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A SYNTHESIS OF LEADERSHIP THEORY TO DATE

by

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

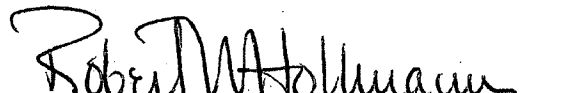
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Preface

A vital element of managerial activity is leadership, but management is not synonymous with leadership. The process of management is most commonly defined in terms of the functions: planning, organizing, staffing, influencing and controlling. Basically, leadership may be defined as a process of directing and coordinating a group's activities toward some collective task accomplishment and is characterized by the willingness of others to follow. Thus leadership has a much narrower focus than does management; the prime function of leadership is to identify, formulate and articulate goals for the group.

CHAPTER ONE

Overview of Leadership Theory

According to BcCall (1977) "The last decade has seen the appearance of at least four different 'contingency' models, as well as open system and path-goal models, not to mention vertical dyad and transactional approaches, integrative and normative models, and behavior and four-factor theories. Moreover, the 'growing mountain' of research data has produced an impressive mass of contradictions."

"While numerous models, theories, and approaches exist, the accumulated research has not yet produced a unified and generally accepted paradigm for research on the topic, much less a clear understanding of the phenomenon." (BcCall, 1977, p. 8).

Naturally enough, many of the early theorists attempted to isolate personal characteristics/traits which would distinguish leaders from nonleaders.

More recent studies indicate that personal characteristics/traits are related to leadership outcomes only in the context of specific situations. Unfortunately, which aspects of the situation are most critical is not yet clear.

Another major approach to leadership involves the 'style' a leader employs in dealing with subordinates. A major problem inherent in the measurement of leadership styles is that "styles are most commonly measured by one of several paper-and-pencil questionnaires; thus, they represent self or others' perceptions rather than actual behavior." (BcCall, 1977, p. 8).

The human relations school initially maintained that leaders should emphasize considerate, participative styles. While considerate, participative styles generally lead to increased satisfaction, they did not necessarily lead to improved performance.

Leaders may choose from numerous styles of leadership, as well as face a variety of situations. A number of leadership behaviors may be equally effective in the same situation. In the final analysis, only one thing is clear--no one leadership style is effective in all situations.

Early research made an important contribution to leadership theory. Namely, it showed that neither personal characteristics nor styles of leader behavior could predict or insure leadership effectiveness across situations.

Most of the current theories retained the basic ingredients of earlier models while adding situational contingencies. "The relationships studied in contingency frameworks still reflect leadership's research origins in individual and group psychology" (BcCall, 1977, p. 109). Despite their intuitive and logical appeal, contingency models have still yielded contradictory research findings.

Over the long run, the true test of any leadership theory is its utility for those individuals who find themselves in leadership roles. The measure of leader effectiveness is not and cannot be a simple index of group satisfaction and/or productivity.

"At a minimum, both researchers and practitioners must realize that leadership effectiveness involves a number of areas of functioning--including how well the leader deals with non-subordinate (and subordinate) relationships, how structures are designed and modified, development of human resources in the organization, utilization and dissemination of knowledge, creating and coping with change, and actual task performance by the leader over time" (Bacall, 1977, p. 19).

In sum, empirical research to date tends to show that there is no normative style of leadership across situations. Rather, successful leaders adapt their style to meet the needs of their subordinates and the particular environment encountered.

CHAPTER TWO

Trait Theory

Development of Trait Theory

One of the earliest approaches to leadership theory has been called trait theory. Trait theory is based on the assumption that, through research, researchers can compile a list of measurable personality variables or traits that will separate leaders from nonleaders.

Early theorists maintained that leadership traits could be acquired through experience, as well as through education and training. These theorists attempted to focus on all traits, whether acquired or inherited, that were commonly identified in individuals regarded as leaders. Such traits frequently included intelligence, technical mastery, teaching ability, a sense of direction and purpose, enthusiasm, drive, physical and nervous energy levels, friendliness and affection, compassion and empathy, and faith. (Haimann, Scott, and Connor, 1978).

Early Criticism of Trait Theory

The inadequacy of the trait approach to leadership quickly became apparent. Lists of characteristics were confusing; they contained different numbers of traits and employed different terminology. Moreover, the intensity and degree of each characteristic

often varied substantially.

Similarly, theorists did not distinguish which traits were crucial and which were less important. Furthermore, theorists failed to concur on the number of traits necessary for leadership, or whether or not an individual could be lacking some, but not all, necessary traits and still be a leader.

Nor were theorists able to identify and isolate all the specific characteristics common to all those regarded as leaders. A further weakness of the trait approach was that it was unable to distinguish between characteristics necessary to acquire leadership and those needed to maintain it.

