Herald Journals of Education and General Studies Vol. 2 (3), pp. 092 - 096 August, 2013
Available online http://www.heraldjournals.org/hjegs/archive.htm
Copyright (c) 2013 Herald International Research Journals

Review

Management style and achievement: a model of counseling synthesis

***A. A. Agbaje[1] and S. I. Efanga[2]**

[1]Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
[2]Department of Curriculum Studies Education, Management and Planning, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Accepted May 21, 2013

The study has taken the best dimensions of a number, of management style models and synthesized them to provide a useful research vehicle and an effective teaching paradigm. The researchers argue that while there are a number of management style training models used to synthesize research findings into useful training vehicles, Blake and Mouton's managerial Grid and Reddin's 3-D, being well known examples of many of the fundamental dimensions upon which the models are based, are surrounded by controversy in initiating structure and consideration. The two factors which form the basis of most models have not been shown to be independent in the majority of studies, yet models such as the two mentioned assume that theoretical independence. Fielder's Least Preferred Co-workers (LPC) forms the style basis of the theory. At various times, it was said that to measure a type of "consideration" versus initiating structure orientation, cognitive complexity or underlying motivational need, an individual would have to be armed with facts and admired expertise. Agbaje argues that management training models which only focus upon a few and questionable dimensions are inevitability simplistic and should be understood and accepted by all the participants.

Keyword: Management Style, Achievement, Model, Counseling, Synthesis.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership, management style and decision-making research contains the ideas that have proved to be both controversial and useful. Many of the equivocal results are due to the limited variables contained within the models reviewed. On analysis, each contains powerful ideas and variables which if integrated, could provide a useful research vehicle as well as an effective training paradigm. This study synthesizes a number of variables from several models to develop such an approach.

There are a number of management style training models used to synthesize research findings into useful training vehicles (Roskin, 2002 and House, 2001). Unfortunately, most focus on only a few dimensions and may therefore be overly simplistic, for as some have argued, many of the dimensions were derived during a time when the situation was comparatively simpler compared with today as stated by Agbaje and Agbaje (2012:14)

"To summarize, in one or two dimensions the multitude of ways in which leaders can differ from one another requires one to test an equivalent, behaviours that are clearly different and may have different effects".

More problematic is the fact that many of the fundamental dimensions on which the models are based are surrounded by controversy. For example, initiating structure and consideration are two factors which for the basis of most models have not been shown to be independent in the majority of the literature reviewed (Karanagh, 2003), yet models such as Agbaje Goal-setting 1997, Blake and Mouton's Grid, Reddin's 3-D and Agbaje and Agbaje's Life-circle theory are all based on their theoretical independence. This difficulty can be better understood if one realizes the origin of the dimensions.

"First of all, it is not clear what constructs or psychological phenomena these leaderships dimensions (C.15) are actually measuring since they came into existence on the basis of successive factor analyses of

*Corresponding Author E-mail: dradeaagbaje@yahoo.com; Tel: +2348162551933

items which did not reflect any specific a priori definition of consideration and structure " Hammer and Dachor, 2005:250.

It is little wonder then that many trainers confuse the issue by implying that **CONSIDERATION** is good and initiating structure is bad since some of the original statements on the Fleishman test1955were clearly punitive. For example, he criticises and controls his foreman when he makes mistakes in front of others. Kerr and Shrieshein (2006) reported other concerns about the measurement stating. Kerr and Shrieshein (2006) reported other concerns about the measurement stating.

"The scales inadequately control for agreement response tendencies, typically generate responses which may be contaminated by which seem to be social desirability or leniency, include behavior dimensions other than those of **CONSIDERATION** and **STRUCTURE** and provide response choices of unequal intervals".

