible responses remain equally valid and avoid inadvertently biasing participants toward a particular leadership style.
- **Relatable Situations:** Ensured that the scenarios cover a wide range of common leadership challenges, keeping them relevant and relatable to most leadership experiences.
- **Varying Team Performance:** The scenarios are designed to reflect fluctuating team performance, both improving and declining, to assess how leaders might adjust their style in response to these changes.

The questions and their classification are shown in Appendix Appendix A.

7.5 Developing the Answers

Through careful use of language, we present four equally viable leadership choices for each question, allowing participants to answer in a way that reflects their underlying leadership style. Each option is intended to present a plausible response to the scenario posed by the question, that aligns with varying levels of autonomy attributable to followers for each leadership style. Consequently, each choice is designed to progressively reflect increasing autonomy—from providing detailed instructions to delegating responsibility.

To prevent participants from simply following a perceived pattern of low to high autonomy, the order in which the answers are presented was randomised.

7.6 Challenges in Questionnaire Development

During the development of the questionnaire, several key challenges emerged:

- **Language Bias:** Ensuring that the language used in the questions and answers did not lead participants toward a particular leadership style was a major challenge. Words like "give," "allow," or "provide" often carried unintended positive or negative connotations, subtly favouring certain styles over others.

- **Differentiating Autonomy Levels:** Distinguishing between different levels of autonomy in the responses was difficult. During development, we frequently found that adjacent leadership styles on the autonomy scale felt too similar, making it hard for participants to clearly differentiate between them.
- **Representing Delegation:** Accurately representing delegation without framing it as “dumping” or “off-loading” work onto team members was another challenge. We aimed to present delegation as a proactive leadership action, where the leader maintains accountability for the outcome, ensuring that it is seen as an effective and responsible option.

7.7 Questionnaire results - Assigning Leadership Style

We determine a leader’s overall leadership style by averaging their responses to individual questions, with each response corresponding to an autonomy classification on a 1-to-4 scale. The resulting average places the leader within one of the four leadership styles—Directing, Coaching, Supporting, or Delegating which in turn provides an indication of the leader’s typical approach to granting autonomy. This result is also considered alongside further analysis of variability and consistency in their responses:

- **Variance:** Variance reflects the range of leadership styles chosen by the leader. Low variance indicates that the leader tended to choose more similar answers. High variance, on the other hand, may indicate that the leader chose answers that tended to be further from their average style, possibly reflecting uncertainty or adapting to different interpretations of the questions.
- **Entropy:** Entropy measures the consistency of a leader’s choices across the questions, showing how predictably they apply their preferred leadership styles. Low entropy might suggest a more focused leadership approach, whereas high entropy indicates a greater tendency to switch between styles depending on the situation.

By offering these insights, the questionnaire does more than simply categorise a leader’s style; it encourages leaders to reflect on how well their leadership decisions align with their followers’ capability and confidence.

7.8 Evolution of the LARS Questionnaire

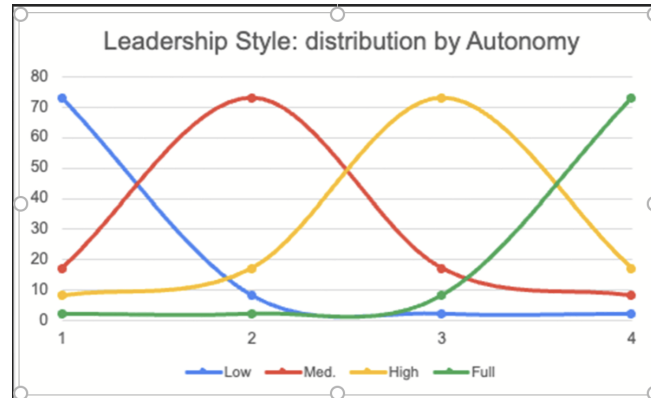


Figure 4: Leadership Style Distribution By Autonomy

We hypothesised a probability distribution of leadership styles across varying autonomy levels, as shown in figure 4 above. The graph demonstrates how different leadership styles (low, medium, high, and full autonomy) are distributed along the autonomy scale. To validate this, we randomly sampled 10,000 participants following the distribution seen in the figure.