Current Criticism of Trait Theory

In a major review of leadership research, Gibb (1969) concluded that researchers have failed to uncover any consistent listings of characteristics that clearly differentiate leaders from nonleaders.

Filley and House (1969) suggest there are several reasons why trait research has failed to demonstrate conclusive results: research samples were taken from subjects who were in different hierarchical leadership positions; if the situation requires different behaviors, it is difficult to distinguish leaders from nonleaders unless the study is restricted to a specific situation; organizations differ as to how persons get into managerial positions; and different phases of the organizational growth may require different

leadership abilities.

Trait Theory Today

Although the trait approach to leadership has been partially discredited today, research does indicate that leaders do share some very general characteristics--interpersonal communication skills, intelligence, and sensitivity to the needs of their constituency (Haimann, Scott and Connors, 1978). However, the possession of these traits does not necessarily insure that an individual will emerge as the leader of a group. Rather the individual with the set of traits best suited to the situation encountered by the group at that point in time will assume the role of leadership.

Personal Review of Trait Theory

The trait approach to leadership theory possesses intuitive, as well as logical appeal in as much that most would agree that an individual who proscribes to the tenets of the Boy Scout laws--trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, etc.--will be a successful leader in many situations.

Upon closer examination, however, the initial appeal of the trait approach is substantially diminished due to such problems as defining and measuring any given trait.

For example, what constitutes being trustworthy? One may consult Webster's dictionary, but said definition is not necessarily

universally accepted. Rather the possession of any given attribute or trait is a matter of degree as opposed to being absolute.

As a case in point, I would trust a friend to repay a loan of a hundred dollars. However, if that loan were a hundred-thousand dollars, I would certainly require more than just a handshake as bond.

This brings up the issue of at what point does an individual possess a given trait. Put another way, is it possible to measure a trait by some objective empirical means, and if so how? Researchers have developed instruments to measure such characteristics as intelligence, (i.e., the intelligence quotient) as well as instruments of prediction--personality inventories, measures of sensory and psychomotor abilities, and measures of motivation variables. However, such instruments and the data they provide are of limited value because of their limited scope. The results of any battery of tests must be interpreted in light of other available information.

Finally, the question of whether or not some traits are more important than others must be addressed. Clearly, the situation encountered will partially dictate which traits are vital and which are secondary. Technical expertise may be paramount in scientific endeavors, while interpersonal and communication skills may be the dominant criteria for a leader of a program composed exclusively of volunteers.

Conclusion

Despite the identification of numerous shortcomings of the trait approach to leadership theory, this is not to say the trait approach is totally without merit. On the contrary, traits are an important dimension of whether or not an individual will prove to be a successful leader. However, just as traits are but one dimension of a leader, the trait approach is but one dimension of leadership theory. Therefore, the trait approach should be used in conjunction with important aspects of the other major theories of leadership.

CHAPTER THREE

Leadership Styles

Introduction to Leadership Style Research

This chapter will provide an overview of the major leadership styles including the following: the continuum approach by Tannebaum and Schmidt, the Ohio State studies, the Michigan studies, the Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton, Reddin's 3-D Management Style Theory and Likert's System 4 Theory.

Continuum Approach

The continuum approach suggests that leadership styles are not limited to the two extremes, but rather an infinite number of leadership approaches one might follow depending on the circumstances.

Furthermore, the continuum approach suggests that leadership styles may be charted on a scale such as the one developed by Tannebaum and Schmidt. "These approaches may vary according to different circumstances. Leadership styles approaching the left side of this continuum are reflected by managers who make decisions and then announce them to the work group." "The right side of this chart (subordinate-centered leadership) reflects a high degree of

of participation by subordinates" (Mondy and Noe, 1981, pp. 79-80). Between these extremes exist varying degrees of participative-democratic leadership styles.

"The differences in the two styles of leader behavior are based on the assumptions leaders make about the source of their power or authority and human nature. The authoritarian style of leader behavior is often based on the assumption that the power of leaders is derived from the position they occupy and that people are innately lazy and unreliable (Theory X). The democratic style assumes that the power of leaders is granted by the group they are to lead and that people can be basically self-directed and creative at work if properly motivated (Theory Y)" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 91). Between these two extremes there are, of course, a wide variety of leaders' behaviors.

"Leaders whose behavior is observed to be at the authoritarian end of the continuum tend to be task-oriented and use their power to influence their followers; leaders whose behavior appears to be at the democratic end tend to be group-oriented and thus give their followers considerable freedom in their work" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 92).

Ohio State Studies

In 1945 the Bureau of Business Research at Ohio State University attempted to identify various dimensions of leader behavior. In order to gather data, researchers at Ohio State developed the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), an instrument designed to describe how leaders carry out their activities.

