The Relationship Between Leadership and Personality

Andrew J. Marsiglia, PhD, CCP

People that have task-oriented personality types tend to have considerable focus on details. They are not comfortable initiating an action-plan until they are satisfied they have all the necessary facts. On the other hand, people who have relations-oriented personality types tend to have considerable focus on the result and are comfortable initiating an action-plan when they have just the essential facts. Therefore, it is important for a leader to understand personality and accurately adjust leadership style to the management situation.
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Personality theorists tended to regard leadership as a one-way effect: Leaders possess qualities that differentiate them from followers. But these theorists did not acknowledge the extent to which leaders and followers have interactive effects by determining which qualities of followers are of consequence in a situation. (p. 12)

Personality predicted leadership emergence across a variety of people and settings. Lord (1986) states, “In short, personality traits are associated with leadership emergence to a higher degree and more consistently than popular literature indicates” (p. 407). In addition, Barrick and Mount (1993) have found a significant association between personality and job performance.

The combination of leadership style and personality type appears to meld into a psychological combination that produces the ethos of a leader. “Leaders are not just identified by their leadership styles, but also by their personalities, their awareness of themselves and others, and their appreciation of diversity, flexibility, and paradox” (Handbury, 2001, p. 11). In addition, McGregor (1960) states, “It is quite unlikely that there is a single basic pattern of abilities and personality trait characteristics of all leaders. The personality characteristics of the leader are not unimportant, but those which are essential differ considerably depending on the circumstances”
(p. 180). Therefore, it may indeed, make a difference in ascertaining personality type in order to determine the correct job match between an employee and his or her colleagues.

Historical Overview

The ancient era of leadership theory, from about 2300 B.C. to 1 A.D., was characterized by the idea of leaders being great men who were sources of authority and justice. Leaders were expected to behave in a manner imagined by their society and culture as appropriate for a particular role such as a king, chief, prince, or prophet. They were considered to be heroic, inspirational and endowed with special leadership power that enabled them to capture their follower’s imagination (Bass, 1990). So powerful was this effect that when Woods (1913) examined the evolution of leadership in 14 countries over a 14-century period, he concluded that the great-man leaders made their nation and shaped it in accordance with their abilities.

The classical era of leadership range from 1 A.D. to 1869 and the neoclassical era range from 1870 to 1939 encompassing a substantial portion of the industrial era. During the Industrial era, organization theories were based on social, demographic, and economic issues that related to a relatively stable command-and-control, production-oriented environment. These theories provided a foundation for establishing procedures for managing personnel and equipment as well as creation of formal organization structures to insure production stability. This produced an environment characterized by large organizations that were regionally located and predominantly employed local male workers. These workers composed a homogeneous group that typically had little or no formal education, conducted their life activities within a few miles of their work site, and had personal familiarity with most of their colleagues (Hatch, 1997; Jacques, 1996; Shafritz & Ott, 2001). However, as organizations developed interests outside of their regional areas, especially interests in foreign countries, demographic homogeneity gave way to diversity of
personnel that included different ethnic, racial, and gender groups. In addition, increased
globalization and cultural diversity led to greater information generation and dissemination. The
result has been an increasingly open environment, heterogeneous demographics and greater
knowledge of non-local affairs, all of which has increased the feeling of uncertainty (Handy,
1996).

The industrial era of organization theory is characterized by its focus on stability,
authoritarian management, and formal structure and appears to have spawned leadership theories
where leadership was a product of the emerging effect of leader and follower interaction,
differentiated roles, and compliance-induction. In fact, the compliance-induction theory appears
most prevalent during this period because its authoritarian, directive approach enabled leaders to
accomplish the most work with the least friction and greatest cooperation.

The American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 had a profound effect on American industry and
government by virtue of the fact that war production in the northern states stimulated
manufacturing activity to high production levels. The southern states, however, suffered
considerable damage to manufacturing infrastructure and civil government. The positive
consequence, however, is that after southern industry was rebuilt it became a major contributor
to the country’s modern industrial resource (Hummel, 1996).

In the post-Civil War period of 1869 to the World War II period beginning in 1940, the
United States significantly increased its influence as a world political power and manufacturing
producer (Hummel, 1996; Jacques, 1996). This environment appears to have created a new
leadership focus that included greater reliance on trait theory where ideal leaders were
considered to have the greatest number of personality traits and attributes (Bass, 1990). Through
the end of the nineteenth century up to mid-twentieth century leadership theorists appeared to
focus less on compliance-induction theory and more on the concept of leadership as a product of group processes and as a form of persuasion where there is a reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers. This approach is espoused by Cowley (1928), who posited that a leader as a person who moved followers toward a mutual objective. In addition, Tead (1935) states that a leader should influence people to cooperate to attain a desired common goal.

There appears to be no single universal definition of leadership but rather definitions relate to various leadership perspectives such as personal traits, power-influence, behavioral aspects, or situational environment. Hogan (1994) defines leadership, “Leadership involves persuading other people to set aside for a period of time their individual concerns and to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of a group” (p. 494). Yukl (1989) posits, “Leadership includes influencing task objectives and strategies, influencing commitment and compliance in task behavior to achieve these objectives, influencing group maintenance and identification, and influencing the culture of an organization” (p. 253).