Other recent comprehensive work done by Okonkwo (2006) gives some credence to the mentals of models, using them as a foundation. Fiedler's contingency model is certainly not void of criticism, either. The main situational varieties are position power, Leader-member relations and task structure. The major concern revolves around the Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) measure itself which forms the style basis of the theory and has at various times been said to measure a type of consideration versus initiating structure orientation, cognitive complexity or underlying motivational need (Agbaje, 2012). Other matters at issue include the fact that Leader-member Relations are often measured by the leader's perception of his group, an approach open to all kinds of distortion (John and Johnson 2012). Other significant problems include:

(a) Weak statistical correlations
(b) Different operational definitions of group atmosphere and the LPC score itself.
(c) Variable stability of the LPC score from 0.31 to 0.8
(d) Extrapolating behavior from an attitudinal scale and
(e) Subjects over time, changing in and out of LPC categories

The Least Preferred Co-workers score, as experienced by the researcher, has limited face validity to managers who have taken it, particularly as they often have to think back over a number of years when responding. This may lead to a tendency to "over average" their scoring. Agbaje and Agbaje (2003) normative leadership model combines the concepts of leadership style and decision-making. The model's situational variables are Peter's quality and Acceptance while the leadership and decision style are influenced by Tannenbaum and Schmidt's continuum approach (1958). While Peter has researched the categorization of problem types and the appropriate decision styles, there are a few reviews of Agbaje and Agbaje's extension of his work, although in a critique. Field suggests its validity is suspect because of the use of concurrent validation of variables by the subject manager and further argues that it is not parsimonious.

Another unreported issue is that decision-making is but one of the many behaviours that constitute a style. The decision tree developed from the model may lead the manager to a suggested method of action based on delineated decision rules, but then the manager is left to his own wiles to decide how to implement the method. For example, the usefulness of knowing a problem type may be united by a serious constraint, the manager's ability to behave appropriately in accordance with the situation. The question many managers ask is "How do I achieve the suggested goal once determined?" The effect of the process is really to help the manager decide the "nature of the problem" rather than the "nature of the solution".

This leads to another problem. While the decision-tree format used is a useful and elegant means for classifying thoughts and determining pathways, it is dependent on rather complete information. Assumedly, a manager with such complete knowledge would rarely need to structure his thought pattern as formally. The fact is that many of the questions asked when using the decision-tree for example, Do I know exactly what information is needed? Who possesses it? and How do I collect it? Are the uncertainties in the manager's mind making the predicted style outcome suspect.

Still the statistical basis of the model and the face validity to managers who have used it make it a very effectively integrated situational management style model. Agbaje's goal-setting theory of leadership is surrounded by several questions over and above its major weakness that is, having its genesis in **CONSIDERATION** and **INITIATING STRUCTURE**. These include concern over the fuzzy definition of Path and Goal and non-existent measurement of the management styles evolving from the theory. The four types of leader behavior briefly discussed in the literature include: Directive, Supportive, Participative and Achievement-oriented. From the terms themselves, it appears very unlikely that the four are independent. For example, it is probable that participative leaders would be seen as supportive although supportive leaders need not be seen as participative. Of more concern is the Achievement-oriented category. Achievement is normally considered a more general attribute than suggested by the theory (McClelland, 2001). Hence all behavioural stereotypes would presumably have a desire to achieve personal and or organizational goals given the right conditions.

A fundamental proposition of Path-Goal setting theory is that structuring and ambiguous environment would lead to subordinate satisfaction as the path to the goal is clarified, however Uduak and Ekanem (2009) did not corroborate this in their study. Nor did Stephen and John concern but found tensions arising from a lack of solution specifity were moderated only by considerate behaviour.

Another weakness of the theory is that it has not developed specific, validated instrumentation. “In one of his studies was his (Okonkwo’s) path-goal-setting model tested by using instruments specifically designed for that purpose”.