Although the major emphasis of the Ohio State Leadership Studies was on observable behavior, the staff also developed the Leader Opinion Questionnaire (LOQ) to provide insight into the leader's own self perception of his leadership style. The LBDQ was scored by the leader's subordinate(s), superior(s), or associates/peers, but the LOQ was completed by the leaders themselves. Numerous self assessment instruments, including the LOQ have been developed to analyze supervisory leadership.

The Ohio State researchers concluded that Initiating Structure and Consideration were independent and distinct dimensions. A low score on one dimension does not necessitate a high score on the other.

"Initiating Structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and members of the work group and in endeavoring to establish methods of procedure" (Halpin, 1959, p. 4; Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 94).

"On the other hand, Consideration refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth in the relationship between the leader and members of his staff" (Halpin, 1959, p. 4; Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 94).

Leader behavior was first plotted on two separate axes rather than on a single continuum. Later the two axes were combined to

form the Ohio State leadership quadrant.

In my estimation, the principal research finding is that the dimensions of supervisory leadership are separate and distinct. This means that supervisors may be low on both dimensions, high on both, or low on one and high on the other. The indicators are that, for the most part, the LOQ measures something not measured by other personality questionnaires.

Michigan Studies

The early leadership studies of the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan occurred almost simultaneously with the Ohio State Leadership Studies. The attempt was to approach the study of leadership by locating clusters of characteristics which seemed to be related to one another and various indicators of effectiveness. The studies identified two major concepts; namely employee orientation and production orientation.

Leaders who are described as employee-oriented tend to emphasize relationship aspects of the job, view employees as important and take into account individuality. On the other hand, leaders who are described as production-oriented emphasize production and technical aspects of the job, and view employees as merely tools to accomplish organizational goals.

"These two orientations parallel the Ohio State Leadership dimensions of initiating structure and consideration" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 93). The extensive studies of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research clearly advocate supportive styles of leadership. Other survey investigations concur with the University of Michigan's findings.

The Managerial Grid

Blake and Mouton (1964; 1968) revised the continuum approach by dividing concern for production and concern for people into two axes. These two axes form the Managerial Grid.

The five different types of leadership identified in the Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton consist of the following:

"1, 1 Impoverished Management. Exertion of minimum effort to get required work done is appropriate to sustain organizational membership."

"9, 1 Authority-Obedience. Efficiency in operation results from arranging conditions of work in such a way that human elements interfere to a minimum degree."

"1, 9 Country Club Management. Thoughtful attention to the needs of people for satisfying relationships leads to a comfortable friendly organization atmosphere and work tempo."

"5, 5 Organization Man Management. Adequate organization is possible through balancing the necessity to get out work with maintaining morale of people at a satisfactory level."

"9, 9 Team Management. Work accomplishment is from committed people: interdependence through a 'common stake' in organization purpose leads to relationships of trust and respect" (Blake, 1964, p. 136).

"In the Managerial Grid, five different types of leadership based on concern for production (task) and concern for people (relationships) are located in four quadrants similar to those identified by the Ohio State studies" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 96). A leader with a rating of nine on the horizontal axis has a maximum concern for production. Similarly, a leader with a rating of nine on the vertical axis has maximum concern for people.

According to Blake and Mouton the first four leadership styles are not the most effective. They maintain that a 9, 9 Team Management approach will result in improved performance, lower employee turnover and absenteeism and greater employee satisfaction.

"In essence, the Managerial Grid has given popular terminology to five points within the four quadrants of the Ohio State studies. However, one significant difference between the two frameworks should be noted. 'Concern for' is a predisposition about something or an attitudinal model that measures the predispositions of a manager, while the Ohio State framework tends to be a behavioral model that examined how leader actions are perceived by others" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 97).

3-D Management Style Theory

Reddin's approach to leadership is based on the assumption that no one "best" leadership style exists. Reddin, like Blake and Mouton, begins with the two-dimensional task-orientation and relation-orientation model. But while Blake and Mouton propose that the combination of task and employee orientation (9, 9) is the single

most effective leadership style, Reddin maintains that the most effective style is the one tailored to the situation encountered. Thus Reddin identifies four basic leadership styles; namely separated, dedicated, related and integrated. Moreover, Reddin states that if these four styles are exercised in the appropriate situations, they will be effective. If not, they will be ineffective.

Reddin was the first to add an effectiveness dimension to the task-orientation and employee-orientation dimensions of earlier attitudinal models such as the Managerial Grid.

Likert's System 4 Theory

Like the Michigan and Ohio State studies, Likert's System 4 Theory stresses concern for people as well as production. Likert's System Theory of leadership styles exist on a continuum consisting of the following: System 1, Exploitive Autocratic; System 2, Benevolent Autocratic; System 3, Consultive; and System 4, Participative Team. Likert contends that only the System 4 is the best style of leadership in the long-run.

