

The 3-D Management Style Theory

A Typology Based On Task and Relationships Orientations

W. J. Reddin

Trainers are currently showing great interest in the classification of the typical behavior of managers. This has also occupied the attention of political and administrative scientists, sociologists and psychologists for some years. It is widely recognized that such classifications may enable organizational, group, or even personal life to be better understood and changed.

Trainers though have special needs. They must have a classification or a cognitive map, that is as close to reality as possible. If they use one that is not, it will be seen as too gimmicky, unreal, too academic, too soft-nosed, or simply useless.

Figure 1 shows six managerial typologies, used to varying degrees, together with their apparent basis of classification.

The Two Underlying Variables

Speaking very generally, the underlying theoretical components of four of these six psychological typologies are two fundamental personality variables which might be called Task Orientation and Relationships Orientation. These two variables go under the names shown in Figure 2.

The importance of these two underlying variables is well grounded in empirical findings, in particular the Ohio State Leadership Studies, the Michigan Leadership Studies, and the work of Bales² at Harvard.

Ohio State Leadership Studies

The Ohio State Leadership Studies isolated two independent factors to describe management behavior. One is initiating structure and the other is

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consideration. As they are independent, a score on one factor may be combined with any score on the other. It

appears that a high score on both tends to correlate best with effectiveness, but that some studies show that

Figure 1. Psychological Managerial Typologies

<i>Author</i>	<i>Basis of Classification</i>	<i>Types</i>
Lewin - Lippitt - White ¹²	Initiation Guidance	Democratic, Laissez-Faire, Autocratic
McGregor ¹⁴	Assumptions About the Nature of Man	Theory "X", Theory "Y"
Jennings ¹¹	Power Impulse, Hierarchical Orientation, Order Impulse, et al	Abdicrat, Bureaucrat, Autocrat, Democrat, Neurocrat, Executive
Blake - Mouton ³	Concern for Production Concern for People	1,1; 1,9; 9,1; 5,5; 9,9
Raskin ¹⁸	Factor Analysis	Leadership Skills, Hostile Self Seeking, Dependent - Exploited, Interpersonal Orderly
Carron ⁴	Consideration Scores Structure Scores	Laissez-Faire; Democratic, Autocratic, Paternalistic

Figure 2. Two Underlying Variables

<i>Author</i>	<i>Task Orientation</i>	<i>Relationships Orientation</i>
Blake - Mouton	Concern for Production	Concern for People
McGregor	Theory "X"	Theory "Y"
Carron	Structure	Consideration
Lewin - Lippitt - White	Initiation	Guidance

low scores on both may lead to effectiveness. In any case, a certain minimum amount of consideration appears to be critical.

A factor analytic study by Halpin and Winer,¹⁰ part of the Ohio State Leadership Studies, suggests that most of the individual differences in leadership performance can be explained by positing these two variables. In their study of air-crew commanders they found that these two factors together accounted for 83 per cent of the differences in leader behavior.

Michigan Leadership Studies

The Michigan Leadership Studies, based on extensive interview work, produced a continuum with production-centered at one end and employee-centered at the other. This continuum grew, in part, out of boys' club studies. On some dimensions, democratically-conducted boys' clubs did better than clubs led in an autocratic or laissez-faire manner. While there is a great deal of evidence that the employee-centered leadership is often effective, it is clear also that pro-

duction-centered leadership is sometimes just as effective.

Bales' Studies

The studies of small groups at Harvard have derived two leadership types; the Task Leader and the Social-Emotional Leader. These appear to be independent leadership types. To be high on one does not correlate with being high on the other.

This task and relationship dichotomy is a widespread social phenomenon. Zelditch²¹ studied role differentiation in the basic family unit in fifty-six societies. He found that, within the family, there was a characteristic differentiation into the task specialist and maintenance specialist roles. The male adult was typically the task specialist, the female adult, the maintenance specialist.

It seems then that many studies refer to similar underlying dimensions. While each study defines the dimension in its own way, and not all posit independence, they might reasonably be presented by the terms, Task Orientation and Relationships Orientation

Figure 3. Research Support for Two Underlying Variables

	<i>Task Orientation</i>	<i>Relationships Orientation</i>
Ohio State	Structure	Consideration
Michigan	Production Centered	Employee Centered
Bales	Task Leadership	Socio-Emotional Leadership
Zelditch	Task Specialist	Maintenance Specialist

which appear to capture the common thread of meaning.