In an effort to develop a comprehensive definition of leadership, Bowers and Seashore formulated four basic dimensions of leadership:

1. **Support**: Behavior that enhances someone else’s feeling of personal worth and importance.
2. **Interaction Facilitation**: Behavior that encourages members of the group to develop close, mutually satisfying relationships.
3. **Goal Emphasis**: Behavior that stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting the group’s goal or achieving excellent performance.
4. Work Facilitation: Behavior that helps achieve goal attainment through activities such as scheduling, planning, and providing resources such as tools, materials, and technical knowledge.

Leadership is frequently defined in terms of transactional and transformational dimensions. The paradigm of transactional-transformational leadership has universal applicability across all continents and cultures. In terms of universality, Bass (1990, p. 137) declares, “Transformational leadership tends to be more effective and satisfying than contingent rewarding, contingent rewarding is more effective and satisfying than managing by exception, and managing by exception is more effective and satisfying than laissez-faire leadership.”

During the 1980’s theorists began to recognize the importance of personal and national cultural influence on leadership paradigms. In the global economy of the 21st century, occidental management theories and techniques in some form will be adapted to countries around the world. In order to be effective, however, the theories must incorporate cultural variations and will be combined with oriental management theories thereby producing management techniques that have near-universal applicability (Hofstede, 1984). “Feedback from subordinates should be part of an organization’s leadership performance assessment program. Such feedback, along with self-assessment, provides useful information for leadership development purposes and may help in closing the gap between actual and desired performance” (Kolb, 1995, p. 244).

Current Findings

Leader Effectiveness

Leader effectiveness is dependent on the leadership problem-situation, team-dynamics, organization culture, and strategy. Consequently, the leader must employ a multiple level of
leadership skills in order to be effective (Yammarino, 2000). Hogan (1994, p. 497) submits that there are five categories that may be used to evaluate leader effectiveness:

1. Actual performance of the organization unit or team
2. Ratings by peers, subordinates, and superiors
3. Results of interviews, simulations, or assessment centers
4. Self-ratings
5. Perceptions of people whose careers are in jeopardy.

Team dynamics and processes generally provide rapid and measurable results for determining leader effectiveness. Team processes have a reciprocal relationship in which leadership processes and team processes influence each other as team members become more experienced in their job related skills or in other words, the team members become gain job-skill maturity. Zaccaro (2001) states, “We have also suggested that as teams become more experienced and achieve a significant level of expertise, other members take over more of the leadership functions while designated leaders retain their boundary spanning responsibilities” (p. 477). In addition, leader effectiveness may be increased when the leader takes a relationship or partnership approach. The leader-follower relationship is reciprocal because as the leader influences the subordinate to become more effective and as this effectiveness increases, the subordinate requires less direct leader intervention (Hamilton & Schriesheim, 2001; Higgs & Roland, 2001).

When a leader uses a partnership approach with his or her team, leadership assumes functional characteristics. A functional perspective of leadership focuses on the essential functions of a work group, and the ancillary organizations supporting the work group. Leadership functions should be functionally equivalent to those of the work group. In addition,
functional leadership recognizes the skill maturity of the work group. At low levels of job maturity, employees performing new tasks require encouragement and support. As employees gain job maturity, they require less direct leader intervention (Behling & Rauch, 1985).

In some situations, indirect leadership may increase effectiveness. Leaders often directly apply their problem solving skills, knowledge, solution formulating skills, and social judgment to a leadership situation. Effective leadership may be achieved by using more of an indirect approach. Mumford (2000, p. 167), states, “. . . leadership may sometimes be a rather indirect phenomenon where influence is exercised through cognition and performance as well as through interpersonal interaction.”

In a study for the U.S. Army, Connelly (2000) determined criteria for leader effectiveness using both military and civilian subjects. Connelly (2000, p. 77) declares, “The Army study emphasizes the importance of creative thinking, complex problem-solving skills, and social judgment skills, while the civilian study serves as a reminder that other leader attributes, such as personality and motivation, are critical to a leader’s success.”

Hater and Bass (1988) conducted a study of highly educated workers and discovered that a transformational leadership approach, displaying various amounts of participative decision making, generated high motivation and work effectiveness. Transaction leadership on the other hand, did not produce high motivation from workers who expected personal enrichment from their job-related activities. Transformational leadership is frequently considered to be most effective at higher levels within an organization’s hierarchy. A transformational leadership style, however, may be more effective at lower management levels. Effective leaders will not rely solely on a transactional leadership style but will move between transformational and
transactional styles as required by the situation and subordinate characteristics (Howell & Avolio, 1993; Lowe & Galen, 1996).