System 1 managers make all decisions and announce them; failure to comply results in threats or punishment. In this system there is a low level of confidence and mutual trust between employees and management.

Under the System 2 approach, managers continue to make all decisions. However, employees have some degree of flexibility and freedom in performing their jobs so long as they conform to specified procedures and rules. Employees are cautious when dealing with management as there is a fairly low level of mutual trust.

System 3 managers consult with employees prior to making decisions about their work and establishing objectives. Employees have considerable freedom in making decisions and emphasis is placed on rewards rather than punishment. A fairly high level of trust exists between employees and management.

Likert's System 4 emphasizes group participation and full employee involvement in setting goals and making decisions. Under the System 4 approach, the manager serves as a liaison between the work group and higher levels in the organization. Generally the influence takes precedence over formal authority.

"The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and in all relationships within the organization, each member, in the light of background, values, desires and expectations, will view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance" (Likert, 1961, p. 103).

Conclusion

The studies at Ohio State University, the University of Michigan, and by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton all employ similar categories. Similar styles involving "concern for production," "production-centered," and "initiating structure" are all task-oriented. The leader perceives her or his role as that of a facilitator in achieving the unit's production. Work is carefully planned and organized to meet production schedules and most formal communication is work-related.

On the other side, the employee-centered style involves showing concern for people and emphasizes social (as opposed to job) functions. The leader's role is to help the unit operate as a group by fostering social ties. Subordinates are treated as individuals and enjoy considerable freedom in the workplace. This style is characterized by mutual trust and respect, and an emphasis on interpersonal relations.

Separating leadership behavior into two distinct dimensions was vital in identifying the two principle roles of the leader. The first role ensures that the work of the organization is accomplished. The second role assures that the activities necessary to maintain the group are carried out. However, in the final analysis, both roles are essential if the goals of the organization are to be achieved.

After identifying the two central concerns of leadership, task and relationships, the theorists discussed earlier have recognized the potential conflict in satisfying both concerns. Consequently, an effort has been made to find a middle ground which will encompass both concerns.

Andrew W. Halpin, using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire in a study of school superintendents, found that administrators he interviewed tended to view consideration and initiating structures as either/or forms of leadership. However, Halpin stressed that this apparent conflict between initiating structure and consideration should not necessarily exist. Furthermore, he points out that based on his findings, "effective or desirable leadership behavior is characterized by high scores on both Initiating Structure and Consideration. Conversely, ineffective or undesirable leadership behavior is marked by low scores on both dimensions" (Halpin, 1959, p. 24).

Thus the Ohio State Leadership studies seem to conclude that the high consideration and initiating structure style is theoretically the "best" leadership behavior, while the style low on both dimensions is theoretically the "worst."

The Managerial Grid also appears to conclude that the most desirable leader behavior is "team management" i.e. maximum concern for both production and people. In fact, Blake and Mouton have

developed special training programs to move managers toward the (9, 9) team management style.

Using the earlier Michigan Studies as a point of origin, Rensis Likert conducted some extensive research to uncover the general pattern of management used by high-producing managers in contrast to those used by other managers. Likert found that "(s)upervisors with the best records of performance focus their primary attention on the human aspects of their subordinates' problems and on endeavoring to build effective work groups with high performance goals" (Likert and Fisher, 1977, p. 46).

Likert also discovered that high-producing managers "make clear to their subordinates what the objectives are and what needs to be accomplished and then give them freedom to do the job" (Likert and Fisher, 1977, p. 46).

Thus the implication throughout Likert's writings is that the most productive and/or ideal leader behavior for industry is employee centered. Yet his own research findings raise serious doubts as to whether there can be an ideal or single normative style of leader behavior which is applicable to all situations. In the study just cited, almost 35 percent of the low-producing sections were supervised by the "ideal" type of leader behavior and almost 15 percent of the high-producing sections were supervised by the suggested "undesirable" style.

Additional evidence suggesting that a single or normative leadership style is unrealistic was provided when a similar study was completed in an industrial setting in Nigeria (Likert and Fisher, 1977). The results of this study were virtually opposite those of Likert. In Nigeria the tendency is for job-centered supervisors who provide close supervision to have high producing sections, and the low producing sections tend to have employee-centered supervisors who provide general supervision. Thus a single normative style of leadership behavior fails to address cultural differences, particularly traditions/customs, educational levels and the basic standard of living. Therefore, based on the premise that the leadership process is a function of the leader, the group, (i.e. the followers), and various situational factors, the notion of a single normative style seems unrealistic.

CHAPTER FOUR

Leadership Contingency or Situational Approach

Introduction to Contingency Theory

The logical progression of the trait approach was to expand the parameters to include more aspects of the situation. Empirical studies suggest that leadership is a dynamic process, varying over time, as well as by situation.

