Development of the Leader Behaviour Assessment Profile

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ABSTRACT

Leadership as a concept has interested psychologists, sociologists, political scientists and management scientists. Significant efforts have been made by researchers since the 1920s to understand the concept of leadership. The more we research leadership, the more complexity comes to light. Leadership can be simply defined as the act of making an impact on others in a desired direction. The present paper summarises the development of the leader behaviour assessment profile, which measures leadership styles in terms of telling, selling, participating and delegating.

INTRODUCTION

Managers can effectively run organisations, but it is only leaders who can build them. Managers are goals driven, whereas it is purpose that motivates leaders. There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Leadership has been defined in terms of individual traits, leader behaviour, interaction patterns, role relationships, follower

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3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 34

perceptions, influence over followers, influence on task goals and influence on organisational culture. Hemphill and Coons (1957) defined leadership as the behaviour of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal. Tannenbaum et al. (1961) had defined leadership as a process of interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals. However leadership is also understood as the initiation and maintenance of structure (Stogdill, 1974). It is the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organisation (Katz and Kahn, 1978). It is a process of influencing the activities of an organised group toward goal achievement (Rauch and Behling, 1984).

Leadership process is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort and causing willing efforts to be expended to achieve the purpose (Jacobs and Jaques, 1990). Therefore, leaders are those who consistently make effective contributions to social order and who are expected and perceived to do so (Hosking, 1988). Leadership is an attempt to influence the behaviour of another individual or group. Management, on the other hand, is working with and through others to accomplish organisational goals (Hersey, 1984). Researchers have tried to find out what makes an individual a leader; or what kind of behavioural patterns are exhibited by the leader; or why leadership styles differ from individual to individual. The cumulative findings from more than eighty years of research indicate that some traits, e.g. intelligence, increase the likelihood of success of a leader, even though none of these traits guarantee success (Lord et al., 1986; Bass, 1990). The leaders are responsible for accomplishing organisational goals as well as for the well-being of their subordinates. In general, effective leaders show substantial concern in their behaviour, both for task objectives and for the people who must carry out the task (Blake and Mouton, 1982). Although some task-oriented and people-oriented behaviour is necessary for any leader, the relative importance of specific forms of behaviour varies from situation to situation (Yukl, 1989).

Effective leaders select behaviour which is appropriate for a given situation and they also act to modify the situation to make it more favourable (Yukl, 1981; Blake and Mouton, 1982). Situational

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 35

approaches to leadership emphasise the importance of contextual factors, such as the leader's authority and discretion, the nature of the work performed by the leader's unit, the attributes of subordinates and the nature of the external environment. Situational leadership theories are divided into two major sub-categories. One line of research treats leader behaviour as a dependent variable: the researchers seek to discover how the situation influences behaviour and how much variation occurs in leader behaviour across different types of leader positions. The other line of research seeks to discover how situational variables moderate the relationship between leader attributes (e.g. traits and behaviour) and measures of leader effectiveness. There has been much more research on the latter approach than on the former, perhaps because it is compatible with the common bias to perceive leaders as causal agents who shape events rather than being shaped by them.

The theory and research on situational demands is concerned primarily with explaining leader behaviour across situations, not with explaining why one particular type of behaviour is more effective in one particular situation. Some insights into the reasons are useful for understanding situational demands for organisational effectiveness, especially to understand what aspects of the job to emphasise, how to allocate time and with whom to interact (Kotter, 1982). Situational approaches maintain that leadership is determined not so much by the character of the individuals as by the requirements of the social situation.

According to this research focus, a person could be a follower or a leader depending upon circumstances. Situational leadership approaches contain an underlying assumption that different situations require different types of leadership, while the contingency approach attempts to specify the conditions or situational variables that moderate the relationship between leader traits or behaviours and performance criteria. The most popular situational theory of leadership among management practitioners is Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (1969, 1988). It proposes that the optimal amount of task-oriented behaviour by a leader depends on subordinate maturity. They combined the contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967) and grid approach (Blake and Mouton, 1982) to propose their situational theory of leadership.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 36

Combining concerns for tasks and for people (from low to high), they proposed four leadership styles: *Style 1*: high concern for task, low concern for relationship, *Style 2*: high concern for both task and relationship, *Style 3*: high concern for relationship, low concern for task, *Style 4*: low concern for both task and relationship. They proposed that all four styles are functional; however, their relevance to situations is important. They proposed that the leader effectiveness is inversely related to the maturity of the followers. In this situational model, whether the leader should tell, sell, participate or delegate is contingent upon job maturity of the subordinate in terms of ability and willingness to own responsibility for self-direction.