It is difficult to predict leader effectiveness by using only single measurement criteria. A multi-criteria measurement system has greater probability of predicting leader effectiveness. Hogan (1994) states, “In our judgment, the best way to forecast leadership is to use a combination of cognitive ability, personality, simulation, role play, and multi-rater assessment instruments and techniques” (p. 497). It appears that personality measures are efficacious in predicting effective leadership. Personality typing using validated instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator may improve leader-subordinate communication and increase leader effectiveness (Witt, 2000). In addition, leader traits and behavior influence leader success across a variety of situations. Using the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire, Hartman (1999) found that personalities high in “Factor A, Warmth,” were more effective in their leadership roles.

In research conducted by Day and Stogdill (1972) it was determined that that there was no appreciable gender difference in leader effectiveness. Male and female leaders in parallel leadership positions exhibited similar patterns of leader behavior and were regarded by their superiors as being similar in leader effectiveness.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction depends on a plethora of elements. Measuring only one or two elements such as leadership style, personality, or least preferred co-worker may not produce a full explanation of the most effective leadership style to use in a particular situation. Analysis of subordinate’s cultural, career progress perceptions, relationship between job characteristics and attitude, and non-job related characteristics in order to produce a more comprehensive assessment of job
satisfaction (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Glick, Jenkins Jr., & Gupta, 1986; Scarpello & Campbell, 1983).

In a study of the relationship of job satisfaction to job performance Petty (1984) proved there is a positive relationship to individual job satisfaction to individual job performance. Popular books such as Theory X (Ouchi, 1981), In Search of Excellence (Peters & Waterman, 1984), and The One Minute Manager (Blanchard & Johnson, 1985) suggest a direct relationship between job satisfaction and performance. It seems logical, therefore, to conclude that Blanchard’s (2001b) Situational Leadership II theory will be applicable to the study of leadership style and project manager job tenure.

In expressing concern that the benefits of the social scientific study of leadership are not being applied enough in practical situations, Hogan (1994) states, “…what we know about leadership seems to have little impact on the people who actually make decisions about leadership” (p. 494). This may provide a partial explanation of why the Managerial Grid and Situational Leadership II form the basis of popular commercial leadership training programs. These programs appear to be intuitively appealing to non-academicians. That is, non-leadership researchers immediately perceive or mentally understand, without intermediate explanation, the practical application of leadership concepts.

Using monozygotic twins reared apart, Arvey (1989) studied the genetic predispositions of a person gravitating toward staying in a particular type of job environment and the person’s concept of job satisfaction as measures by the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. Results of the study indicated that there are significant inherited traits that cause people to seek and remain in certain types of jobs. Therefore, it appears important for organizations to accurately
define the personal characteristics required for a person to be successful in a particular leadership role and to test candidates to insure they will be a proper fit for the job.

**Personality and Leadership**

Certain personality traits are positively related to leader effectiveness and team performance. These personality traits include surgency, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. Even though there are no universal personality traits that are predictors of leader effectiveness in all situations, some situations and organization cultures require specific personality traits and leadership styles relative to the follower’s expectations of a leader (Hogan et al., 1994). “Personality traits, such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion, openness, neuroticism, and self-monitoring influence implicit leadership theories. Specifically, individuals characterize a leader similar to self as ideal” (Keller, 1999).

Hollenbeck (2000) developed an integrated theory of person-organization fit in which the structure of an organization is compared to the personality traits of the organization’s people. Typically, organizations develop a functional structure that enables it to successfully integrate with its external environment. The functional structure characteristics create unique internal environment conditions that require organization members of particular personality traits in order to attain organization efficiency. In addition, Hollenbeck (2000) suggested that successful organizations employ people that have personality traits that enable the workers to fit well into both the organization’s internal and external environments.

Senior executives often select people for a leadership role solely based on the criteria of the candidate’s operational efficiency or experience. Sorcher (2002) suggests that the selection should be made on a broad range of soft leadership criteria including personal integrity, cultural background, and personality. Hogan (1994) states, “In our judgment, the best way to forecast
leadership is to use a combination of cognitive ability, personality, simulation, role play, and multi-rater assessment instruments and techniques” (p. 497). In addition, personality measures are efficacious in predicting effective leadership.

Proactive personality was positively associated with both self-reported objective success-criteria of salary and promotions as well as the subjective success-criteria of career satisfaction (Seibert, 1999). In a study of six hundred fifty-two employees composing 51 work teams it was determined that relationships of team member’s ability, personality and social cohesion contributed positively to team viability and team performance. “With respect to composition variables, teams higher in general mental ability, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extroversion, and emotional stability received higher supervisor ratings for team performance” (Barrick, 1998, p. 377). In addition, the three personality characteristics of autonomy, control, and motivation orientation influence performance and achievement through achievement goal patterns, goal level, and mental focus. “Research suggests that global personality traits can help researchers to understand and predict the motivational strategies that people use while working toward goals in achievement settings” (Lee, 2003, p. 256).

