A Comparative Analysis of Situational and Style Leadership Theories

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ABSTRACT

This research paper provides a comparison of contemporary leadership theories of situational and style approaches. Over the decades researchers have analyzed different approaches of leadership to find out the most authentic and suitable style. There are many leadership styles. To adopt any leadership style, it is important to analyze structure of that organization, its socio economic back ground. Based on Spradely Semantic relationship taxonomy analysis this research paper provides a critical comparative analysis of situational and style approaches of leadership, to understand the differences and similarities and uses. Leaders can adopt any style according to the need of particular organization. This paper will review models of Blake and Mouton managerial grid and Paul Hersey and Blanch leadership theory.

Keywords: Situational Approach, Style Approach, Educational Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a complex behavior reflecting the beliefs, personality, experience, work, environment and situational assessment of the leader (Stogdill, 1974), there are several theoretical approaches of leadership to explain variety of complexities (e.g., Bass,1990; Bryman,1992; Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson &Ulh-Bien,2011; Day & Antonakis, 2012; Hickman,2009; Mumford,2006). Effective leaders run the organization in an effective manner and gain more and more fruitful benefits.

Northouse (2016) defines leadership as a is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Leaders direct people toward shared goals in a way to achieve them in an organized and systematic way. Some leaders are task oriented and some are people oriented. According to Bernard (1938) Leadership is the quality of behavior of the individuals whereby they guide people or their activities in organized efforts. Koontz and O'Donnell (1986), Leadership is the process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals. There are different leadership styles which different theorist presented that includes trait approach, style approach, situation approach, path goal approach. Here is comparison of style and situation approaches.

Situational Leadership:

This theory was developed by Dr Paul Hersey and Blanchard (1969) based on Reddin's (1967) 3 D management style theory. This is the most used leadership approach adopted by many organizations. Leader choose his/her style according to situation and need of subordinates. This model shows the relationship of leader and followers. This theory gives freedom to choose and adapt any style according to the current situation and task requirements. Leaders change their style according to the competence level and commitment of the followers. Effective leaders always analyze the needs of followers and adapt their own style.it is necessary for the situational leaders to determine the maturity level of the workers and adopt the style accordingly to the situation to reduce pressure of work on them and to make task easy and adaptable for workers. This approach has four leadership styles.

S 1: Directive style: High directive- low supportive. In this style leader just tell people what to do and how to do. This leadership style is effective when people have low competence but have high level of commitment. They have less knowledge and skills but they are very committed. Followers miss the mark on information and abilities with regards to playing out a particular task. Then again, the representative is intrigued, energetic about the assignment and prepared to learn it (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969)

S 2: Coaching style: High directive – high supportive. where people have some competence and low commitment. They have some competence but have low commitment. They have some knowledge and skill but not ready to work according to skills. When supporters have fostered abilities yet are frequently baffled due to neglected assumptions. Not long after starting another undertaking, adherents normally encounter a time of disappointment which diminishes their level of responsibility. Leader will tell people what to do and how to do by keeping their socioemotional needs. In this way leader has more communication with subordinates (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969).

S 3: Supporting style: High supportive -low directive. In this style leader has more focus on relationship of employees. Through his encouraging behavior he leads followers to accomplish goals. This leader works with employees and shares decision making with them. Most people at this level go through a self-uncertainty, addressing in the event that they can play out the assignment all alone. Their responsibility varies among fervor and weakness. Devotees have fostered a fair degree of information and abilities however the inspiration level is changing. People have medium skills and knowledge and have variable commitment. They are not sure about their competence (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969).

4: Delegative style: Low supportive -low directive. In this style of leadership, leader share responsibilities with the workers to make their more and more involvement. This style restricts unnecessary interruption of leader. On this level the adherents have dominated the assignment, they are committed and profoundly energetic. With appropriate help an individual can ultimately turns into an independent achiever who shows an elevated degree of ability and responsibility. People have high level of competence and high level of commitment. They are highly competent and highly motivated (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969).

Use of Situational Leadership

Situational leadership is consisting of only one concept of situation. Leader with this style of leadership is required to know about competence of subordinate, Willingness of subordinates, Nature of task. It is important for a leader to identify

and analyze situation, nature of task, judge the maturity level of workers, take decision according to current scenario. If subordinates are new but have high level of commitment, are they are at Developmental level 1, should be dealt with S 1. If they have some competence and have low commitment, they are at Developmental level 2, should be dealt with S 2. If they have medium competence and changing commitment, they are at Developmental level 3, they should be dealt with S 3. If they have highly competent and highly committed, they are at Developmental level 4, they should be dealt with S 4.