However, the model is an interesting departure from some past approaches and deserves further analysis and study. One of the earliest style models, Austine and Aloysius (2004) Grid is criticized as not contingent enough on the situation and its suggestion of an ideal 9.9 style as inappropriate. This led Reddin to add a third dimension, effectiveness, and suggested that matching style to situation is the key. While it made a great deal of sense to managers, its theoretical basis was never adequately tested. Dominic and Victor (2009) added a different third demission which they called group maturity.The appropriate manager’s skill was in their mind, dependent on the subordinates technical understanding and skill relating to the problem and their socio-emotional ability to operate as a group Supportive research has yet to be published. Group maturity, then, defied the particular quadrant that the leader was to operate within moving from high consideration and structure if the group was immature (selling style) to low consideration and structure (delegating style) where the group was mature. Although the previous models have been criticized for their shortcomings, each has strengths which have led to improved training and research work. Each will be providing some elements of the integrative model to be discussed in this study. Indeed, they have been the progenitors of the counseling synthesizes model. Its orientation will be seen to be clearly “situational”.

The Situational Focus

The problem of definition and research design have not discussed those interested in determining the factors on which managerial achievement we dependent.(depends) While there is, at present, little agreement on exactly what constitutes “the situation”, there is much agreement that contingency management is the most appropriate approach. It is underlined by the high reputation held in management literature by both researchers and practitioners. The management surveyed categorically rejects this simple solution suggested by some social scientists. Their virtually unanimous view was that the “best” leadership depends on:

(a) Individual personality of the manager himself. (Trait theory)

(b) The individual followers, the kind of people they are and the kind of work they do and

(c) The particular situation and circumstances on any given day or hour.

The gist of my own findings is that:

(a) Different management styles are effective within

(b) the same situations;

(c) Different management styles are effective within the same situation

(d) There is an ideal management style for particular situations.

The average researcher, let alone manager, must be confused by the plethora of apparent and actual conflicts found in the leadership literature. As a consequence, the best dimension of style models discussed have been taken and integrated into a model based on research findings. Needless to say a “best fit” was all that was possible. However, reference to the work on which each model was based should indicate that the dimensions for the most part, operate correctly. Indeed, the counseling synthesized variables often work in a manner which explains some of the controversy surrounding them. For an excellent discussion of why some findings appear to conflict (because of moderating valuables are due to consideration, initiating structure and organizational structure After a comprehensive review of the literature, they compressed their findings into ten situational propositions.

Integrated Management Style Model

The model proposed as the integrated management style model is based on a number of dimensions, some of which have been modified to operate more efficiently.

The Situational Dimensions

This defines the managers domain and should influence his behavour.

Positive Power

This dimension is broken into two attributes

(a) Formal, this relates to the authority delegated to the individual because of the position he holds within the organization and is defined by such things as his job description and the number of subordinates that are responsible to him; and

(b) Informal, this is power which accrues to the individual not directly related to the position he holds. Sometimes called charisma, it develops because of his ability to fulfill the needs of others follower Maturity

This dimension is broken into two attributes:

(a) Technical skill: this relates to followers experience and skill levels in relation to the job to be undertaken; and

(b) Emotional skill which relates to the followers ability to resolve group conflict and operate cohesively.

Job Structure

The dimension can be observed in two perspectives

(a) Path which is the nature of the information provided to the manager about how to achieve, the goal. In order words, was the manger provided with detailed information about the appropriate approach to use in achieving the goal and
(b) Goal-setting is the objective or result for which the manager was held responsible to achieve. In other words, was the manager provided with a clear and specific end-goal which could be objectively evaluated?
These then constitute the major situational influences which the manager must be aware of when determining what action to take. Depending on their combined importance, a certain basic style should result.

The Management Style Dimensions

The dimensions constitute the basis of managerial behavior and should be appropriately displayed depending on situational influence. They include three underlying style bases:
(a) Task-Centred (TC) defined as the degree to which the manager is perceived in his function as emphasizing, directing, initiating, controlling and structuring type behaviour.
(b) Situational-Centred (SC) defined as the degree to which the manager is perceived in his function as emphasizing integrating, organizing, co-ordinating and synthesizing type behavior and
(c) Relationship-Centred (RC) this is defined as the degree to which the manager is perceived in the function as emphasizing, trusting listening, co-operating and encouraging type behaviour.
Task-centred and Relationship-centred dimensions are parallel to consideration and initiating structure. The situation-centred dimension is the result of research by the researcher. As indicated earlier, most style models have moved to a contingency or situational underpinning . Hence it seems apparent that not only must a manager be successful reaching task objectives and satisfying human relationships, but he must also devise the process of integrating the interaction of the two which is to say he must be situation centred. Or put another way, the jigsaw puzzle of the domain over which he reigns must be understood, and the more complex it is, the more important the skill. It has been found that the more situation-centred the manager, the more he achieved (Agbaje, 2012). However, since this was the result of several managerial-situation interfaces, one should not assume that all jobs necessitate such ability. Indeed, some objectives may be achieved successful by those who lack situational sensitivity, but they are generally rather simple or routine in nature.