A U.S. Army study examined criteria for leader effectiveness using both military and civilian subjects and discovered the importance of personality and leadership. Connelly (2000, p. 77) declares, “The Army study emphasizes the importance of creative thinking, complex problem-solving skills, and social judgment skills, while the civilian study serves as a reminder that other leader attributes, such as personality and motivation, are critical to a leader’s success.” Military and civilian senior executives often select people for a leadership role solely based on the criteria of the candidate’s operational efficiency or experience. Sorcher (2002) suggests that the selection
should be made on a broad range of soft leadership criteria including personal integrity, cultural background, and personality.

Prior research has shown that personality characteristics can be accurately assessed using of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (Witt, 2000; Young, 2001), DiSC®, (Morgan, 2000), Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (George, 1990), and the Five Factor Model (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Larson et al., 2002). Judge (2002, p. 1) declared, “Overall, the five-factor model had a multiple correlation of .48 with leadership, indicating strong support for the leader trait perspective when traits are organized according to the five-factor model”. In fact, considerable personality-leadership effectiveness research has been conducted using the Big Five Personality Model or Five Factor Model (hereafter referred to as FFM). Barrick and Mount (2001) summarized the results of 15 meta-analytic studies, conducted over the prior 50 years that focused on the relationship of FFM personality characteristics to prediction of job performance. Results, summarized in Table 1, indicated that there is a positive relationship of FFM dimensions to job performance. In particular, conscientiousness and emotional stability were positively correlated to job performance in all jobs while the other FFM dimensions only had positive correlation to specific occupations. Salgado (2003) reached a similar conclusion in a study of Western European firms.
Table 1:  
*Correlation Between the FFM Dimensions and Job Performance.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFM Dimension</th>
<th>Correlation to Job Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Positive correlation in all jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional stability</td>
<td>Positive correlation in all jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Correlation for specific occupations only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Correlation for specific occupations only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>Not relevant to most jobs</td>
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Larsen (2002) declared, “For understanding an individual’s total personality, it is absolutely necessary to know something about the kinds and intensity of his interests” (p.217). In fact, for decades researchers have suggested there is a direct link between personality and vocational interests. In an effort to determine correlation between personality and vocational interests, studies were conducted using Holland’s Big Six domains of vocational interest and the Big Five model of personality traits (Barrick et al., 2003; Furnham, 2001; Larson et al., 2002). Results of the study showed a clear link between personality type and vocational interests. Larson declared, “Of the 30 correlations, five appeared to be substantial for both men and women and across interest measures. They are Artistic-Openness (r = .48), Enterprising-Extraversion (r = .41), Social-Extraversion (r = .31), Investigative-Openness (r = .28), and Social-Agreeableness (r = .19)” (Larson, 2002, p. 217). Barrick’s (2003) research yielded similar results with Enterprising-Extraversion (r = .41) and Experience-Openness (r = .39). Overall conclusions of these studies, however, indicate that while Big Five personality traits are directly related to the Big Six vocational interests, they are not substitutes for each other.
Five Factor Model of Personality

The Five Factor Model of Personality consists of five primary personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness. Although this model cannot account for all aspects of human personality, it is relevant to gaining a macro understanding of a person’s personality (McCrae & John, 1992). Even though the Big Five is not a complete theory of personality, it serves as a practical framework to bring cohesion to the myriad of personality theories (Digman, 1997).

Ployhart (2001) conducted a study to determine if the Five Factor Model of Personality (hereafter FFM) could predict transformational ratings of transformational leadership. Results of the study showed a strong relationship between personality and transformational leadership. Furthermore, research conducted by Judge and Bono (2000) showed direct relationship between the Five Factor Model and transformational leadership. Extraversion and agreeableness positively predicted transformational leadership. Openness and Experience were positively correlated to transformational leadership. Neuroticism and Conscientiousness were unrelated to transformational leadership. Bono states, “. . . organizations might benefit from selecting leaders on the basis of certain personality traits” (2000, p. 763).

Even though Block (1995) questioned the validity the Five Factor personality model he declared, “. . .the contemporary Big Five represents a clarifying and advancing framework that can provide needed integration for the archaic field of personality assessment” (p. 207). Smith (2001) investigated criticism that the Big Five model was an inadequate tool for personnel selection. Research, however, showed that the Big Five was an accurate predictor of performance and that personality testing is an effective tool in personnel selection methods (Salgado, 2003; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991).
The Big Five personality dimensions of Consciousness and Extraversion are significantly related to job performance and are a useful tool for examining the relationship between personality and job performance criteria (Barrick, 1993; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Barrick and Mount (1991) performed a meta-analysis to determine the correlation of the Big Five personality dimensions to three job performance criteria: job proficiency, training proficiency, and personnel data. The meta-analysis showed a direct correlation with all performance criteria. Although personality assessment has utility for predicting job performance, researchers should be cognizant that their analysis should address the relations between the personality and contextual performance (Bryman & Stephens, 1996; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000).

Hollenbeck (2000) developed an integrated theory of person-organization fit in which the structure of an organization is compared to the personality traits of the organization’s people. Typically, organizations develop a functional structure that enables it to successfully integrate with its external environment. The functional structure characteristics create unique internal environment conditions that require organization members of particular personality traits in order to attain organization efficiency. The five factor model of personality has proven to be effective to derive predictions of person-organization fit. In addition, Hollenbeck (2000) suggested that successful organizations employ people that have personality traits that enable the workers to fit well into both the organization’s internal and external environments.