This leadership has number of positive aspects. It is easy and understandable approach to implement by analyzing situation. It is mostly used style. The second positive and practical point is, it tells that in what situation you can use which style. Third strength is, it demands from leader to be flexible according to nature of task. Leader has liberty to deal differently with differ employees according to their maturity level (Northouse, 2016).

Considerations

There is very less solid written material available to justify this study. There are no of doctoral dissertations but many of them have not been published. Less body of research make doubtful about theoretical support. Secondly this study does not define the level of competence and level of commitment of subordinates. Third criticism is prescription of this model does not support with developmental level. Forth criticism is model developers did not take demographical aspects of the followers. Fifth criticism is questionnaire that is developed to determine it.

Style Approach:

Style approach is based on leader's behavior. It focusses on the actions taken by leader for subordinates. Leaders have two types of behavior; one is task behavior and other is relationship behavior. (Northouse, 2016). Leaders having task behavior just focuses on completion of task and emphases on achieving goals and objects. Relationship behavior focuses on dealing employees with care, giving them comfortable working environment, providing them all facilities to achieve goals and objectives. They do not ignore behavioral aspect of the employees. In 1940 The Ohio state University a research was conducted on Stogdill's (1948) model which presented that leader must have more qualities than traits. Second line of research was conducted at University of Michigan defining the leader's

behavior in small groups. Blake and Mount (1960) also presented a behavioral approach of a leader.

History of the study: Behavioral approach determines that how leader deals with followers in certain situations. Behavioral approaches have been studied in three various times and sources. First time it was being studied at The Ohio State University, second time at The University of Michigan and third time by Blake and Mouton. (Northouse, 2016). The study of Stogdill determines that leaders could be more than leaders with traits. At The Ohio State University developed a questionnaire consist of 150 questions regarding leadership based on Stogdill's study. Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire LBDQ was given in military, industrial sector and educational institutions. Data was collected and analyzed. This research questionnaire determined two aspects of a leader, one is task oriented and other is people oriented. At the same time The University of Michigan also conducted a research and results showed two major dimensions one is employee oriented and production oriented. Employee oriented is more concerned for followers, their personal needs and their comforts but on the other hand production oriented is more concerned with completion of task and get production. A leader with natural trait and ability is less effective than a leader who knows the needs of the followers. Believers of the behavioral leadership says that anyone can be a leader by following behavioral approach. A great leader analyzes the situation and acts according to the needs of that particular prevailing situation.

Blake and Mouton's Managerial (leadership) Grid: Managerial Grid was developed in 1960 and redeveloped by many times (Blake & McCanse,1991; Blake & Mouton,1964,1978, 1985).This model was first named Managerial grid later on after some progression and changing it was given name of Leadership Grid. This grid is basically based on two things one is concern for production and other one is concern for people. (Northouse, 2016). Concern for task means achievement of goals, objectives, decision making, production management of internal and external resources. They are more concern to achieve production targets. Concern for people means that a leader is taking care of needs of followers, providing them all necessary facilities, dealing them nicely, sharing organizational goals with them, giving them good rewards, providing them fair feedback and morally giving them support.

The leadership grid is presented with two axes, the horizontal axis shows concern for people of a leader and vertical axis shows concern for task. Each axis has 9 grades or points which shows degree of concern for people or task.1 shows least concern and 9 shows high concern. "The leadership Grid portrays five major leadership style can be illustrated. The leadership styles are: Authority compliance (9,1), county club management (1,9), impoverished management (5,5), and team management (9,9). (Nourthouse, 2016; pg.75).

Authority Compliance (9,1)

9,1 leadership has a great concern with completion of task and has no concern with people except work. They deal people as tools to put their work done and get production targets. The only communication is giving instructions to get job done. They just show authority to the subordinates and have emotional linkage with them (Blake and Mouton,1985).

Country – Club Management (1,9)

1,9 leadership has great focus on human relationship. They give extreme importance to interpersonal relational ship. They give comfortable environment to subordinates, they met needs of followers, they have concern for attitudes, feelings and emotions. They create healthy and stress-free environment (Blake and Mouton,1985).

Impoverished Management (1,1)

1,1 style leaders have no concern with task and no concern with people, kind of a lassie's fair leader. This kind of a leader just gives targets to the subordinates and gives them liberty to accomplish the task without intervening. This leadership demands efficient, experienced workers and well build procedures (Blake and Mouton,1985).

Middle of the road Management (5,5)

5,5 style leaders have equal level of concern with task accomplishment and concern with people. They get the task completed by focusing on needs of subordinates. They create such a balanced and healthy environment through which they get job done. Its middle way approaches (Blake and Mouton,1985).

5.Team Management (9,9)

Style 9,9 leaders has some concern for work and people. They same level of focused on organizational task and needs of followers. They take care of followers by giving them good working environment and by guiding them in their work (Blake and Mouton,1985).