The situational approach to leadership focuses on observable behavior, rather than on hypothetical, innate or acquired ability and/or potential for leadership. The emphasis of the situational approach is on the behavior of both leaders and group members across various situations. With this emphasis upon behavior and environment, the possibility of training individuals to adapt their leadership style according to the situation encountered appears promising.

In their quest for understanding of leadership, theorists discovered the importance of situational factors that predispose certain individuals to positions of leadership. This is not to say that proponents of contingency theory have completely discarded the work that preceded them. On the contrary, proponents of contingency theory readily acknowledge the fact that characteristics and/or traits of individuals also play a vital role in leadership.

Fiedler's Contingency Model

"The concept of adaptive leader behavior" or the situational approach "questions the existence of a 'best' style of leadership; it is not a matter of the best style, but of the most effective style for a particular situation" (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey, 1967; Athos and Coffee, 1968; Reddin, 1970; Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 101).

The Leadership Contingency Model developed by Fred E. Fiedler consists of three major situational variables which may determine whether a given situation is favorable to leaders: "(1) the leader's personal relations with the members of the group (leader-member relations); (2) the degree of structure in the task their group has been assigned to perform (task structure); and (3) the power and authority that their position provides (position power)" (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 101). The favorableness of a situation is defined as "the degree to which the situation enables the leader to exert his influence over his group" (Fiedler, 1967, p. 13).

Leadership is measured by asking each respondent to recall all his or her previous coworkers and, to describe a "least preferred coworker" (LPC) on the questionnaire's bipolar scales. An unfavorable description (low LPC) is assumed to indicate a task-oriented leadership style; a favorable description (high LPC) is assumed to indicate a relationship-oriented style.

The favorableness of situation is measured along three dimensions: "(a) the degree to which the leader feels accepted by his group . . .; (b) the degree to which the task is structured; and (c) the degree to which the leader position has power and influence" (Fiedler, 1971, pp. 4-6).

"In a re-examination of old leadership studies and an analysis of new studies, Fiedler has concluded that: 1. Task-oriented leaders tend to perform best in group situations that are either very favorable or very unfavorable to the leader. 2. Relationship-oriented leaders tend to perform best in situations that are intermediate in favorableness" (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 102).

Critique of Fiedler's Contingency Model

Wendell L. French (1964 ; 1970) points out that while Fiedler draws some tentative conclusions as to the implications of personnel management strategy, the linkage between LPC scores and actual leader behavior are too tenuous and organizational dynamics too volatile, for Fiedler's measurement techniques to be translated directly into personnel practice.

Fiedler's article, "New Concepts for the Management of Managers," states:

"While we do not have, at this time, a cookbook or a blueprint which can guide the top manager on how to manage his leadership cadre to the organization's and

to his own best advantage, we do have rudimentary theoretical framework which permits us to predict the effects which various events in the organization's life have on leaders with particular motivational structures" (Fiedler, 1975, p. 219).

Although Fiedler's model is useful to a leader in terms of selecting a situation which fits his style, he seems to be reverting to a single dichotomy of leader behavior, suggesting that there are only two basic leader behavior styles: task-oriented and relationship-oriented. This is contrary to most evidence which indicates that leader behavior should be plotted on two separate axes rather than as a single dichotomy.

"The concept of 'adaptive leader' behavior might be stated as follows: 'The more managers adapt their style of leader behavior to meet the particular situation and the needs of their followers, the more effective they will tend to be in reaching personal and organizational goals'" (Hersey, 1967, p. 15; Hersey and Blanchard, 1977, p. 101).

Harvard Contingency Studies

A number of studies at Harvard University have examined the relationship between leadership style(s) and organizational structure, as well as other variables, in relation to other organizational effectiveness. In studies of six research laboratories and four manufacturing plants, Lorsch and Morse found that the more effective laboratories had less structure and more participation in comparison

to the less effective laboratories. In the manufacturing plants the situation was reversed, with more effective plants having more structure and less participation than the less effective plants.

Thus, it would seem that leadership style should be adapted to the particular technological and task demands of the organization. It should be pointed out, however, that these were relative measures; there was some modicum of structure and participation in all the organizations studied. Moreover, in the manufacturing plants where participation was greatest, subordinates expressed that they were participating in many matters that were more easily determined "topside."

Personal Analysis of Harvard Contingency Theory

In my estimation, the concerns expressed about the Harvard contingency studies merely reinforce, rather than detract from, the theory that the leader should adapt his or her style to the particular environment and situation encountered. The fact that subordinates felt they were involved in decisions that could have more easily handled "top-side" indicates that the manufacturing plant's management must adapt their leadership style still further. Thus, organization's leadership must discern what matters are appropriate for participation and to what extent.

Contingency theory of leadership may be viewed as a hybrid of previous works in the area of leadership theory. However as Fiedler points out, it is simply a foundation, rather than a cookbook or blueprint, as to how to be an effective leader.