The research with the FFM clearly shows the efficacy of using a well-structured, validated method to assess personality characteristics. Using FFM methods, however, to determine major personality characteristics is a more complex process than the self-administered DiSC® method proposed for this research project. The two methods are closely related as shown in the brief taxonomy of Table 2.
Table 2
*Comparison of the Five Factor Model and DiSC® Personality Dimensions.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Factor Dimensions</th>
<th>DiSC® Dimensions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreableness and Open-to-experience</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadiness</td>
<td>Emotional stability</td>
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The FFM dimension of Extraversion is a characteristic of having keen interest in other people, external events, and venturing forth confidently into the unknown while the DiSC® dimension of Dominance is characterized by a person that accepts challenges and is comfortable with ambiguity. Agreeableness measures how compatible people are with other people. Open-to-Experience refers to how willing people are to making adjustments to accommodate new ideas or situations. Juxtaposed to Agreeableness and open-to-experience is the DiSC® dimension of influence in which emphasizes personal compatibility with other people as well as viewing situations with optimism. The personality dimension of Conscientiousness for both the FFM and DiSC® emphasize diplomacy in working with people while adhering to key directives and concentrating on task details. Dimensions of Steadiness and Emotional Stability refer to cooperation with other people while performing in a consistent, predictable manner (John, 1996; MacDonald, 1995; *DiSC Classic and models of personality*, 1996).

Modern Leadership Theories

Leadership theory has evolved from a focus on personal traits in the early 20th century to a 21st century integration of personal traits, leader-follower behaviors, and situational environment.
characteristics. By the 1940’s it was becoming evident that personal traits alone could not reliably predict leadership success. Stogdill (1990) and Chemers (2000) found that some traits could be associated with leader success but in general, personality and physical traits were not solely predictive of leadership emergence or success. Consequently, leadership theorists changed their attention to the study of leader behavior and leadership style. This resulted in creation of comprehensive, empirically based leadership research programs at the University of Michigan and Ohio State University.

The Ohio State University studies focused on leader behavior and leadership style and produced a comprehensive 150-question instrument, the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (hereafter LBDQ), designed to assess leadership style in terms of consideration and initiating structure (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Chemers, 2000; House & Aditya, 1997). “Consideration included behaviors such as showing concern for the feelings for subordinates, making sure that minority viewpoints were considered in decision making, and attempting to reduce conflict in the work environment…Initiation of Structure includes items measuring the leader’s use of standard operating procedures, criticism of poor work, and emphasis on high levels of performance” (Chemers, 2000, p. 28). LBDQ evolved into several variations, each of which incorporated statements that increased the instrument’s reliability. Eventually, leadership theorists suspected additional factors affected leadership style beyond what LBDQ identified. The new approach to leadership theory incorporated contingency or situational factors. LBDQ, however, formed the genesis for several leader behavioral assessment theories such as the Managerial Grid, the Situational Leadership Model, and Least Preferred Coworker.
**Contingency Theory**

Contingency theory addresses the relationship of a leader’s personality and leadership style to situational variables. In addition, contingency theory addresses the interaction between situational variables and a leader’s task-motivation verses relationship-motivation. Nebeker (1975) declared, “The best organizational form or leadership style is contingent upon its appropriateness to a situation or environment” (p. 281). In an effort to provide credibility for this statement, Nebeker (1975) devised a study to integrate Fielder’s contingency model with Lawrence and Lorsch’s contingency organizational theory. Fiedler’s (1971) contingency model of leadership effectiveness emphasizes three salient leadership characteristics: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) posited that the environment in which the organization conducts its activities influenced an organization’s form or structure, and Nebeker’s (1975) research showed that there is a significant relationship between decision uncertainty and situation environment.

The Vroom-Yetton contingency model of leader behavior (Vroom, 2000) is based on the hypothesis that in order for a leader to be effective, he or she must employ different decision-making processes including autocratic, consultative, or group-oriented, contingent to a particular leadership situation (Goleman, 2000; Jago, Etting, & Vroom, 1985). Situational characteristics mitigate differences between leaders and their natural leadership style (Schriesheim, Tepper, & Tetrault, 1994). Managers behave situationally and adapt their behavior to the situations in question. In addition, Fiedler (1976) states, “The research on the contingency model shows that effective leadership depends on maintaining the right match of personality and of situation” (p. 15).
Kanuk (1976) hypothesized that the effectiveness of managers could be attributed to his or her affiliation with employees and as well as using a leadership style appropriate to the situation. A study was conducted using the Least Preferred Coworker (hereafter referred to as LPC) method to measure effectiveness of managers in a retail store chain. Results showed that managers with a mid-LPC score were effective in balancing their leadership style to address employee relations and task orientation. The least effective managers had high-LPC scores for employee relationship orientation at the expense of task orientation or had high-LPC scores for task orientation at the expense of employee relationship orientation.