That task and relationships orientation are fundamental and independent measures of managerial performance has high face validity. What is there that cannot be said to be part of either the manager's job or the people who inhabit the manager's environment? Many studies such as Raskin¹⁸ support these two measures as fundamental and independent.

Definitions which appear to be broad enough to incorporate the findings, orientations, and definitions, of the studies cited are:

Task Orientation is defined as the extent to which a manager is likely to direct his own and his subordinates' efforts toward goal attainment. Those with high task orientation tend to direct more than others through planning, communicating, informing, scheduling and introducing new ideas.

Relationships Orientation is defined as the extent to which a manager is likely to have highly personal job relationships characterized by mutual trust, respect for subordinates' ideas and consideration of their feelings. Those with high relationships or orientation have good rapport with other and good two-way communication.

These definitions relate closely to Structures (S) and Consideration (C) of the "Leadership Opinion Questionnaire"

(Fleishman, 1951, 1953, 1957, 1960).^{5, 6, 7, 8}

The two dimensions of the Leadership Opinion Questionnaire are independent ($r = -.01$) when several studies are considered together, although higher correlations ($r = -.47$) have been reported on individual studies.

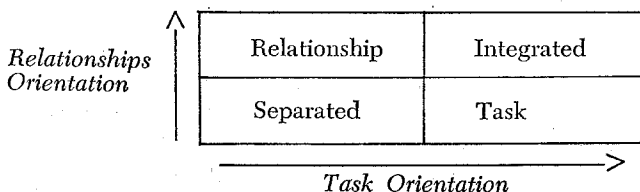
The Non-Normative Styles

If these variables are treated as independent and continuous, the four type typology of Latent Non-Normative styles is obtained.

No claims can be made that any one of these four styles is more effective than the other. Attempts to consider "the manager" as a single, internally undifferentiated job function have proven consistently fruitless. It is now clear that management jobs vary widely in the behavior required for successful performance. Thus, while task and relationships orientation may be powerful personality factors, any particular combination is not, in itself, effective or otherwise. Some jobs, to be performed effectively, demand a high relationships orientation and low task orientation. Some require the opposite.

In the mid 1920's, E. K. Strong, Jr.²⁰ attempted to develop an "executive" scale for his vocational interest blank. The scale he attempted to de-

Figure 4. Latent Styles



velop did not meet the validity standards for the Strong Vocational Interest Blank and was not used in it. Instead he successfully developed scales for production managers, sales managers, personnel managers and others. This supports the view that the positing of an ideal manager type may be less useful than positing the existence of several possible ideal types.

That management jobs are significantly different from one another is further supported by the finding that different jobs appear to demand or create different values in effective managers. Nash¹⁷ points out that the economic scale of the Allport-Vernon Study of Values correlates with criteria of management effectiveness positively in a large mail order house to distinctly negatively related for public administrators (Mandell),¹⁵ (Mandell & Adkins).¹⁶

An important finding (Fleishman & Peters)⁹ was that the consideration and structure scores of managers in a manufacturing organization they investigated were not correlated with the effectiveness scores given by top management. Thus effectiveness, in this one organization at least, appears as an independent variable.

Anderson¹ reviewed forty-nine studies in which authoritarian and democratic leadership have been experimentally compared. He concluded that the evidence available demonstrates that neither authoritarian nor democratic leadership is consistently associated with better performance and that therefore the authoritarian-democratic construct provides an inadequate conception of leadership behavior.

All this does appear to be rather strong evidence that when speaking of managers, in general, it is inappropriate to consider that any one combination of task and relationships orientation is more likely to lead to

effectiveness than another. It seems best then to treat as non-normative the four styles, created by dichotomizing the task and relationships variables.

Normative Style Typologies

Several typologies however do posit a single normatively good type. For example theory "Y" of McGregor and the 9,9 style of Blake. They each express a particular management philosophy. This arises in part because these and some other typologies are culture bound. Most of them, all North American, give some positive value to the permissive, democratic, human-relations approach. McGregor uses two types which might be simply labeled normatively as "Good" and "Bad." All this is nothing new. As Liu¹³ points out, this "Good" and "Bad" classification was used in China in the 11th century and before. There were the Chun-Tzu (Virtuous Man) and Hsiao-Jen (Unworthy Person). The Confucian political philosophy used this dichotomy to classify bureaucrats:

The virtuous ones are those loyal to the state or the sovereign, steadfast in their moral and political principles, cordial toward their colleagues, kind toward the common people, and dedicated to the Confucian ideal of government, which is to improve both the material welfare and moral well-being of society.

