

A Situational Approach to

Administrative Leadership

(Summary)

Dr. Faisal F. Marar

A lot has been written about leadership in organizations, most of which is based on research and experiments on groups in different organization settings. In discussing the research findings one has to mention the efforts of such people as Barnard, Likert, McGregor, Schmidt, Tannenbaum, Burns and Stalker, Lawrence and Lorsch etc.

The net result of the research findings and of human relations training based upon them has been to call into question the stereotype of an effective leader. For, over the past seventy years, hundreds of studies were conducted but no universal set of traits has been established. Certain traits that seemed to be primary ingredients of success in some situations were of limited importance in others.

The conclusion was reached, therefore, that it is the demands of the situation that dominate and leaders become successful only when their particular traits happen to fit those demands.

In this article we intend to examine the nature of leadership, sources of leadership power, the different approaches to leadership and their effectiveness and then to concentrate on the situational analysis of leadership. Our objective is to identify key factors in the situation by evaluating the dimensions of each factor. Once the situation is mapped, the question becomes that of

Dr. Marar is a lecturer at the Faculty of Economics & Commerce, Jurdainian University.

the course of action or leadership styles that will be effective. Thus internal and external factors are discussed.

The internal factors include such things as: the purpose or goal and the degree of its acceptance by organization members; the tasks (repetitive or varied, complex and challenging); the technology; the people and the organization structure.

The external factors as external change, rapidity of change, time and cultural factors have their influence on determining the most appropriate leadership style. Besides, a situational analysis chart is used to show the relationship of situational variables to leadership and is extremely revealing in analysing leadership patterns.

It is important to differentiate between a leadership style and leadership behavior. We found that it is considerably more difficult to change a man's personality than it is to change the situation within which he operates. Rather than fitting the manager to the job, we should therefore aim to fit the job to the manager.

It is pertinent to conclude that our emphasis on the situational approach to leadership is concomitant with a major breakthrough that is just emerging in the shift from regarding the structure and design of an organization as a given to something highly contingent on the climate and environment in which the organization finds itself.

We are really only beginning to see the implication of this concept not only on organizational structure and function but on all other facets of administration including administrative leadership.