The Contingency Theory of leadership provided the foundation for studies that proved there is a definite link between situational variables, personality, and leadership style. Not only do these components interact, there must be a correct match of personality to a particular situation in order to increase leader effectiveness (Fiedler, 1976). The matching aspect of contingency theory paved the way for leadership theories that focused more intensely on situational phenomenon.

**Situational Leadership**

“Whether a person is successful in a leadership job seems to depend as much on the situation as on the personality and skills he or she brings to the job” (Fiedler, 1981, p. 619). Consequently, a higher probability of organizational effectiveness may be achieved if the leader can adjust his or her leadership style to the demands of the management situation. Guion and Gottier (1965) submit that using personality measures without considering work situation factors will not produce an accurate prediction of job performance. In order to be consistent and accurate, personality measures should be carefully developed for specific situations.

“Do individual dispositions significantly influence behavior, or are situational forces alone sufficient to predict and explain behavior?” (Tolstoy in House, 1996, p. 1). Tolstoy’s question is
important because effective leadership does not depend solely on the person but is influenced by multiple factors including demographics, personal and organizational culture, and situation characteristics. Interaction of these factors and their affect on leadership became the basis for situational leadership research. In particular, the Ohio State University leadership studies of the 1940’s showed that there is a positive link between leader-traits, situational environment, and leadership styles to mitigate situational effects to produce greater leader effectiveness (Hollander, 1979). When studying a situational environment it is important to consider a person’s external needs, self-esteem, motives, and satisfiers like those discovered by Maslow (1998). In addition, it is important to determine a person’s disposition as expressed in personality characteristics (House, 1996).

Yukl (1989) states, “The situational approach emphasizes 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 the subordinates, and the nature of the external environment” (p. 261). Major situational leadership approaches include the following theories:

1. Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971)
2. Situational Leadership Theory (i.e. Life-Cycle theory of leadership) (Blanchard, 2001a; Blanchard & Hersey, 1996)
3. Managerial Grid Theory (Blake & Mouton, 1985)
4. Leader Substitute Theory (Jermier & Kerr, 1997)
5. Normative Decision Theory (Yukl, 1989)
7. Leader Member Exchange Theory (Bass & Stogdill, 1990)
8. Cognitive Resources Theory (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987)
9. Multiple Linkage Theory (Yukl, 1989)

10. Leader-Environment-Follower-Interaction Theory (Yukl, 1989)

There is a fundamental question in leadership theory as to whether or not there is a single effective leadership style for all situations (Argyris, 1957; Blake & Mouton, 1982; McGregor, 1960) or if leadership style should change with the situation (Blanchard, 2001b; Fielder, 1998; House, 1971). Goleman (2000) discovered six important leadership styles that have a positive effect on organization performance. These leadership styles include coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and coaching. Effective leaders will use a combination of these leadership styles, moving seamlessly from one style to another, depending on the task situation and subordinate characteristics.

Regarding situational leadership, Graeff (1997) states, “. . .the continued absence of a well-thought-out rationale to support its existence makes prescriptions regarding leader behavior vulnerable to a variety of criticisms including ambiguity, a lack of consistency and incompleteness” (p. 162). Situational Leadership Theory however continues to be popular as a commercial leadership-training tool because it appears to be easily understood by many people (Graeff, 1997). Pre-dating Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory, Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) proposed a “continuum of leadership behavior” (p. 164) that incorporates a bipolar scale from authoritative to democratic leadership styles. Use of a particular leadership style depends on situational conditions and subordinate involvement in the problem-solving process. Furthermore, Tannenbaum (1973) states that a successful leader “. . . is one who maintains a high batting average in accurately assessing the forces that determine what his most appropriate behavior at any time should be and in actually being able to behave accordingly” (p. 180).
Blake and Mouton (1982, 1985) posit that the most desirable leadership dimension or attitude is *team management* where the leader is equally task oriented and people oriented. In this perspective, the leader would have consistent leadership style that will be effective at all levels of a subordinate’s maturity. Hersey and Blanchard (1996), on the other hand, submit that the managerial grid focuses on a leader’s attitudinal dimensions of task-orientation, people-orientation, concern for production, and concern for people while SLII® focuses on leadership style. Blanchard (1996) declares,

> We argued that there could be best attitudes for managers but there was no best leadership style. For example, all managers should be concerned about production and people. But that concerned attitude can be expressed in different leadership styles, depending on the situation. (p. 43)
Path-Goal & Exchange Theories

The primary premise of the exchange and path-goal theories is that leadership effectiveness and subordinate motivation are a manifestation of the benefits derived from a leader-member relationship verses the effort required to create and maintain the relationship. Therefore, the greater the leader’s rewards to followers, the greater the motivation and loyalty of members in exchange for the rewards under consideration (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Key to effective leader-member exchange (hereafter LMX), however, is member’s trust in their leader (Deluga, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1993, 2002). In studies conducted by Deluga (1994) it was suggested that the higher the level of leader trust, the greater the LMX that was connected with organizational effectiveness and employee motivation.