Thus the central premises of both Fiedler's model and the Harvard studies merit review here. Basically, Fiedler's model proposes that organizational effectiveness is contingent upon the match between the leader's style and the extent to which the group situation is favorable to the leader's exercise of influence and control.

Organizational effectiveness, based on Lorsch and Morse work, is contingent upon adjusting one's leadership style to the particular task and technological demands of the organization.

It is imperative that leaders look beyond the specifics of these two contingency studies and examine the similarities between their own situation and those of the studies. Every leader would be well advised to examine the reasons which underlie their relationship with their own least preferred coworker (LPC), in order to gain valuable insight as to how they might adjust their own leadership style to improve their organizational effectiveness. In the case of Lorsch and Morse's work, the individual leader should determine

whether his or her organizational setting most closely parallels the structured environment of the manufacturing plant or the more independent setting of the laboratory, and adapt his or her leadership style accordingly.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mintzberg: The Manager's Job

Introduction

The entire field of management is devoted to answering one, basic question; namely, what do managers do. Since 1916, the dominant response by practitioners and theorists alike has been four simple words propounded by the French industrialist Henri Fayol--planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling. These four words are firmly entrenched in the mind of anyone who has ever picked up a management text.

Despite the auspiciousness these four words enjoy in the literature, they offer very limited insight into what managers actually do in their daily performance.

Henry Mintzberg in his article in the July-August 1975 Harvard Business Review, "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact" takes the revolutionary position of challenging Fayol's classical view of management.

Mintzberg first contrasts four myths about the nature of managerial work with some empirical evidence of how managers spend their time. Next, the hard facts of this systematic research are synthesized into ten roles which depict the essential content of

all managerial tasks. Finally, Mintzberg discusses a number of implications of this synthesis for both the theorist and practitioners who are struggling to achieve more effective management.

Since the primary focus of this treatise is on the role of the leader as opposed to the role of the manager, Mintzberg's treatment on some folklore and facts about managerial work will not be reviewed here. Rather the ten roles identified by Mintzberg and the implications of those roles will be examined in the paragraphs which immediately follow.

Origin of Mintzberg's Ten Roles

Mintzberg defines the manager as any individual who is in charge of an organization or any subunit of that organization. This broad definition of manager is an important premise, for all are vested with formal authority over some unit(s) of the organization. The status which accompanies formal authority leads to interpersonal relationships, and in turn access to information. Information, then in turn, enables the manager to make decisions and set policy for his/her unit(s).

Moreover, Mintzberg states that the manager's job may be described in terms of ten "roles"; i.e., organized sets of behaviors identified with a position. The manager's formal authority gives rise to the three interpersonal roles, which in turn leads to the

three informational roles and together these two sets of roles enable the manager to act out the four decisional roles.

Interpersonal Roles

Three of the ten managerial roles identified by Mintzberg involve basic interpersonal relationships and arise directly from the manager's formal authority.

The first of the roles is the "figurehead" role. By virtue of his or her position as head of an organizational unit, every manager is obliged to perform some ceremonial tasks. Such things as public speaking engagements, responding to requests for donations and presenting awards at company functions are examples of ceremonial duties.

Duties that involve this figurehead role may at times be considered routine, involving very little, if any, serious communication and/or decision making. Nevertheless, such tasks are essential to the continuation of the organization and cannot be ignored by the manager.

By definition the manager is in charge of her/his organizational unit and the work of his subordinates. His/her actions in this regard constitute what Mintzberg terms the "leader" role.

The leader role involves direct actions such as the hiring and training of the unit's staff, as well as indirect actions such as motivating employees and reconciling their individual goals with

those of the organizational unit.

The counterpart to the manager's leader role is the "liaison" role, which involves the manager's contacts with individuals outside the organizational unit's vertical chain of command. Numerous managerial studies, including those by Rosemary Stewart; Robert H. Guest; and Mintzberg, have all found that managers spend as much time with peers and individuals outside their own organizational unit as they do with their own subordinates. The manager cultivates such contacts predominantly for purposes of information.

Informational Roles

As head of the organizational unit, the manager has formal and easy access to every member of his/her staff. Thus, the manager emerges as a nerve center because she or he knows more about her or his own organizational unit than anyone else does. Moreover, the manager's liaison contacts expose him/her to external and/or confidential information to which subordinates are not privy to. In this way, the manager develops a rather extensive network of information.

The processing of information is an integral part of any manager's day. To a great extent, communication "is" the manager's job. Mintzberg describes the informational aspects of the managerial work in terms of three roles, i.e. monitor, disseminator, and spokesman.

As "monitor," the manager must deem what information is useful and what is simply gossip, hearsay and speculation. The manager's subordinates and liaison contacts provide him/her with a natural advantage in collecting information for his/her organizational unit.

