

2: LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the evolutionary process of leadership theories?
2. What are the major conclusions of the trait theories?
3. What is the skills approach to leadership?
4. What are the major conclusions of the behavioral theories?
5. What are the major components of the contingency/situational theories?
6. Differentiate the two emerging perspectives of transactional and transformational leadership.

"A LEADER TAKES PEOPLE WHERE THEY WANT TO GO. A GREAT LEADER TAKES PEOPLE WHERE THEY DON'T NECESSARILY WANT TO GO, BUT OUGHT TO BE."

~ ROSALYNN CARTER

1. What is the evolutionary process of leadership theories?

- A. The first real attempt in studying leadership theory started with what was called the _____
_____. This was based on the idea that the capacity of leadership is inherent—that great leaders are born, not made. This early look at leadership often portrayed great leaders as heroic, mythic, and destined to rise to leadership when needed. The term "Great Man" was used because, at the time, leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, especially in terms of military leadership. This formed the basis of additional studies that specifically attempted to identify what traits were necessary for leadership success.
- B. The Great Man theories initiated the evolutionary stages of leadership theory, we learn that three general approaches have surfaced—_____
_____. Trait theories focus on identifying traits that separate leaders from followers. Behavioral theories identify leaders from a different approach, the behavior exhibited by leaders. Both of these approaches provide great insights into the most popular leadership theories today that are based on contingency theories.

- C. Trait theories were researched in the early 1900s and the 1940s saw attention toward research of the behavioral theories. The last twenty years have seen conclusions that leadership styles should _____, which has generated many research studies in the area of contingency theories.

2. What are the major conclusions of the trait theories?

- A. The first major study of leadership was the search for _____ from followers. Throughout the early 1900s, social observers were fascinated by examples of successful interpersonal influence. This early attention of studying leadership developed the “leaders are born, not made” conclusion. Assumption was that people possessed natural inborn traits that would make them successful leaders.
- B. Early traits that were identified from studies to be necessary for leadership success were traits like ambition, initiative, energy, confidence, integrity, and power. Research focused heavily on _____ and companies started using assessment exercises to measure leadership traits of potential employees. Companies leaned toward the process of identifying traits, utilizing techniques for measuring these traits, then used desirable traits in selecting and promoting their leaders.
- C. Research studies by Ralph Stogdill and Richard Mann during the late 1940s and 1950s desired to summarize the impact of traits on leadership. As they reviewed the trait research and conducted their own studies, they disappointed the trait theorists. The popular trait theory became debated and eventually disputed. Research results found that personal characteristics and traits found in leaders were also found in followers. Stogdill and Mann’s research did surface _____ that seemed to be found more in leaders than followers.
- D. _____ refers to having a strong verbal ability, perceptual ability, and reasoning.
_____ is the ability to be certain about one’s competencies and skills.
_____ is the desire to get the job done and includes characteristics such as initiative, persistence, dominance, and drive.

_____ is the quality of honesty and trustworthiness. _____ is a leader's inclination to seek out pleasant social relationships. _____ was identified as the best predictor for leadership success from these studies.

- E. Important conclusions came out of the many studies during the trait theory period. One major conclusion was that though many people are given advantages in their leadership development because of their early environments and exposure, everyone can acquire some leadership skills to some degree through training suggesting that leaders are _____. A second conclusion indicated that people do not become leaders solely because they possess certain traits, however, the traits leaders possess must be relevant to situations in which the leader is functioning.
- F. Today, traits still play a role in how we perceive leaders and organizations are still spending resources and allocating time to train their leaders to _____. In the 1995 book, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner revealed several research studies that indicate what today's workers say are the most important traits they expect to see in their leaders. The top ten revealed were honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, competent, fair-minded, supportive, broad-minded, intelligence, courageous, and dependability.