The Decision Style Dimensions

The fundamental style basis will determine the nature of the decision style process to be used. Three are described below as portrayed by Uduak and Ekanem (2003):
(a) Command: this is defined as the manager making the decision himself without consulting his subordinates and communicating it to them.
(b) Consultation: is defined as the manager obtaining opinions from subordinates without getting them together as a group and then making the decision himself.
(c) Consensus is defined as the manager gathering his subordinates together as a group, outlining the problem and then acting as a conference leader to help them to reach a decision.
These decision processes evolved from the work of Peter (2002) whose research determined that the two main conditions which describe effective decisions are:
(a) Quality which refers to the objectives criteria embedded in the situation, facts and logic.
(b) Acceptance refers to the subjective feelings in people who have to implementa policy.
In some problems, one or another or both attributes are paramount. In relation to the decision styles outlined previously, a command decision attempts to control for quality, a consultation decision attempts to gain both quality and acceptance while a consensus decision is aiming first at acceptance. Different problem types suggest different focuses.

Using the Model of Counselling Synthesis

The previously delineated dimensions have been combined into a diagnostic model to facilitate managers to behave appropriately to situational demands and to help researchers understand better the relationship between the situation-style interface. Depending on the degree of each element present, a particular style basis and decision style is indicated. Theoretical ranges are broken into three: high (a great amount evident), medium (a moderate amount of evident) and low (little evidence of the element).

Generally speaking, high ranges lead to relationship centred demands, medium to situation-centred demands and low to task centred. Conceptually, the basis of a manager's style can be thought to be composed of degrees of the three style dimensions discussed earlier. Hence various combinations of TC, SC and RC style profiles will become evident once situational determinants are described. This would require measurement instruments for the situational variables. Since there are six attributes, one could determine the shading of the management style column by counting the number of times each attributes ends up in TC SC and RC hand, the possibilities ranging from 1 to 6. The appropriate combination of decision styles is determined by following the arrows to the right, noting the relative weighting

implies by the style profile. lead to the same result as regards formal power. Even where the group is not particularly cohesive, his mandate

The Situational Dimensions Related

Generally, the dimensions and their composite attributes can be understood to act as follows when mapping appropriate counseling management styles:

The Task-oriented Profile Conditions

This occurs when the leader has high formal position power and low informal power; the subordinates have limited knowledge and or experience concerning a job and, characteristically, have difficulty operating effectively as a team and finally, where the path is unclear as is the objective which they are attempting to achieve.

The Relationship-centred Profile Conditions

This occurs when the leader has little formal position power but high informal power; the subordinates have a great deal of experience and knowledge about the task they are involved with and the job itself has a clarified path to an objective goal.

A situational centred management style is indicated when the attributes discussed consistency fall in the moderate range. Needless to say, few managerial jobs are to clearly delineate as those mentioned above and as a consequence, most circumstances demand some combination of all three orientations.

Each of the situational dimensions can be better understood if the following considerations are taken into account. Position power accrues generally from the manager's ability to handle effectively followers' maturity and job structure and is an antecedent of achievement. Therefore it necessitates appropriate matching of style orientations and situational demands. Hence, the manager is a teacher when technical uncertainty is apparent and a group counseling psychologist when internal groups conflict arises. He knows how to clarify and structure paths and how to make abstract goals appear more concrete. But he does this only when the job demands it. Herein has an important perceptual skill, one that has caused some confusion in research results, for similar behaviour in difficult circumstances can have direct results. Consider a manager who acts similarly to our previous one but in a different environment. The conditions in this case are a group of followers, highly skilled and cohesive, who are involved in a job which is clearly delineated and which has a very objective and concrete goal. He would be perceived as not having enough confidence in his subordinates, as supervising too closely and of being either over-bearing or a "busy body". Continued behaviour like this would rapidly erode any informal power he possessed and eventually could is to act as a facilitator to help the group develop mechanisms which will allow it to problem solve rather than be dependent continually on him.