From this random sampling, we observed that 15% of leaders selected “Directing” (low autonomy), 35% “Coaching” (medium autonomy), 35% “Supporting” (high autonomy), and 15% “Delegating” (full autonomy).

When comparing these results with our expected distribution, several questions showed significant deviations. Upon investigating, we identified potential biases in the phrasing of certain questions and answers. This led to revisions, where we adjusted specific wording to better capture unbiased leadership responses, ensuring that the questionnaire aligns more closely with our model’s intended distribution.

8 Conclusion

In conclusion, while Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) has endured for decades, its empirical validation has often been questioned. Despite this, its intuitive appeal has made it a staple in leadership discourse. Our approach aimed to address some of the theory's limitations by adapting elements that we identified as barriers to its predictive strength. The resulting method offers a more structured and potentially more predictive model of leadership adaptability. We hope that future empirical studies will confirm the effectiveness of these refinements, providing a stronger foundation for SLT's continued use in contemporary leadership practices.

9 References

1. Ceopedia. (n.d.). *Hersey and Blanchard model*. Retrieved October 17, 2024, from https://ceopedia.org/index.php/Hersey_and_Blanchard_model

10 Contact Information

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. Contact the author at:

Author Name: James McDermott

Company: AchieveIntelligence

Email: james.mcdermott@achieveintelligence.com

Website: <https://achieveintelligence.com/>

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Appendices

Appendix A Questions and Their Classification

1. **Question 1:** You have just taken over or formed your group, their initial performance is good. You wish to establish a shared vision and define the strategic direction that will align with both the organisation's objectives and the team's strengths. Do you:
(Team Performance: Good, Main Issue: Set Initial Strategic Direction)
2. **Question 2:** Recent information highlights some internal conflicts among your group members. Nevertheless, the group has a commendable history of performance and cohesion. They have worked well together over the past year, with all members being highly competent in their roles. Do you:
(Team Performance: Good, Main Issue: Conflict in normally cohesive group)
3. **Question 3:** Your team is facing an increasing workload with no additional resources. Despite the team's strong past performance, they are now showing signs of stress and decreased productivity. Do you:
(Team Performance: Decreasing, Main Issue: Overburdened Team)
4. **Question 4:** A sudden unplanned budget cut has affected the resources available to your team. You need to reallocate responsibilities and potentially reduce the scope of some projects.
(Team Performance: Increasing, Main Issue: Resource Reallocation)
5. **Question 5:** The team is struggling to solve a complex problem that requires collaboration across departments. Despite good individual performance, the collective effort is falling short. Do you:
(Team Performance: Good, Main Issue: Cross-department Collaboration Challenge)
6. **Question 6:** You have made a recent change to the team, adding a new member who brings a different skill set but is having difficulty integrating with the existing group. Do you:
(Team Performance: Good, Main Issue: Team Integration Challenge)
7. **Question 7:** The roles within your team have become stagnant, and there is a noticeable decrease in motivation. You need to revitalise the team by adjusting roles and responsibilities. Do you:
(Team Performance: Decreasing, Main Issue: Role Stagnation)
8. **Question 8:** The organisation is undergoing a restructure, and your team is uncertain about their future roles. There is growing anxiety negatively impacting performance. Do you:
(Team Performance: Good, Main Issue: Uncertainty during Restructure)
9. **Question 9:** The strategic direction your team is working to no longer aligns with the company's overall objectives and there is confusion about priorities. Do you:
(Team Performance: Good, Main Issue: Misaligned Objectives)
10. **Question 10:** Your team meetings have lost their focus and have turned into social gatherings rather than productive sessions. This has led to poor decision-making and lack of progress. Do you:
(Team Performance: Poor, Main Issue: Lack of Meeting Structure)
11. **Question 11:** There is a need to change roles within the team due to a recent merger, but the team is resistant to these changes, leading to a decrease in overall performance. Do you:
(Team Performance: Decreasing, Main Issue: Resistance to Role Changes)
12. **Question 12:** Your company is undergoing a major restructuring. You must lead your team through uncertainty whilst maintaining morale and productivity. Do you:
(Team Performance: Decreasing, Main Issue: Team Disengagement)