Having planned what information is useful the manager must share and disseminate much of this information. The manager, in her/his "dissemination" role, passes on some of her/his privileged information directly to her/his subordinates, who would otherwise lack access to it.

In his or her "spokesman" role, the manager provides information to individuals outside his/her organizational unit. The manager may provide such information in the form of a formal presentation at a public event, a speech at a local business or fraternal organization luncheon or simply through everyday conversation.

Decisional Roles

Information is not an end in itself, rather it is a basic and vital input in the decision-making process. The manager by definition of his or her job plays the leading role in his or her organizational unit's decision-making system. As the unit's formal authority, only the manager can commit the unit's organizational resources to new courses of action; the unit's nerve center, only the manager has access to information necessary to determine

strategy. Mintzberg identifies four roles which depict the manager as the organizational unit's decision maker.

As "entrepreneur," the manager strives to improve her or his organizational unit, as well as adapt the unit to changing environmental conditions. In essence, the entrepreneur role is fulfilled by the organization's chief executive officer (CEO). The CEO, in his or her monitor role, is constantly on surveillance for a new idea. When a good idea appears, the CEO generally initiates an ad hoc developmental project/committee.

The CEO may serve as the chair for this committee or appoint someone to head the project, who would report directly to him/her. In either case, the CEO must carefully monitor each development project and its respective progress in order to justify the organizational resources such projects command.

While the entrepreneur role depicts the manager as the voluntary initiator of change, the "disturbance handler" role describes the manager involuntarily responding to pressures which are beyond his/her control. In effect, every manager must devote a significant portion of her or his time responding to high-pressure disturbances. Disturbances occur in every organization because it is impossible to anticipate every contingency no matter how well run the organization might be.

In the role of "resource allocator" the manager decides who

will receive what in his or her organizational unit. Perhaps the most important resource the manager allocates is her/his own time, i.e. access to the organizational unit's nerve center and decision maker. Furthermore the manager is charged with the delegation of power and responsibilities within his or her organizational unit.

The final decisional role is that of "negotiator." Negotiations are an integral part of any manager's job, for only he/she has the formal authority to commit organizational resources and the nerve center information that major and/or important negotiations require.

Conclusion

The ten roles are obviously interdependent and not easily separable. Employing the terminology of the psychologist, the ten roles form a gestalt, i.e. an intergrated whole. Every role is a necessary and vital component of the framework and must be present if the job is to remain intact.

This is not to say that the gestalt formed by the ten roles means that every manager gives equal attention to each role. In fact, Mintzberg points out that his research indicates the following: sales managers give relatively more attention to interpersonal roles; production managers devote relatively more time to decisional roles; and staff managers emphasize informational roles. However, in the final analysis, the interpersonal, informational and decisional roles remain interdependent and inseparable in every case.

Mintzberg's primary message to management is simply that his description of managerial work should prove more important to managers than any prescription they might derive from it. "That is to say, 'the manager's effectiveness is significantly influenced by his (her) own work.'" Thus managers who are able to be introspective about the nature of their work are apt to be effective in their jobs.

Personal Analysis of Mintzberg

While I basically concur with the three functional areas (interpersonal, informational and decisional) identified by Mintzberg, I do not entirely agree with his development and analysis of the ten roles. At the outset, I fail to comprehend what is gained by separating the three functional areas into ten separate and distinct roles. The roles within each of the three categories are so interrelated that the distinction is more semantic than real in my estimation.

Furthermore, I can't help but wonder how Mintzberg arrived at "ten" roles; why not a greater or fewer number of roles?

Is the decisional category paramount, since it has four roles and the interpersonal and informational areas each have only three roles? Moreover, Mintzberg depicts the development of the ten roles as linear, each category of roles building on the one which preceded it. My concern here is that Mintzberg appears to be developing a hierarchy of both categories and roles. However, I

believe that this hierarchial portrayal is reflected more in Mintzberg's literary style, rather than in his theory. Therefore, this criticism can be dismissed at this point.

In all fairness, as this chapter draws to close, I must compliment Mintzberg for depicting the manager's job as an intergrated whole (i.e. gestalt), rather than focusing in on one aspect of the job at the expense of all others.

Relevance of Mintzberg's Work

In reviewing Mintzberg's work the key to this nouvelle approach to organizational leadership theory is that while Mintzberg begins his study by focusing on various dimensions of the manager's job, i.e. roles, in much the same fashion that his predecessors focused on various aspects of leadership, i.e. personal traits, the situation or contingency encountered, Mintzberg reaches startling different conclusions. If I may borrow the phraseology from the field of mathematics, the sum of the parts is greater than the whole or what Mintzberg has termed a gestalt.

