

**BEHAVIORAL AND SITUATIONAL MODELS OF LEADERSHIP**

**Identifying Leader Behaviors**

A number of researchers have focused on the question of whether specific behaviors, rather than traits, make some leaders more effective than others.

1. If behavior studies turned up critical behavioral determinants of leadership, people could be trained to be leaders.
2. Four main leader behavior studies are carried out.
  - a. University of Iowa Studies—Kurt Lewin and associates—studied three leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire.
  - b. The Ohio State Studies identified two important dimensions of leader behavior—initiating structure and consideration.
  - c. University of Michigan Studies identified two dimensions of leader behavior—employee oriented and production oriented.
  - d. The Managerial Grid is a two-dimensional grid for appraising leadership styles using “concern for people” and “concern for production” as dimensions.
3. Predicting leadership success involved more than isolating a few leader traits or behavior. This “failure” to attain consistent results led to a focus on situational influences.

University of Iowa researcher, Kurt Lewin, conducted some of the earliest attempts to identify effective leadership behaviors.

1. Three types of leadership behavior styles were identified.
  - a. **Autocratic** leaders tend to make unilateral decisions, dictate work methods, limit worker knowledge about goals to just the next step to be performed, and sometimes give feedback that is punitive.
  - b. **Democratic** leaders tend to involve the group in decision making, let the group determine work methods, make overall goals known, and use feedback as an opportunity for helpful coaching.
  - c. **Laissez-faire** leaders generally give the group complete freedom, provide necessary materials, participate only to answer questions, and avoid giving feedback.
2. Research on the comparative effectiveness of the three leadership styles was inconclusive.
  - a. The laissez-fair style was ineffective.
  - b. The effectiveness of the autocratic and democratic leaders varied, although satisfaction levels tended to be higher in the democratically led groups.

**Michigan Studies**

The Michigan studies compared leadership within groups already identified as effective or as ineffective.

1. A continuum was developed from employee-centered to job-centered approaches.
2. With the **employee-centered** approach, managers channel their main attention to the human aspects of subordinates’ problems and to the development of an effective work group dedicated to high performance goals.
3. With the **job-centered** approach (or production-centered approach), leaders divide the work into routine tasks, determine work methods, and closely supervise workers to ensure that the methods are followed and productivity

- standards are met.
4. The outcomes of the study were mixed, but they sometimes showed that the high-producing work units tended to have job-centered supervisors.

### Ohio State Studies

Researchers at the Ohio State University developed a questionnaire to measure leaders' behaviors and to correlate them with group performance and satisfaction.

1. Two behaviors were identified as particularly important.
  - a. **Initiating structure** is the degree to which a leader defines his or her own role and the roles of subordinates in terms of achieving unit goals.
  - b. **Consideration** is the degree to which a leader builds mutual trust with subordinates, respects their ideas, and shows concern for their feelings.
2. In contrast to the Iowa and Michigan studies, the two behaviors were considered to be independent variables and are best illustrated with separate continuums rather than the single continuum developed in the Iowa and Michigan studies.
3. The leader who is high in both initiating structure and consideration was thought to be the most effective, but further research indicated that such a generalization was too simplistic.

**The Mouton-Blake Managerial Grid** uses concern for people and concern for production as its two axes.

1. Used a training device, the grid enables managers to understand their own styles.
  2. The manager high in concern for people and concern for production is the theoretical ideal.
- a. Research into male-female stereotypes of management styles do not hold. Most studies indicate that male and female leaders are similar in the amounts of interpersonal and task behaviors exhibited.

### Situational Theories

- A. Lack of success in identifying an effective leadership style generalize-able to all situations led to consideration of situational factors—i.e., any particular style of leadership could be effective depending on the situation.
  1. **Situational theories** are theories that emphasize situations.
  2. Contingency theories are theories of leadership because they hold that appropriate leader traits or behaviors are contingent, or dependent, on relevant situational characteristics.
- B. **Fielder's contingency model** is a situational approach originally developed by Fred Fielder and his associates.
  1. A leader's **LPC orientation** is a personality trait measured by the least preferred coworker (LPC) scale.
  2. The LPC scale is a 1 to 8 rating by the leader of "the person with whom the leader can work least well."