In Path-Goal Theory is a functional approach to leadership that calls for the leader to diagnose the situation and select the functions that will satisfy and motivate subordinates (Schriesheim & Neider, 1996). Primarily the leader’s role is to increase “...personal pay-offs to subordinates for work-goal attainment, make the path to these pay-offs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing roadblocks and pitfalls, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction en route” (House, 1971; p. 324). These leader tasks appear to relate to the Situational Leadership II model in that these are the types of activities a leader may use along the leadership curve depending on the subordinate’s job maturity and situation environment.

The types of decision-making processes used in an organization are contingent on the organization’s environment and structure. Environment variables stem from both present and anticipated internal and external forces. In order to achieve effectiveness, therefore, an organization’s management and decision methods, and usually individual leadership styles, are framed by situational factors (Kimberly & Rottman, 1987).
Management Grid Leadership Model

The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan studies of the 1940’s formed the genesis of Blake and Mouton’s Managerial Grid III (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Blake & Mouton, 1985) and it is one of several popular models of leadership style and behavior. The model compares a leader’s degree of concern for people, or relations-orientation, to the leader’s degree of concern for production, or task-orientation. Blake and Mouton (1982) posit that a leader’s skills should be matched to the properties in the situation. The Managerial Grid displays five major leadership styles as follows (Blake & Mouton, 1982, p. 23):

1. “Authority-Obedience management: Maximum concern for production, minimum concern for people.
2. Country Club management: Maximum concern for people, minimum concern for production.
3. Impoverished Management: Minimum concern for production, minimum concern for people.
4. Organization Man Management: Middle concern for production, middle concern for people.
5. Team management: Maximum concern for production, maximum concern for people.”

According to Blake (1982) if the management situation is concerned with activities of a manufacturing shop floor the most effective management style will probably be style one, Authority-Obedience. A management situation involving sales activities may be more successful if a Country-Club style is used. In an environment like the project teams lead by a project manager, the most effective results may be achieved through style five, Team Management.

Blake (1966) states, “The Managerial Grid is an intellectual framework of ways that men manage. It is used to summarize management practices and compare them with behavioral science theories” (p. 30).
Bernardin and Alvares (1976) questioned the validity of the Managerial Grid as a predictor of leadership. A study was conducted where test subjects took the Managerial Grid self-assessment before attending an appropriate training session. One week later, after participating in a Managerial Grid training program, the test subjects retook the assessment. Results showed a 32% decline in participant’s rating of their leadership style. Consequently, Bernardin (1976) concluded that the Managerial Grid theory was not a predictor of leadership effectiveness. In rebuttal, Blake and Mouton (Blake & Mouton, 1976) pointed out that it is critical for test participants to attend the appropriate training session before taking any type of leadership self-assessment test; this is especially true for the Managerial Grid assessment.

An important contribution of leadership assessment theories such as the Managerial Grid, Situational Leadership II, and Least Preferred Co-worker is that they link behavioral science concepts to an employee’s learning ability and total organization development (Blake, Mouton, Barnes, & Greiner, 1964). Through the comprehensive research at a large parent firm whose name was disguised as Piedmont and its divisional plant disguised as Sigma, Blake (1964, p. 155) concluded that behavioral science concepts could be transferred into organizational action. Some management scholars have questioned the efficacy of applying modern management theories to both managerial levels and line levels of an organization. Conventional wisdom dictated that people essentially do not want to work and therefore, have no motivation to self-direct themselves (Blake, Mouton, Sloma, & Loftin, 1968). Studies have showed, however, that training involving modern management theories such as the Managerial Grid, can be efficacious to employees at all levels of an organization. When line employees and upper managers understand the Managerial Grid method, synergy is generated that produces greater organization productivity and efficiency.
In expressing concern that the benefits of the social scientific study of leadership are not being applied enough in practical situations, Hogan (1994) states, “... what we know about leadership seems to have little impact on the people who actually make decisions about leadership” (p. 494). This may provide a partial explanation of why the Managerial Grid and Situational Leadership II form the basis of popular commercial leadership training programs. These programs appear to be intuitively appealing to non-academics. That is, non-leadership researchers immediately perceive or mentally understand, without intermediate explanation, the practical application of leadership concepts.

*Situational Leadership II Leadership Model*

Another popular leadership model that has its roots in the Ohio State leadership studies is the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership II model (hereafter SLII®) (Blanchard, 2001b). The model is based on Hersey and Blanchard’s interpretation of
propositions derived from empirical research. The propositions are (Bass & Stogdill, 1990, p. 488):

1. “Leadership varies considerably from leader to leader.

2. Some leader’s behavior primarily involves initiating structure to accomplish tasks, other leaders behave to build and maintain good personal relationships, and still others do both or do neither.

3. The most effective behavioral style of leaders is one that varies with the situation.

4. The best altitudinal style is a high task- and a high relations orientation.

5. The job and psychological maturity of the followers is most crucial in determining which behavioral style of leaders will result in the most effectiveness.