Appendix B Questions and Answers

Question 1: You have just taken over or formed your group; their initial performance is good. You wish to establish a shared vision and define the strategic direction that will align with both the organisation's objectives and the team's strengths. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Organise a workshop where you clearly outline the organisation's objectives and provide instructions on how the group can contribute to these goals. Break down the strategic direction into tasks and assign specific roles to each group member, ensuring that everyone understands their part.	Facilitate a series of collaborative sessions where group members contribute their ideas and insights. Provide guidance on aligning their contributions with the organisation's objectives, while also offering constructive feedback to help them refine their suggestions.	Involve the group in the process of crafting a shared vision statement by facilitating discussions and encouraging them to express their thoughts and ideas. Provide encouragement and support throughout the process but allow the team to steer the discussion.	Identify a capable and confident group member (or a small subset) and give them the responsibility of developing a strategic vision that aligns with the organisation's objectives. Empower them to make decisions and execute the plan, while you offer minimal guidance and trust in their ability to deliver.

Question 2: Recent information highlights some internal conflicts among your group members. Nevertheless, the group has a commendable history of performance and cohesion. They have worked well together over the past year, with all members being highly competent in their roles. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Develop a plan to address the internal conflicts your group is facing. Create guidelines and instructions for resolving these issues and monitor the implementation.	Organise workshops focused on improving group dynamics and resolving internal conflicts. Provide guidance on effective communication techniques and encourage team members to share their perspectives and solutions.	Organise team-building activities that emphasise collaboration and team cohesion. Use the activities as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate team performance.	Create an autonomous task force within the group, responsible for addressing a specific internal conflict. Allow this task force to develop and implement its own strategies for resolution.

Question 3: Your team is facing an increasing workload with no additional resources. Despite the team's strong past performance, they are now showing signs of stress and decreased productivity. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Clearly define priorities and set specific, achievable goals. Assign tasks with detailed instructions, closely monitor progress, to ensure the workload is managed effectively.	Provide ongoing, structured training on self-management, time management and effective prioritisation, allowing team members to take greater control of their workload.	Implement regular check-ins to assess progress and offer support as needed. Encourage team members to share ideas on how to streamline processes and improve efficiency.	Encourage the team to independently reorganise their workload and schedules to handle the increase. Consider the frequency of your typical team engagement to recognise signs of burnout early.

Question 4: A sudden unplanned budget cut has affected the resources available to your team. You need to reallocate responsibilities and potentially reduce the scope of some projects.

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Have the team focus on the most critical projects and reduce or eliminate lower-priority tasks. Provide clear instructions on reallocating resources.	Hold discussions to involve the team in decision-making about where cuts can be made with the least impact. Guide them in making tough decisions.	Engage the team in problem-solving to find innovative ways to work within the new budget constraints, encouraging collaboration and creative thinking.	Steer the team to make their own decisions about resource reallocation, trusting them to balance the needs of the projects with the available resources.

Question 5: The team is struggling to solve a complex problem that requires collaboration across departments. Despite good individual performance, the collective effort is falling short. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Set up clear roles and responsibilities for each team member in the collaboration. Provide explicit instructions on how to approach interdepartmental communication.	Facilitate regular interdepartmental meetings to share progress and address challenges. Instruct team members on effective collaboration and communication strategies.	Foster a collaborative environment by encouraging departments to work together on shared goals. Promote initiatives that build trust and cooperation between teams.	Assign the responsibility of managing interdepartmental collaboration to a capable team member, allowing them to develop strategies for effective teamwork.