Liu points out that in the Chinese cultural environment, a moralistic basis was more important than a rational-legal basis for classification. This Chinese model, so obviously culture bound, leads us to look at current typologies to see to what extent they suffer from this. Obviously, most of them do.

The arguments for having a single normatively good type are many, though the notion itself is theoretically

unsound. Many management style typologies are directed toward managers who appear to want to be told how to act; some of the typologies are used as identification models in the design of management development courses where having one type may facilitate the course design but not necessarily a manager's personal growth.

When the typologist bases his theoretical constructs on a particular work situation, he might be expected to posit an effective type that fits that situation. Unfortunately, however, there has been a tendency to call the particular typologies general typologies. Blake, from his work with top management in an industrial situation, has developed an effective type with a high task and relationships orientation. This may be correct for the top management in an industry in the U.S.A. but it may also be limited to it. Similarly, McGregor, in the context of his work in university administration, has produced a "Y" type with a very strong coaching supportive role. For teachers or university administrators who need not meet a payroll this type probably is the best one. It may not always be suited to industry.

The style of an effective manager in the army, the church, the civil service, and industry, may all be different. A

style typology must recognize these differences if it is to be most useful. Positing a single effective style is inappropriate. A useful typology must allow that a variety of styles may be effective or ineffective depending on the situation.

Resolving The Normative Issue

If any style may be less-effective or more-effective, depending on circumstances, then each Non-Normative or Latent Style will have two behavioral counterparts, one less-effective and the other more-effective. Thus the four style typology produced by dichotomizing the two underlying variable of task and relationships orientation, is expanded to a twelve style typology of four less-effective types, four latent types and four more-effective types.¹⁹

Here is a capsule description of the eight types:

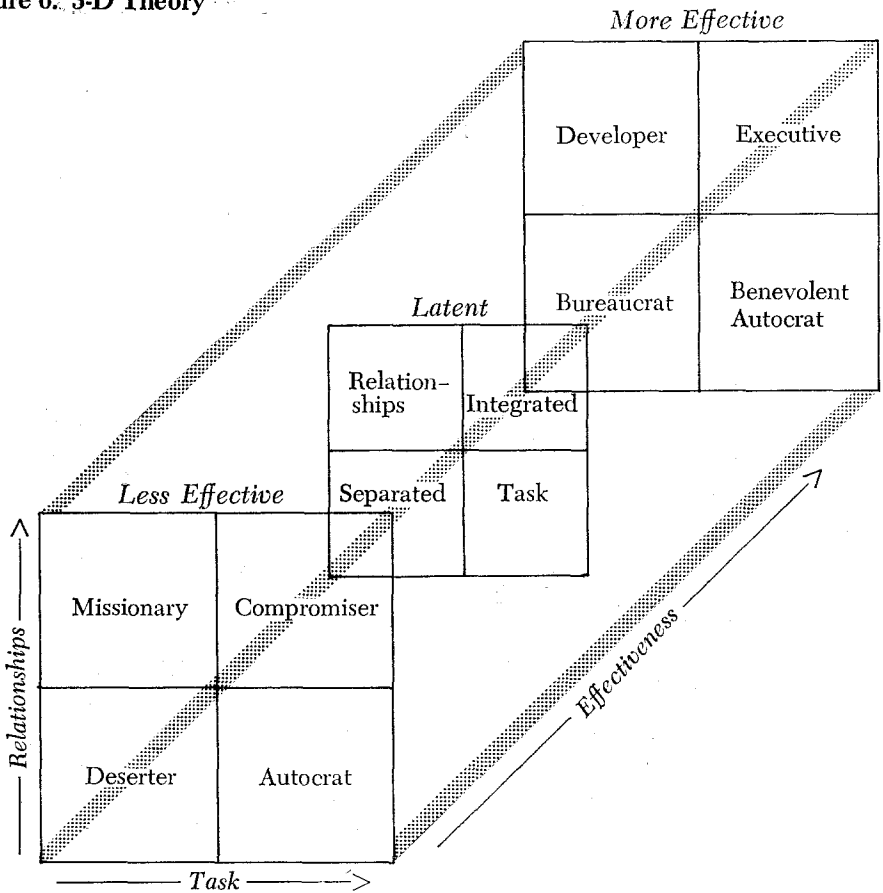
Deserter. One who often displays his lack of interest in both task and relationships. He is ineffective not only because of his lack of interest but also because of his effect on morale. He may not only desert but may also hinder the performance of others through intervention or by withholding information.