6. Maturity relates to the stage in a group’s lifecycle or to the previous education and training of the followers.”

Bass (1990) states, “The most effective leadership is conceived to depend on whether the leader’s task-oriented or relations-oriented behavior matches the subordinate’s maturity” (p. 489).

Situational leadership recognizes the subordinate as the most important factor in determining the most appropriate leader behavior as well as the need for leader flexibility as the leadership situation changes (Graeff, 1983; Blake, 1990). The problem with the SLI² model, however, has been ambiguity regarding what constitutes maturity and lack of theoretical relevance justifying the SLI² task-maturity curve. In SLI² job-level maturity is defined as “... the capacity to set high but attainable goals, the willingness and the ability to take responsibility, and the education and experience of an individual or group” (Blanchard, 1974, p. 27). Research has show that SLI² is useful in predicting leader-follower interaction at low to moderate degrees of job-level maturity but is less effective for high degree of follower job-level maturity (Norris & Vecchio, 1992). Empirical research has shown that lower job-level employees responded well to
monitoring while higher job-level employees responded well to consideration (Fernandez & Vecchio, 1997). Furthermore, it is important to consider other factors such as employee age, employee job tenure, and job-specific personality requirements (Tett et al., 1991).

Leadership effectiveness depends on leadership style as well as the situation environment. Changes to some situational variables may influence other situational variables thus keeping the leadership challenge in a state of flux. Therefore, leaders should anticipate situation changes and proactively adjust their leadership style (Fielder, 1998). Because leaders need to adjust their leadership style over time to match the development changes of work groups, Situational Leadership Theory is useful in instructing leaders in the importance of changing leadership style as group job maturity changes (Blanchard & Hersey, 1996; Kivlighan, 1997; Norris & Vecchio, 1992).

Dhar and Mishra (2001) studied leadership effectiveness and productivity of workers in India. Results of the study showed that a variety of leader behaviors such as coaching, mentoring, and explaining were important in developing subordinate work skills and improving organization productivity. Furthermore, Dhar (2001) concluded that leaders should change their leadership style to encourage subordinates to improve their skill and increase their confidence.

Silverthorne (2001) conducted research on the effect of adaptive and non-adaptive leadership styles on six variables of productivity: absenteeism, turnover rate, quality of work, reject rates, profitability, and units produced. The research study showed that Hersey and Blanchard’s (Bass & Stogdill, 1990) Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (hereafter LEAD) to be an accurate predictor of leadership success at using adaptive or non-adaptive leadership styles. Shoda (2001) states, “Over the last ten years, a growing body of research and theory has accumulated that indicates the utility of conceptualizing personality structure and coherence in
terms of Person X Situation interactions” (p. 533). It appears, therefore, that there will be efficacy in using personality assessment in conjunction with situational management theories such as the Management Grid or Situational Leadership II in order to accurately predict leadership effectiveness.

Summary

Leadership is often defined relative to our perspectives of particular people we admire, believe and are willing to support. In this great man leadership theory, leaders appeal to our specific ethnic, religious, cultural, political, or national characteristics. This relatively one dimensional approach allows the leadership process to be less demanding because the homogeneity of the followers allows a leader to generate energy that will naturally move his or her followers toward their common goal. A calm, tenacious individual can organize the followers and easily lead them to achieve their goal. This same individual, however, may fail as a leader if he or she had to organize a multi-dimensional group.

Leadership theory became more comprehensive and distinctly occidental in nature after British colonization of North America and development of a federalist mentality within the colonies. The successful American Revolution against England and American Civil War created the foundation for an industrial revolution in the United States. Bureaucratic organization structure, a homogeneous work force, and authoritarian leadership theories typified American leadership (Jacques, 1996). In the early 20th century, leadership theory began to incorporate a personality trait perspective as well as job related skills-based attributes as the basis of determining leadership qualifications. When it became evident that job skills and personality traits were not adequate predictors of leadership success, leadership theorists began to consider behavioral and situational characteristics as well. The result was the establishment of research
organizations at notable academic institutions such as Ohio State University and the University of Michigan that focused studies on the interaction between personality, psychological characteristics, and situational variables to produce leadership success (Barrick et al., 2001; House & Aditya, 1997). Ultimately, the Ohio State studies served as the genesis for popular leadership theories such as the Managerial Grid III and Situational Leadership II.

The Managerial Grid III and Situational Leadership II sought to provide a basis for understanding leader behavior relative to situational variables and follower’s characteristics. In particular, the Hersey and Blanchard (2001b) Situational Leadership II model lends itself as an effective device for understanding leader behavior relative to variations in situational characteristics and subordinate’s behavior. Therefore, SLII® may be an effective tool to improving a project manager’s understanding of his or her job environment variables. The ultimate goal will be to improve the project manager’s job satisfaction and increase his or her job-tenure while enabling the project manager to become a leader that can kindle the vision and energy of their co-workers through sincerity and enthusiasm while providing direction to achieve a common goal.
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