

Complexity Theory and Leadership for Turbulent Environments

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ABSTRACT Businesses and their environments are complex adaptive systems, and are therefore too complex to be 'managed' by a single leader. Thus, the traditional view of a leader as a decision-maker, instructing and controlling the organisation is inappropriate in complex/turbulent environments. A qualitative, case method, using depth interviews, investigated leadership activities in four companies, in a country with a turbulent environment, to identify if self-organising leadership is more effective in turbulent environments than traditional bureaucratic management. The findings showed that self-organising leadership appears superior in turbulent environments. These findings and their implications are discussed, and recommendations for further research are made.