Question 6: You have made a recent change to the team, adding a new member who brings a different skill set but is having difficulty integrating with the existing group. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Outline specific integration steps and personal objectives for the new member. Provide clear expectations and integration instructions to the team and monitor their progress.	Organise sessions where team members can learn about each other's strengths and work styles. Give feedback to help the new member integrate into the team.	Encourage team building activities that allow the new member to connect with others on a personal level. Acknowledge and highlight the new member's contributions.	Assign a mentor to naturally integrate the new member by encouraging them to take on responsibilities and participate in decision-making, fostering a sense of team cohesion.

Question 7: The roles within your team have become stagnant, and there is a noticeable decrease in motivation. You need to revitalise the team by adjusting roles and responsibilities. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Review the roles and identify sources of reduced motivation. Implement changes within the team to foster a new dynamic. Establish metrics and monitor their progress closely.	Discuss potential new roles with each team member and align their interests and strengths with new responsibilities. Provide guidance as they transition.	Involve the team in the process of redefining roles. Encourage them to take on new challenges and step out of their comfort zones.	Empower the team to revise its roles and responsibilities to address the stagnation. Trusting that members will take ownership of their transition and performance in these roles.

Question 8: The organisation is undergoing a restructure, and your team is uncertain about their future roles. There is growing anxiety negatively impacting performance. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Communicate the re-structure plan clearly and regularly to your team. Provide specific instructions on what to expect and how to prepare for potential changes.	Hold open forums to discuss the restructure, addressing team members' concerns. Provide guidance to help the team focus on their strengths during the transition.	Provide reassurance to the team and talk through their concerns. Reinforce their value to the organisation and the importance of their roles.	Give the management of the transition process to a trusted team member who can act as a liaison, providing updates and easing the team's concerns.

Question 9: The strategic direction your team is working to no longer aligns with the company's overall objectives and there is confusion about priorities. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Clearly define the new objectives and how they align with the company's goals. Provide specific steps for the team to adjust their focus and align with the new direction.	Engage the team in redefining its objectives to better align with the company's goals. Provide guidance and feedback as they develop new strategies.	Present the bigger picture to the group by discussing the company's goals and how their work contributes. Encourage them to suggest adjustments to their objectives.	Discuss the priorities with the team and identify a team member (or small subset) to take ownership of realigning the objectives. Trust them to collaborate and implement plans that align with the company's overall strategy.

Question 10: Your team meetings have lost their focus and have turned into social gatherings rather than productive sessions. This has led to poor decision-making and lack of progress. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Establish a clear agenda for meetings, with defined goals and time allocations for each topic. Instruct the team to adhere to this structure to ensure focused and productive discussions.	Organise training on effective meeting management. Show team members how to contribute to holding productive team sessions and provide feedback on meeting outcomes.	Encourage team members to take turns leading meetings, with a focus on maintaining structure and achieving goals. Help them in staying on track.	Give the responsibility of meeting management to the most capable team member who can develop and implement a structure that keeps the meetings focused and productive.

Question 11: There is a need to change roles within the team due to a recent merger, but the team is resistant to these changes, leading to a decrease in overall performance. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Clearly communicate the necessity of the role changes and outline the steps for transition. Provide clear expectations and closely monitor the transition process.	Hold individual and group discussions to understand the resistance and work through concerns. Provide guidance as team members adapt to their new roles.	Involve the team in the process of defining new roles and responsibilities, providing reassurance by highlighting benefits and encouraging them to embrace the changes.	Empower team members to lead their transition into new roles, giving them the freedom to define how they will approach their new responsibilities.

Question 12: Your company is undergoing a major restructuring. You must lead your team through uncertainty whilst maintaining morale and productivity. Do you:

Directing	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Provide clear, structured communication about the changes and how they will affect the team. Assign specific roles in the transition to keep team members engaged.	Focus on maintaining engagement with the team by recognising their contributions and involving them in decision-making processes during the transition.	Facilitate open discussions about the changes and encourage them to express their concerns and ideas. Reinforce the importance of their roles.	Give the responsibility of a transition project to a motivated team member, allowing them to take charge and drive engagement among their peers.