



BUS.AL7 Leadership Styles and Theories of Leadership

AQA 7132 · Calculators not allowed · about 60 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Use full sentences for the longer responses (questions 10 and 14). Show any brief reasoning for 2 or 3 mark explain answers. Time guidance: 60 minutes.

1 Which one of the following best describes an autocratic leadership style in a business context?

- ☐ A) Leaders involve employees in decisions and seek consensus
- ☐ B) Leaders make decisions alone and instruct employees what to do
- ☐ C) Leaders act as a friendly parent, making decisions but caring for staff
- ☐ D) Leaders give staff freedom to make their own decisions

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Define the autocratic leadership style, as used in organisations.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Define the democratic (participative) leadership style in a workplace.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Define the paternalistic leadership style as it applies to managers and staff.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Define the laissez-faire leadership style in an organisational setting.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 State one key assumption of McGregor's Theory X about workers, used here as a lens on leadership assumptions.

(Total for Question 6 is 1 mark)

7 State one key assumption of McGregor's Theory Y about workers, used as an alternative leadership lens.

(Total for Question 7 is 1 mark)

8 Explain one likely effect of an autocratic leadership style on employee morale in a small, stable manufacturing firm.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Explain one likely effect of a democratic leadership style on the speed of decision-making in a busy customer-service organisation.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

10 Identify the likely leadership style used by the manager in this scenario and explain one likely effect on organisational performance. Scenario: In a small tech start-up, the founder rarely checks daily work, gives teams autonomy to choose tools and priorities, and only intervenes for quarterly strategy reviews.

(Total for Question 10 is 6 marks)

11 State two situational factors a leader should consider when choosing a leadership style.

(Total for Question 11 is 2 marks)

12 Explain how a workforce with high skill and experience would influence a manager to choose a particular leadership style. Give one effect.

(Total for Question 12 is 2 marks)

13 Explain one likely effect of paternalistic leadership on staff turnover in a medium-sized retail business.

(Total for Question 13 is 2 marks)

14 Evaluate whether one leadership style is always the most effective for a business. Make a judgement supported by evidence and situational reasoning from business contexts.

(Total for Question 14 is 9 marks)

Mark scheme · BUS.AL7 Leadership Styles and Theories of Leadership

Question 1

- **B1** B cao
- **Answer: B**

Question 2

- **B1** states that the leader makes decisions themselves and gives orders to staff
- **B1** may include close supervision and little input from employees, oe
- **Answer: A leader makes decisions themselves and gives orders to staff, often with close supervision and little employee input.**

Question 3

- **B1** states that the leader involves employees in decision-making and seeks input or consensus
- **B1** may include delegation and shared responsibility, oe
- **Answer: A leader involves employees in decisions, seeks input or consensus, and often delegates responsibility.**

Question 4

- **B1** states leader acts like a parent, taking decisions but showing concern for employee welfare
- **B1** may combine firm direction with support or benefits for staff, oe
- **Answer: A leader who makes decisions for the business but shows concern for employee welfare, combining direction with supportive actions.**

Question 5

- **B1** states that the leader gives employees freedom to make decisions and minimal direction
- **B1** may include hands-off approach and high delegation, oe
- **Answer: A hands-off leader who gives employees freedom to make decisions, providing minimal direct instruction and high delegation.**

Question 6

- **B1** workers are assumed to dislike work and avoid responsibility, requiring close supervision
- **Answer: Workers are assumed to dislike work and avoid responsibility, needing close supervision.**

Question 7

- **B1** workers are assumed to be motivated, to accept responsibility and to seek fulfilment at work
- **Answer: Workers are assumed to be motivated, accept responsibility and seek fulfilment at work.**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies an effect, e.g. lower morale or reduced job satisfaction for some employees
- **B1** develops reasoning, e.g. because employees have little input and feel undervalued, which may reduce motivation
- **Answer: Autocratic leadership can lower morale because employees have little input and may feel undervalued, reducing motivation and job satisfaction.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies an effect, e.g. slower decision-making or longer discussions
- **B1** develops reasoning, e.g. because involving staff and seeking consensus takes time, which can delay urgent decisions
- **Answer: Democratic leadership can slow decision-making because involving staff and seeking consensus takes time, delaying urgent choices.**

Question 10

- **B1** identifies the style as laissez-faire, cao
- **B1** identifies a plausible effect on performance, e.g. higher innovation or variable performance
- **B1** explains how autonomy can increase creativity and rapid problem-solving, improving innovation
- **B1** offers a further developed point, e.g. lack of oversight can lead to inconsistent quality or missed deadlines
- **B1** links the inconsistent quality point to an outcome for overall organisational performance
- **B1** provides coherent application to the start-up context, showing both positive and negative effects
- **Answer: The style is laissez-faire. Autonomy can boost innovation and quick problem-solving, improving product development, but lack of oversight can produce inconsistent quality or missed deadlines, harming overall performance.**

Question 11

- **B1** workforce skill and experience, or seniority
- **B1** urgency of tasks/deadline pressure, or organisational culture
- **Answer: Any two, e.g. workforce skill and experience; task urgency or organisational culture.**

Question 12

- **B1** identifies that high skill suggests a more participative or laissez-faire style, e.g. greater delegation
- **B1** explains effect, e.g. increased autonomy can raise motivation and productivity, since skilled staff are trusted
- **Answer: High skill and experience make delegation or laissez-faire appropriate, because trusting staff with decisions can raise motivation and productivity.**

Question 13

- **B1** identifies an effect, e.g. reduced turnover or increased loyalty
- **B1** develops the point, e.g. because staff feel cared for and supported, increasing retention
- **Answer: Paternalistic leadership can reduce staff turnover because employees feel cared for and supported, which increases loyalty and retention.**

Question 14

- **Level 1** (1-3): Offers simple, undeveloped assertions about leadership styles, with little or no situational application and no clear judgement.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Gives developed points about one or two styles and some situational evidence, but the analysis is partial and the judgement is not fully justified.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Weighs strengths and weaknesses of different styles with clear situational application and reaches a balanced, justified conclusion about whether a single style can be always effective.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments that no single style is always best: effectiveness depends on task urgency, workforce skill, organisational culture, business size and external pressures, so situational flexibility is needed.
 - Examples where autocratic can be most effective: emergency situations, simple routine tasks, low-skilled workforce or tight deadlines where fast, centralised decisions are critical.
 - Examples where democratic is most effective: knowledge-based teams, complex decisions requiring buy-in, where employee engagement improves innovation and quality.
 - Examples where paternalistic can be effective: organisations valuing loyalty and long-term retention, where staff respond to leaders who provide support and clear direction.
 - Examples where laissez-faire can be effective: highly skilled, creative teams, research and development units where autonomy fosters innovation, but risks inconsistent standards.
 - Consideration of McGregor Theory X and Y assumptions: a Theory X view may favour autocratic control, while Theory Y supports participative approaches; matching assumptions to reality matters.
 - Evaluation may conclude that no one style is always most effective; instead, leaders who adapt style to context and who combine elements of styles tend to be more effective.
 - Judgement should be supported with reasoned examples and a clear final stance, for example endorsing flexible, contingent leadership rather than a single permanent style.