3. The interpretation of the scale has been controversial, but there is an orthodox interpretation at present.
    - a. Low-LPC leaders describe a least-preferred coworker in relatively negative terms and are likely to be task-motivated.
    - b. High-LPC leaders describe a least-preferred coworker in relatively positive terms and are likely to be people-motivated.
  4. Fielder maintains that management style or LPC orientation is difficult to change, so it is important to carefully match the leader's personality to situational factors that favor the leader's prospects for success.
    - a. The situation should be assessed to determine the degree of situational control for the leader.
      - 1) The most important situational variable is leader-member relations, i.e., the extent to which the leader has the support of group members.
      - 2) Task structure is the extent to which a task is clearly specified with regard to goals, methods, and standards of performance.
      - 3) Position power is the amount of power that the organization gives the leader to accomplish necessary tasks. b. Leadership style should be matched with situation.
        - 1) Low-LPC leaders do best in situations of either high favorability or extremely low favorability.
        - 2) High-LPC leaders do best in situations of moderate favorability
  5. Recent analyses are tending to support Fielder's original research do suggest that there are additional factors at work that are not accounted for in the contingency model.
- C. The **normative leadership model** is a model that helps leaders assess important situational factors that affect the extent to which they should involve subordinates in particular decisions.
1. Five types of management method for solving group problems are delineated.
    - a. Autocratic I (AI): You solve the problem or make the decision yourself using present information.
    - b. Autocratic II (AII): You obtain necessary information from subordinates without involving them in the decision, and make the decision yourself.
    - c. Consultative I (CI): You share the problem with the relevant subordinates individually, then you make a decision which may or may not be influenced by subordinates.
    - d. Consultative II (CII): You obtain ideas and suggestions from subordinates in a group session, but make the decision yourself.
    - e. Group II (GII): You share the problem with your subordinates as a group and coordinate their efforts to devise a solution.
  2. A decision about which method to use is guided by the answer to eight questions.
    - a. How important is the technical quality of this decision?
    - b. How important is subordinate commitment to this decision?
    - c. Do you have sufficient information to make a high-quality decision?
    - d. Is the problem well structured?
    - e. If you were to make the decision by yourself, is it reasonably certain that

- your subordinates would be committed to the decision?
      - f. Do subordinates share the organizational goals to be attained in solving this problem?
      - g. Is conflict among subordinates over preferred solution likely?
      - h. Do subordinates have sufficient information to make a high-quality decision?
  - 3. The revised normative leadership model can be used in either of two variations: when developing subordinates is more important than conserving time in decision making or when minimizing time is more important.
- D. The **situational leadership theory**, developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, is on the premise that leaders need to alter their behaviors depending on the readiness of followers.
  - 1. Two leader behaviors are considered to be independent dimensions.
    - a. Task behavior is the extent to which the leader engages in spelling out the duties and responsibilities of an individual or group.
    - b. Relationship behavior is the extent to which the leader engages in two-way or multi-way communication
  - 2. The four levels of readiness defined along a continuum from low to high readiness prescribe the appropriate leadership style.
    - a. Telling is used in situations of low readiness, when followers are unable and also unwilling or too insecure to take responsibility for a given task.
    - b. Selling is used for low to moderate readiness, when followers are unable to take responsibility, but are willing or feel confident to do so.
    - c. Participating is used with moderate to high readiness, when followers are able to take responsibility, but are unwilling or too insecure to do so.
    - d. Delegating is used for high readiness, when followers are able and willing or confident enough to take appropriate responsibility.
  - 3. Leaders should help increase the task-related readiness of their followers as quickly as feasible by adjusting their own leadership styles.
  - 4. Studies have found the situational theory of leadership particularly effective with newly hired employees and employees in new jobs.
  - 5. Recent analyses are tending to support Fielder's original research do suggest that there are additional factors at work that are not accounted for in the contingency model.

The **path-goal theory** of leadership attempts to explain how leader behavior impacts the motivation and job satisfaction of subordinates.

- 1. The theory gets its name from the fact that it focuses on how leaders influence the way that subordinates perceive work goals and possible paths to reaching both work goals (performance) and personal goals (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards).
- 2. Path-goal theory relies heavily on the expectancy theory of motivation.
- 3. Four major leader behaviors can be used to affect subordinate perceptions of paths and goals.
  - a. **Directive** leader behavior involves letting subordinates know what is expected of them, providing guidance about work methods, developing work schedules, identifying work evaluation standards, and indicating the basis for outcomes or rewards.
  - b. **Supportive** leader behavior entails showing concern for the status, well-being, and needs of subordinates; doing small things to make the

- work more pleasant; and being friendly and approachable.
- c. **Participative** leader behavior is characterized by consulting with subordinates, encouraging their suggestions, and carefully considering their ideas when making decisions.
  - d. **Achievement-oriented** leader behavior involves setting challenging goals, expecting subordinates to perform at their highest level, and conveying a high degree of confidence in subordinates. Situational factors must be taken into account when choosing a leader behavior.
1. Subordinate characteristics include personality traits, skills, abilities, and needs.
  2. Context characteristics include the task itself, the work group, and the organization's formal authority system.

Diagnosis in terms of expectancy theory leads to a choice of appropriate leader behavior and involves three steps.

1. Think in terms of the elements used in expectancy theory to diagnose various situational factors in terms of their effects on the three expectancy-theory elements (the path).
  - a. Effort-performance is the probability that our efforts will lead to the required performance level.
  - b. Performance-outcome expectancy is the probability that our successful performance will lead to certain outcomes or rewards.
  - c. Valence is the anticipated value of the outcomes or rewards.
- 1) Diagnose situational factors that can be changed to enhance the expectancy theory elements are targeted.
- 2) Appropriate leader behaviors are initiated to change the situational factors.

Path-goal theory encompasses multiple leader behaviors and a potentially large number of situational variables. Its flexibility provides a useful framework about likely impacts of leader behavior on subordinate motivation, goal attainment, and job satisfaction.