Hersey and Blanchard proposed that when subordinates are unwilling and unable then a 'telling style' that clarifies direction and instructs subordinates can be more effective. When the subordinates are willing but unable then a 'selling' style of leadership may be more effective; in the case of subordinates being able but unwilling then a 'participating' style of leadership is more effective. When the subordinates are willing as well as able then 'delegating' may be more effective.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) cited conclusions of Korman (1966) as a basis for their theory, and they argued that Korman suggests the possibility of a curvilinear relationship rather than a simple linear relationship between initiating structure, consideration and other variables. They stated that situational leadership style is based on a curvilinear relationship between task behaviour, relationship behaviour and maturity. In 1982, Hersey and Blanchard presented a model with multiple styles that displayed both ability or 'job maturity' and willingness or 'psychological maturity' as separate components of maturity. Ability is argued to progress from a little, to some, to quite a bit, to a great deal through the four levels of increasing subordinate maturity respectively. The present paper is an attempt to describe the procedure undertaken for developing and standardising an instrument to assess the behaviour of a leader in terms of the various styles proposed by Hersey and Blanchard in their model.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument is based on situations. In all, sixteen situations were developed which depicted the state of maturity of the subordinates in terms of their ability and willingness. Four possibilities were

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 37

developed for each level of maturity: 1) unable and unwilling, 2) unable but willing, 3) able but unwilling and 4) able and willing. These situations were written on cards, which were shown to ten experts or judges who were well versed with situational leadership theory. These experts had doctoral/MBA degrees and were experienced management practitioners. The sixteen situations were modified and finalised based on suggestions of the experts or judges. Each situation had four response options. Each option represented a particular leadership style, viz. telling, selling, participating and delegating. After finalising the sixteen situations and their options, the first version of the instrument was administered to 197 managers to testify the feasibility of the measure. The respondents were asked to choose their response on the basis of what they might do if they had to face a particular situation (Appendix 3.1).

Validity

Face/content validity of the instrument was high, because all the situations were validated by the subject experts who were taken as judges.

Use of the Instrument

The measure can be used for research and survey purposes. It can also be used for individual assessment. It is self-administering and does not require the services of a highly trained tester. It is eminently suitable for group as well as individual testing. Leader Behaviour Assessment Profile (LBAP) was designed to help managers to examine their dominant and back-up leadership styles. The respondents can examine their profiles on the basis of scoring patterns and enhance their effectiveness across situations.

Limitations of the Instrument

In all measures of this nature, the respondents do manage to get some insights into what the purpose is. As such, there is always the factor of 'social desirability and faking'. The instrument is purported to assess the leadership profile on the basis of self-awareness of the respondent. Thus, it does not cover the part of knowledge unknown to the respondent him/herself.

The user of the instrument is advised to develop his/her own norms, if the instrument is administered on a large sample.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 38

Instructions for Administration of LBAP

The instructions are given to the respondents for clarity and correct understanding about the procedure required to be followed for responding to the situations given in the instrument.

Important Points

1. No time limit should be given for completing the measure. However, most respondents should complete it in about twenty minutes.
2. Before administering the measure, it is advisable to emphasise orally that responses should be checked as quickly as possible and sincere cooperation is sought for the same. The responses should be kept confidential.
3. It should also be emphasised that there is no right or wrong responses. The situations are designed to highlight the differences in individual reactions. The instrument is meant to record the difference between individuals and not to rank them as good or bad.
4. It should be duly emphasised that all situations have to be responded to and no situation should be left unanswered.
5. It is not desirable to tell the respondents the exact purpose for which the measure or instrument is used prior to administration of the instrument. However, this can be disclosed afterwards when respondents have completed the work.
6. Though the measure is self-administering, it has been found useful to read out the instructions printed on the response sheet to the respondents.

Instructions for Scoring the LBAP

Manual scoring is done conveniently. A scoring sheet is provided to identify corresponding leadership styles as per responses:

1. Each alternative is representative of one of the leadership styles.
2. The tick-marked (✓) alternatives are identified in terms of the styles represented by them. Each style can, therefore, be tick-marked (✓) sixteen times in the measure.
3. Each tick (✓) mark is awarded a score of one if the style is appropriate for the situation. In each situation, there is only one

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 39

alternative that is appropriate for it, as per the Hersey and Blanchard Model. Hence, the maximum possible score for each style is four and the minimum is zero.