Missionary. One who puts harmony and relationships above other considerations. He is ineffective because his

Figure 5. The Twelve 3-D Styles

	No Orientation	Relationships Orientation	Task Orientation	Task and Relationships Orientation
Ineffective	Deserter	Missionary	Autocrat	Compromiser
Latent	Separated	Relationships	Task	Integrated
Effective	Bureaucrat	Developer	Benevolent Autocrat	Executive

Figure 6. 3-D Theory



desire to see himself and be seen as a “good person” prevents him from risking a disruption of relationships in order to get production.

Autocrat. One who puts the immediate task before all other considerations. He is ineffective in that he makes it obvious that he has no concern for relationships and has little confidence in others. While many may fear him they also dislike him and are thus motivated to work only when he applies direct pressure.

Compromiser. One who recognizes the advantages of being oriented to both task and relationships but who is incapable or unwilling to make sound decisions. Ambivalence and compromise are his stock-in-trade. The strongest influence in his decision making is the most recent or heaviest pressure. He tries to minimize immediate problems rather than maximize long term production. He attempts to keep those people who can influence his career as happy as possible.

Bureaucrat. One who is not really interested in either task or relationships but who, by simply following the rules, does not make this too obvious and thus does not let it affect morale. He is effective in that he follows the rules and maintains a mask of interest.

Developer. One who places implicit trust in people. He sees his job as primarily concerned with developing the talents of others and of providing a work atmosphere conducive to maximizing individual satisfaction and motivation. He is effective in that the work environment he creates is conducive to his subordinates developing commitment to both himself and the job. While successful in obtaining high production, his high relationships orientation would on occasions lead him to put the personal development of others before short or long run production, even though this personal development may be unrelated to the job and the development of successors to his position.

Benevolent Autocrat. One who places implicit trust in himself and is concerned with both the immediate and long run task. He is effective in that he has a skill in inducing others to do what he wants them to do without creating enough resentment so that production might drop. He creates, with some skill, an environment which minimizes aggression toward him and which maximizes obedience to his commands.

Executive. One who sees his job as effectively maximizing the effort of others in relationship to the short and long run task. He sets high standards for production and performance and recognizes that because of individual differences and expectations that he will have to treat everyone differently. He is effective in that his commitment to both task and relationships is evident to all. This acts as a powerful motivator. His effectiveness in obtaining results with both of these dimensions also leads naturally to optimum production.

Effectiveness

The essential difference between less-effective types and more-effective types is often expressed in terms of the qualities a manager possesses. When a single effective type is posited, this amounts to a return to the trait theory of leadership. A better explanation of effectiveness would appear to lay in the extent to which a manager's style, his combination of task and relationships orientation, fits the style demands of the situation he is in. Five elements compose the style demands. Two pairs of elements are related.

The third dimension is thus an output variable that is a function of the appropriateness of the underlying style to the demands of the job. A separated underlying style, for instance, might prove more-effective in a job

Style Demands of Situation:

1. The style demands of the job.
2. The style demands of the superior:
 - A. The corporate philosophy
 - B. The style of the superior
3. The style demand of subordinates:
 - A. The expectations of subordinates
 - B. The styles of subordinates

where an orientation to routine was demanded; thus, the Bureaucrat style. The same underlying style in an aggressive sales organization would probably produce Deserter-style tendencies.

Management style theories such as these have more than simply entertainment value. Once a realistic set of types of managers has been established and agreed on, industry can use it in many ways, and has done so. Management appraisal is made much more effective, as is management counselling. Several tests using the 3-D theory have been developed which may be used in appraisal or counselling. The appraisal tests compare a manager's leanings to each of

the eight types with that of other managers. The counselling tests allow a manager to say what he thinks is the best style behavior under various conditions; his answers are then discussed with him.

A recently-developed use is that of training and organizational change. Style models are used as the central theme of training courses. They provide a concrete framework by which behavior on such courses may be discussed. Organizational change is also facilitated as organizations too have styles which may be diagnosed, held up for inspection, and parts modified as necessary. The 3-D typology has been used in all of these ways.

In Summary

3-D Theory Distinctiveness:

- Not normative, culture-bound, or tied to single stereotype ideal national or industrial style.
- Four potentially more-effective styles.
- Effectiveness is function of match of style to situation.
- Key managerial qualities leading to effectiveness not task and relationships orientation but diagnostic skill and style flexibility.
- The five situational elements identified.
- Several observable styles included which previously have received little attention.
- Effectiveness is emphasized.
- Clear theoretical framework.

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