Job structuring must lead to path clarification but for many it should fall short of a bureaucratic rules-oriented approach. Instead the manager should provide guidelines about the availability of resources then leave the subordinates to "get on with the job". Since employees should be judged on their effectiveness in achieving objectives, these objectives should be made as clear as possible. Even with clarification, mid-course changes are often necessitated and must be considered when evaluating performance. What is important to remember is that the degree of path and goal clarification necessary is dependent on job maturity. Groups with related experience and problem-solving capability necessitate and demand less structuring.

The Decision Process

The model of counselling clearly identifies the type of decision style appropriate to each basic management style orientation. A tasked-centred style is compatible with the command approach. Situation centred with consultation and relationship-centred with consensus. However, a few job conditions lead clearly to one of the three, different processes may be necessary for different aspects or phases of a decision. For example, conditions may bad an effective manager to make command decisions concerning matters about which he has sole expertise, consultation decisions concerning decisions about which he would like a formal input from employees but has a pretty good idea about what to do or consensus decisions when he feels that they can best be made by his subordinates.

CONCLUSION

The model integrates the findings on leadership and management style into a coherent, integrated training and research vehicle with face validity. In some ways it clarifies the equivocal results of previous researchers. It is hoped that it would lead to further research to test formally the suggested interrelationships.

REFERENCES

Agbaje AA (2003). Distributive Leadership and Managerial

Agbaje AA (1997). Goal-setting and Problem-solving Behaviour in fostering management competence in Bank Managers. (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Agbaje AA (2012). Leadership and Decision making. Ibadan:University of Ibadan Press.
Agbaje AA, Agbaje AO (2003). The Dynamics of Psychological Adjustment among Nigeria. Ibadan: Claverium Press
Austine O, Aloysius I (2004). Decision-Style Model. Annual Handbook for Group Facilitator. Illorin: University of Ilorin Press.
Blake JT, Monton CP (2004). Managerial Effectiveness, New York: McGraw-Hill
Dominic O, Alasa V (2009). Management of Organizational Behaviour, Multidisciplinary. J. Res. Dev., 15(1):23-34
Effectiveness: The Power and Relevance of Counselling Skills
Fielder FE (2007). A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness. New York: McGraw-Hill
House RR (2001). A Path Goal Theory of Leader Effectiveness. Administrative Science Quarterly, 16 (3):16-34
John MJ, Johnson EA (2012). The Effects of Subordinate Behaviour or Managerial Style. Human Relations,12 (4): 24-33
Karanagh MJ (2003). Expected Supervisory Behaviour: International Trust and Environmental Preferences. Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance, 13 (4):1-12
Kerr S, Schrisheim C (2006). Consideration, Initiating Structure and Organizational Criteria: An update of Korman's 1966 Review. Personal Psychology 44 (3):44-54
McClelland DC (2001). The Achieving Society. New Jersey: Van Nostrand Princeton
Okonkwo J (2006). What make a Manager Good, Bad or Average. Psychology Today 16 (3):13-15
Peters TJ (2002). LPC as a Modifier of Leader Follower Relationship. Academy of Manage. J. 44 (16): 242-254
Roskin RR (2002). Managerial Achievement Seminar: The Design and Debugging. Journal of European Training, 3 (2):10-19
Tannenibaum AS, Schmidt WH (1958). How to Choose a Leadership Pattern. Harvard Business Review 56 (2): 426-432
Training. International Journal of Research in Education 3 (2):6-16
Uduak TP, Ekanem MA (2003). The Uses of Leadership Theory, Michigan Business Review, Vol. 665 (4).