4. Award a score of 'one' for each response if your answer matches the key: 1(d), 2(a), 3(a), 4(b), 5(d), 6(a), 7(a), 8(b), 9(d), 10(a), 11(a), 12(b), 13(d), 14(a), 15(a) and 16(b). All other answers score zero. Here, the number refers to the serial order of the situation and the letter in the parentheses is the indicator of the appropriate style for each specific situation.
5. The style having the highest score is considered to be the 'dominant' style, whereas the next highest score is considered as the 'back-up' style.
6. However, it is possible to have more than one dominant and even back-up styles, which is so only if there are two or more styles with the same scores. If this occurs, then the respondent is considered to have multiple 'dominant or back-up' styles.
7. The measure yields the leader behaviour profile in terms of four leadership styles with dominant and back-up styles for an individual.

APPENDIX 3.1: LEADER BEHAVIOUR ASSESSMENT PROFILE

Instructions: In this questionnaire certain situations are given. Place yourself in these situations and choose one of the four options by encircling your choice. There are no right or wrong answers.

Situation 1

You have recently joined an organisation as head of one of the departments. Your subordinates seem to be enthusiastic and efficient. The top management has given you higher targets than the previous year.

(a) You would assign the tasks to your subordinates without consulting them.
(b) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks to accomplish the targets after discussing it with them.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 40

(c) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising the action plan to accomplish the targets.
(d) You will apprise your subordinates of the targets and allow them to accomplish them in their own way.

Situation 2
Your department is given the responsibility of organising a programme for all employees. Your subordinates have volunteered and have shown keen interest in organising the event. They have not demonstrated ability in the past for organising such programmes.

(a) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks after discussing their responsibilities with them.
(b) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising the action plan afresh.
(c) You will apprise your subordinates of the situation and allow them to work out a new plan and implement it.
(d) You will assign the tasks to your subordinates and instruct them in detail about how to perform these tasks.

Situation 3
You have recently joined an organisation. Your department is considered quite efficient in its work. You are given an important assignment. Your subordinates seem to be reluctant and uninterested in your proposals.

(a) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising their responsibilities and action plan.
(b) You will apprise your subordinates of the assignment .and allow them to prepare an action plan and implement it in their own way.
(c) You will assign the tasks to your subordinates on your own without discussing it with them.
(d) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks after discussing it with them.

Situation 4
The performance of your department is declining. The team members blame each other. They seem to be confused over their

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 41

roles and responsibilities. They are not able to coordinate different activities.

(a) You will apprise your subordinates of the current situation and allow them to find a solution on their own.
(b) You will reassign the tasks to your subordinates and clarify your expectations.
(c) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and reassign them tasks after discussing it with them.
(d) You will allow your subordinates to share their views and revise their roles and responsibilities.

Situation 5
You are appointed to take charge of a special task force. Your team members are experienced, skilled and enthusiastic. They have handled similar assignments successfully in the past.

(a) You will assign the tasks and closely monitor the progress.
(b) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks to be performed after a detailed discussion with them.
(c) You will allow your subordinates to finalise their roles and prepare the action plan in consultation with you.
(d) You will acquaint your subordinates with the objectives of the task force and allow them to work out an action plan themselves.

Situation 6
Your organisation is planning to restructure its entire processes. Your subordinates are supporting the restructuring process willingly, but they are lacking in the required skills.

(a) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks and arrange training after discussing the situation with them.
(b) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising the processes and understanding the training needs.
(c) You will apprise your subordinates of the new processes and allow them to formulate a training programme in their own way.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 42

(d) You will instruct your subordinates on how to perform different tasks and carry out new functions.

Situation 7
You are heading a team of high performers for a long time. During the last few months their performance is declining. They do not show interest in their jobs.

(a) You will allow your subordinates to share their views while assigning responsibilities and developing action plan.
(b) You will apprise your subordinates of their new responsibilities and allow them to carry on their work in their own way.
(c) You will reassign the tasks to your subordinates and instruct them regarding how to carry out their jobs.
(d) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and reassign them tasks after discussing the situation with them.

Situation 8
You have recently joined an organisation in charge of an important division. You have observed that your subordinates are not ready to change old practices. Their skill level is below average.

(a) You will apprise your subordinates of the current urgencies and encourage them to find a solution on their own.
(b) You will reassign the tasks to your subordinates and instruct them on how to perform different functions.
(c) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and reassign them tasks after discussing the situation with them.
(d) You will allow your subordinates to share their views while redesigning their roles and responsibilities.