3. What is the skills approach to leadership?

- A. Researchers have studied leadership skills for a number of years. The best known research on skills was done by Robert Katz and discussed in the 1955 Harvard Business Review article titled, "Skills of an Effective Administrator." Katz transcended the emphasis from a trait approach to addressing leadership as a _____ that can be learned and developed. Based on field research, effective leadership depends on three skills—technical, human, and conceptual skills.
- B. Technical skills consist of knowledge about and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity. It includes competencies in a specialized area, analytical ability, and the ability to use appropriate tools, methods, and techniques. Technical skills usually involve a _____

_____ with a basic product or process within an organization. Technical skills are most important at lower levels of management and are usually important to look for when hiring new employees.

- C. Human skills consist of knowledge about and ability to _____. These skills are quite different from technical skills, which has to do with working with “things” as human skills are “people skills.” They are the abilities to help a leader work effectively with subordinates, peers, and superiors to accomplish the organization’s goals. Human skills allow a leader to assist group members in working cooperatively as a group to achieve common goals. In short, human skills consist of the capacity to get along with others as you go about your work. The lack of competent human skills usually is the most common reason why employees are dismissed from an organization. This skill remains consistently important throughout an employee’s movement upward within the organization. Good human relations skills are perhaps the greatest asset that enables constant individual success throughout a career.
- D. Conceptual skills are abilities to work with _____. Whereas technical skills deal with things and human skills deal with people, conceptual skills involve the ability to work with ideas. A leader with good conceptual skills is comfortable in talking about ideas and putting goals into words that can be understood by group members—in essence, doing the mental work of shaping the meaning of organizational issues. Conceptual skills are central to creating a vision, developing strategies, solving problems, and determining the appropriate direction for the organization. This is a highly important skill for top management levels and leaders. These skills become less important as you move from top to lower leadership and management levels.

4. What are the major conclusions of the behavioral theories?

- A. After heavy emphasis was placed on leadership traits, development of behavioral theories began around the 1940s. The basis was an assumption that leadership effectiveness depended on leader behavior, and researchers examined _____ and its impact on subordinate performance and satisfaction. The major assumption drawn was that the behavior of effective leaders was somehow different from the behavior of ineffective leaders.
- B. The first study we will look at that supports the behavioral theory is the Michigan studies conducted at the University of Michigan under Rensis Likert. His studies concentrated on leadership behavior and had the goal of determining how effective supervisors differed from ineffective supervisors. Two basic forms of leader behavior surfaced. First, _____, or production-centered, leader behavior existing when a leader pays close attention to the work of the subordinates, clearly explaining the work tasks and procedures, and showing concern on the accomplishment of the task. Second, an _____ leader exists when the leader emphasizes a team-like or cohesive work group and spends energy in the area of employee satisfaction of the job with the goal of the employee's well-being and happiness. Thus, the Michigan studies were one of the first approaches in the leader's attempt to balance task and relationship.
- C. A second study came from the Ohio State studies that were based on a questionnaire designed to assess subordinates' perceptions of their leaders' behavior. These studies revealed two major forms of leadership behavior—consideration and initiating structure. Like the Michigan studies, the Ohio State studies also had two areas of emphasis that utilizes the task and relationship approaches. _____ takes place when the leader shows concern for the subordinates' feelings and gives great respect for their ideas. This emphasis is characterized by mutual respect, trust, and two-way communication. _____ has the leader placing emphasis on defining the roles and clearly outlining what is expected of subordinates. Channels of communications are established, and methods are determined for accomplishing the desired tasks.

- D. The third research study that looked at the behavioral approach is the Managerial/Leadership Grid, developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. This grid provides a framework for examining different types of leadership. The approach consists of the two dimensions similar to those described by the Michigan and Ohio State studies. This study shows that a leader's _____ should be balanced against a _____ and suggests that the best leadership approach is one that attempts to maintain this balance making adjustments when needed. Experts suggest the ideal approach would be a 9.9 or team management emphasis on the grid. The Managerial/Leadership grid provided the basis for additional research and greatly influenced the modern contingency leadership approaches that are preferred today.