Because Mintzberg has gone beyond the scope of individual components of leadership, theorists and practitioners can finally end the quest for a magical formula of how one identifies and/or becomes a successful leader. Perhaps it is in this fact alone that Mintzberg has made his single greatest contribution to the field

of leadership theory. Theorist can now focus their efforts on the leader as an intergrated whole rather than repeating the errors of the classical theorists who approached the study of leadership through dissection.

It is essential to reiterate, however, that Mintzberg's ten roles are not the final word on leadership theory. Rather I believe Mintzberg's roles will endure with certain modifications as theorist and practitioners learn more about the field of leadership.

CHAPTER SIX

The Final Analysis

Summation

As any prudent researcher begins his/her analysis by carefully scrutinizing the successive works of researchers which preceded him/her, it seems appropos that this final chapter be devoted to synthesizing the major works from which this brief treatise was compiled.

Despite the fact that the trait approach to leadership has been partially discredited, current research does indicate that some very general characteristics are common to all leaders--intelligence, communication skills, and sensitivity to the needs of their constituency (Haimann, Scott and Connors, 1968). As pointed out earlier, those characteristics may prove difficult, if not impossible, to measure by empirical means. Moreover, the possession of these traits by an individual does not necessarily insure that he/she will emerge as the group's leader. Rather the individual with the set of traits best suited to the situation facing the group at that point in time will shoulder the burden of leadership. Thus trait theory has contributed at least one vital element to the evolving "formula" for becoming a successful leader; namely, leaders

share some very general characteristics which vary in terms of importance based on the situation encountered by the group.

The studies at Ohio State University, the University of Michigan, and by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton have all contributed yet another important element to the "formula" for developing successful leadership: concern for production coupled with concern for people.

Separating leadership behavior into distinct dimensions was essential to identifying the two principle roles which the leader must fulfill. The first leadership role assures that the tasks of the organizational unit are accomplished; the second ensures that the activities necessary to maintain the group are carried out. Both roles, however, are essential if the goals of the organization are to be realized.

Theorists have only recently recognized the potential conflict of fulfilling the two central concerns of leadership, task and relationships, and are currently striving to find a middle ground which will encompass both concerns. Thus based on empirical evidence gathered by Rensis Likert and a supporting study conducted in Nigeria, the notion of a single normative style seems unrealistic.

Contingency theory may be viewed as a hybrid of the numerous works in the area of leadership which preceded it. However, it is

not the elusive final "formula" on how to be an effective leader, rather it is simply a foundation from which to build.

The two contingency studies which were examined earlier-- Fiedler's model and the Harvard studies by Lorsch and Morse--will serve as a springboard for future theories. In essence, Fiedler's model proposes that organizational effectiveness is contingent upon the match between the leader's style and degree to which the group situation is favorable to the leader's exercise of influence and/or control. Similarly, the Harvard studies by Lorsch and Morse propose that organizational effectiveness is contingent upon adjusting one's leadership style to the particular task and technological demands of the organization.

Mintzberg virtually throws down the gauntlet by challenging Fayol's classical view of management--planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling. Mintzberg proposes that the manager's job may be described in terms of ten "roles" i.e. organized sets of behaviors identified with a position. The manager's formal authority gives rise to the three interpersonal roles, which in turn leads to the three informational roles and together these two sets of roles enable the manager to fulfill the four decisional roles. The ten roles are interdependent and not easily separable; employing the terminology of the psychologist the ten roles form a gestalt.

However, the gestalt formed by the ten roles does not mean that every manager gives equal attention to each role. Mintzberg's research indicates that production managers devote relatively more attention to interpersonal roles and staff managers emphasize informational roles. In the final analysis, however, the interpersonal, informational and decisional roles may vary in terms of importance depending on the circumstances encountered, but remain interdependent and inseparable.

Mintzberg's primary message to management is simply that his description of managerial work should prove more important to managers than any formula they might deduce from it.

Conclusion

A leader is an individual who is perceived by other group members as a responsive proponent of the prevailing attitudes, aims and ideals of the group. In other words, an individual assumes the role of leadership by consensus of those which will follow, as well as by formally vested authority. Thus an individual who finds herself/himself in a position of authority by appointment must earn the confidence and respect of the group in order to be even marginally effective. An individual's leadership style will determine to a major extent just how effective he/she will be in influencing the members of his/her constituency.

Despite mountainous sums of research, theorists have failed to develop a "formula" on just how one becomes an effective leader. At best, the combined efforts of the numerous theorists have provided some insight on how to improve one's own leadership performance by comparing one's actual leadership performance to the ideal performance proposed by the theorist. In sum, all leaders may share a common set of traits, concern for production, and concern for people, as well as attempt to match their leadership style with their followers and the situation encountered, in addition to fulfilling a number of roles. All of which indicates the evolution of leadership theory to date rather than the final word.

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