Parentals/ Maternalism: These leaders have 1,9 and 9,1 styles. They have concern for work but also have strong concern for people relationship. They take organization as family and their employees as children. They met all needs of followers, take good decisions which benefits followers and organization.

Opportunist: These leaders just work for their own interest and personal gain. They change their style to get more and more benefits for themselves. They have concern for their own benefit not for the followers and organizational goals (Blake and Mouton,1985).

Blake and Mouton leadership Grid could be used by determining two factors one is nature of work and second is needs of followers. A leader must analyze the followers technical and emotional needs to meet organizational objectives. Sometimes subordinates need more attention to get organizational goals but on the other hand they need more direction to accomplish task. This leadership style provides complete guideline to choose best suitable style according to situation (Northouse, 2016).

Strength: Blake and Manton Leadership theory gave a new dimension to the researchers who have been studying only trait theory which says that leaders are born leaders with charismatic personality and ability to inspire others. Anyone else could not be leader. Leaders could not be developed; they are by default leaders. But addition to this study gave a new dimension to the researchers of leadership that anyone could be leader by assessing needs of situation. This shifted personal trait theory to the action of the leader, what they do and how they do. Different researchers from The Ohio State University and University of Michigan also reported their work and present it workable approach. Trait leaders have inbuilt qualities but conceptually leaders have blend of two behaviors, one is work and the other is relationship with people. Effective and successful leaders will always create a good balance between both (Northouse, 2016).

Criticism:

Yukl (1994, p.75), says "results from this massive research efforts have been mostly contradictory and inconclusive". This approach has many weaknesses. Behavioral approach does not determine the performance outcome. "Researchers have not been able to establish a consistent link between task and relationship behavior and outcomes such as morale, job satisfaction and productivity". (Nouthouse,2016) This approach is unclear about which style is more effective and workable. If we consider that 9,9 style is good and effective but it may happen it does not work in certain situation.

Similarities and Differences:

Both approaches have to accomplish task by directing people or by taking care of them. Accomplishment of task is the prime responsibility of the leader and they can choose any kind of style to get desired results. They can go with style of Do as directed or by considering needs of the employees. Both methodologies need to achieve task by coordinating individuals or by dealing with them. Achievement of assignment is the superb obligation of the pioneer and they can pick any sort of style to come by wanted results. They can go with style of Do as coordinated or by thinking about requirements of the workers. Both approaches have followers to give commands and to achieve organizational goals. Without employees it is not possible to accomplish task and achieve targets. Both have certain no of employees who needs some directions and care. Without followers' leaders are nothing. Both have actions to do towards people or task. Both approaches are supposed to deal with people and task, it is leaders' choice to adopt style of leadership according to need and environment. Both studies have sufficient research and theoretical evidence to their existence. Both deals with leader's behavior whether it is task oriented, people oriented, directive or supportive. Both have relationship-oriented base towards task or followers. Both have ambiguous method of evaluation in terms of subordinates (Northouse, 2016).

Style approach is leader's behavior whereas situational leader adopt style according to situation. Style approach is pioneer's way of behaving though situational pioneer embrace style as indicated by circumstance. Style leaders take initiatives whereas situational leader has directive behavior. Style pioneers take drives though situational pioneer has mandate conduct. Style Leader focuses on production whereas Situational Leader focuses on maturity level of employees. Style Leader centers around creation though Situational Leader centers around development level of workers. Style Leaders work for creation while Situational Leader work for ability Style Leaders work for production whereas Situational Leader work for competence. Style theory has good theoretical value whereas situational theory is mostly used for trainings. Style hypothesis has great hypothetical worthwhile situational hypothesis is for the most part utilized for preparation stages. recognize Style Leader create balance between work and people whereas Situational Leader identify the problems. Style Leader make balance among work and individuals while Situational Leader the issues (Northouse, 2016).

Conclusion:

Effective leaders always inspire their followers and present themselves as an example to follow. In this research paper situational and style leadership have been discussed. Both studies have their authenticity and theoretical background. Their own leadership

instruments. Have some similarities and differences. An effective leader cannot follow one style of leadership to get the task done or to achieve targets. At times leaders set their pattern of leadership according to competence level of followers, sometime they fix the things by determine the motivation level of workers. Behavioral approach has been studied at The Ohio University and University of Michigan and then Blake and Mouton. At Ohio University LBDQ was developed. Blake and Mouton also developed a managerial grid for training managers. Situational leadership has four different leadership styles, S1 directive, S2 coaching, S3 supporting, S4 delegating. It has four competence levels of followers D 1, D 2, D 3 and D 4. Successful leaders always analyze the situation and act accordingly.

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