5. What are the major components of the contingency/situational theories?

- A. The trait and behavioral leadership approaches provided a solid groundwork for the most widely accepted, known, researched, and preferred approach today—the contingency theory. The main assumption of this leadership approach is that appropriate leader behavior varies from one situation to situation. To put it simply, there is not one best way to lead an organization all the time. The contingency theory identifies key situational factors and specifies how they interact to determine appropriate leader behavior; thus this approach has also been commonly called _____.
- B. The Contingency Theory of Leadership was developed in 1967 by Fred E. Fiedler, an organizational behavior scholar who contends that a leader's effectiveness _____ and effectiveness depends on the proper match between the leader's personality and the situation. The name "contingency theory" stems from the notion that the association between leadership orientation and group effectiveness is contingent upon the extent to which the situation is favorable for the exertion of influence. In other words, some situations are more favorable for certain styles than others.

- C. Fiedler measured leadership style by using the **Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) Scale**, which assesses the degree of positive or negative feelings held by a person toward someone with whom he/she prefers to work with. Low scores on this measurement indicates a task-oriented leadership style. A high score indicates a relationship-oriented style. Three factors are identified in considering what is favorable for a situation—_____.
_____. The most favorable situation has good member relations, high task structure, and strong position power.

During the 1980s, Ken Blanchard refined and revised several of his situational theories that were based on Fiedler's contingency theory research. His situational leadership approach, as the name implies, focuses on leadership in situations. Situational leadership stressed that leadership is composed of both a _____. Leaders should change the degree to which they are directive (task emphasis) or supportive (relationship emphasis) to meet the changing needs of subordinates. Four different leadership styles identified with coaching and delegating added to the directing and supporting styles.

- D. Another approach is the Path-Goal Theory developed in the 1970s by Martin Evans and Robert House. Like the contingency theory of the 1960s, this theory focuses on the situation and leader behavior and validates Fieldler's theory by allowing the possibility of _____.
_____. This theory is based on the expectancy theory of motivation and has four leader behaviors and situational factors. A leader can impact and influence the subordinate's performance by clarifying the specific behaviors and paths that lead to desired rewards and goals. When rewards are heavily contingent on increased performance, the expectations are fulfilled.
- E. The Path-Goal Theory's four leader behaviors are similar to the three classical approaches of leadership discussed earlier in the course. This theory has directive (autocratic), supportive(laissez-faire), participative (democratic), and achievement-oriented. Directive leadership occurs when the leader tells the subordinate exactly what is expected, _____,
_____, and defines standards and measurements of performance. Supportive leadership occurs when the leader is friendly and approachable, _____

_____, shows high concern for well-being and welfare, and treats all group members as equals. Participative leadership occurs when the leader works _____, consults with workers about issues, and carefully considers all input and suggestions before making a final decision.

Achievement oriented leadership is exhibited when the leader _____ for the employees to perform at their highest level.

- F. Leaders in the Path-Goal Theory are able to adjust and adapt their style or behavior to meet situational demands. This theory supports that there is no one best way to lead an organization all the time and situations will force a leader to utilize several leadership approaches. The style that today's experts suggest is generally best is to _____.

6. Differentiate the two emerging perspectives of transactional and transformational leadership

- A. Research on leadership continues to be very popular and the terms of task and relationship keep surfacing as the common denominators of defining leadership. Two different perspectives are constantly discussed today, transactional leadership which emphasizes interpersonal relationships and transformational leadership (also called charismatic leadership) which is an approach that transforms employees to pursue the goal of an organization rather than their personal self-interests. Transactional leadership centers on the _____ while transformational leadership focuses on _____, purpose, or mission.
- B. _____ also known as management theories encompasses many of the theories presented in this lesson. Emphasis is placed on the role of supervision, organization, and group performance. These theories base leadership on a system of reward and punishment. Managerial theories are often used in business; when employees are successful, they are rewarded; when they fail, they are reprimanded or punished. Lately, more emphasis has been placed on building and maintaining healthy relationships between leaders and followers.

- C. Charismatic leadership is often referred to _____ and motivates followers to do more than they originally expected. This leadership perspective is accomplished by raising the perceived value of the task and getting followers to transcend self-interest for the sake of the group goal. The leader becomes a role model setting the example for the desired ethical and moral standards. Charismatic leadership is commonly found in popular military leaders who would create a vision that generates commitment to put the group's common cause in front of individual needs. Today's organizational followers continue to be motivated and inspired by ideas and visions created by charismatic leaders.