Situation 9
Your organisation is planning to introduce major changes in its practices and procedures. This will require more effort and involvement on the part of employees. So far your subordinates have supported you and they have performed well.

(a) You will assign the tasks to your subordinates and clearly spell out instructions relating to the new practices.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 43

(b) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them new responsibilities after discussing the situation with them.
(c) You will encourage suggestions from your subordinates and allow them to have their say in formulating policies and procedures.
(d) You will apprise your subordinates of the situation and allow them to structure policies and procedures independently.

Situation 10
Your department is assigned the responsibility of training a group of employees. Your subordinates have taken the initiative and are willing to contribute. It is their first opportunity but you believe that they lack the basic knowledge.

(a) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks and responsibilities.
(b) You will allow your subordinates to participate in finalising the programme and roles to be performed.
(c) You will apprise your subordinates of the programme and trust them to prepare it in their own way.
(d) You will assign the tasks to your subordinates without taking them into confidence.

Situation 11
One of your subordinates has received a 'best performance' award. He was a fast learner and enthusiastic. You want to assign him new responsibilities. He is not paying attention and has adopted a 'hands off' approach.

(a) You will allow your subordinate to have his say in finalising the action plan and in assigning new responsibilities.
(b) You will apprise your subordinate of your plan and allow him to take up new responsibilities in his own way.
(c) You will assign the tasks to your subordinate without consulting him.
(d) You will take your subordinate into your confidence and assign him responsibilities after a thorough discussion with him.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 44

Situation 12

You are heading the sales department of an organisation. You are given a 40 per cent higher sales target in a new territory. Your subordinates are not able to achieve sales and are not interested in working in a new territory.

(a) You will apprise your salespeople of the targets and allow them to accomplish the targets in their own way.
(b) You will work out a detailed sales plan and closely monitor the sales in the new territory.
(c) You will take your salespeople into confidence and assign them targets to accomplish after a thorough discussion with them.
(d) You will allow your salespeople to have their say in finalising the targets.

Situation 13

Your department is considered as one of the best performing departments. The team members are consistently performing well. Recently you have been assigned an important project.

(a) You will assign the tasks to your subordinates (as per your judgement) and keep a continuous watch on their progress.
(b) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks after discussing the project with them.
(c) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising the action plan to handle the project.
(d) You will apprise your subordinates of the project and allow them to work out an action plan independently.

Situation 14

Your subordinates have cordial interpersonal relations. They cooperate with each other. The team's performance is below average. You feel that they lack the requisite set of skills and knowledge in work methods.

(a) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and discuss the work methods with them.
(b) You will allow your subordinates to acquire new skills while accommodating their suggestions relating to the work methods.

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 45

(c) You will apprise your subordinates of the performance and allow them to handle the situation in their own way.
(d) You will explain how to perform different tasks to your subordinates and closely monitor their performance.

Situation 15
Your department has successfully organised conferences on behalf of the organisation. Your subordinates have always taken initiative and have organised conferences successfully. This time you are observing that they are not coming forward with any initiative.

(a) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising different activities.
(b) You will allow your subordinates to work out a complete plan and execute it in their own way.
(c) You will assign the tasks to your subordinates, set performance standards and make sure that they achieve these standards.
(d) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and assign them tasks after discussing the situation with them.

Situation 16
You are planning a new system for which your subordinates need training. They seem to be unenthusiastic and uninterested in training.

(a) You will apprise your subordinates of the programme and allow them to work out one in their own way.
(b) You will reaffirm your stand on the issue and closely monitor their performance during the programme.
(c) You will take your subordinates into your confidence and work out a programme after detailed discussion.
(d) You will allow your subordinates to have their say in finalising the training programme.

SCORING SHEET: LEADER BEHAVIOUR ASSESSMENT PROFILE

Enter your response in the appropriate box by putting a tick (✓) mark in it. After completing your response to all sixteen situations match your answers with the key given in the manual. Add up the

3. Development.qxp 5/17/2007 10:33 PM Page 46

scores for each style to draw your profile for identifying your dominant and back-up styles of leadership.

Situation	Telling	Selling	Participating	Delegating
1	a	b	c	d
2	d	a	b	c
3	c	d	a	b
4	b	c	d	a
5	a	b	c	d
6	d	a	b	c
7	c	d	a	b
8	b	c	d	a
9	a	b	c	d
10	d	a	b	c
11	c	d	a	b
12	b	c	d	a
13	a	b	c	d
14	d	b	a	d
15	c	a	b	c
16	b	c	d	a
Total Score				

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