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Leadership theory – Adapted from SkillSoft Ireland Limited © (2014) for learning purposes

Traditionally, leadership theory was focused mainly on historic events. Today, however, the focus has shifted from how a person behaves to the styles used in leadership. Based on this research, two types of leadership behaviors have been identified, one centering on the employee and the other focusing on a job itself. First, consideration; this is also referred to as employee-centric behavior. This focuses on ensuring the emotional requirements of team members and individuals are met – for example, clearly explaining complicated decisions and helping the team reach their objectives. The second is initiating structure, which focuses on job-related behavior, such as ensuring employees follow important operating rules and have clear and attainable goals. Research generally shows that to be an effective leader, both dimensions are necessary.

The **Blake Mouton managerial grid** is a theory that uses two axes to describe leadership behavior. First, concern for people is the degree to which a leader considers the needs of team members, their issues, and areas of development when deciding how to accomplish a task. Concern for production is the degree to which a leader highlights objectives, organizational efficiency, and productivity when they are determining how to best accomplish a task. There are four types of leaders according to this theory - authoritarian, team, country club, and impoverished. The target position is a nine on production or task and a nine on people – this is called the team leader.

The **Situational Leadership Model** is laid out in a quadrant, with the X axis representing task behavior (guidance) on a scale from low to high. The Y axis is relationship behavior (supportive behavior) also rated from low to high. The four positions of the quadrant each represent a leadership style, ranging on a bell curve. Position 1 of the quadrant is Telling, which gets a high task/low relationship rating. This leadership style is to provide specific instructions and closely supervise performance. Position 2 is Selling, which gets a high task/high relationship rating. This leadership style is to explain decisions and provide opportunity for clarification. Position 3 is Participating, which gets a high relationship/low task rating. This leadership style is to share ideas and facilitate in decision making. Position 4 is Delegating, which gets a low relationship/low task rating. This leadership style is to turn over responsibility for decisions and implementation.

Fiedler's contingency theory focuses on three factors to help determine the effectiveness of an organization's leadership environment:

- Task structure refers to the extent that tasks are defined – for example, structured, unstructured, clear, or ambiguous.
- Position power is the degree of power and influence the leader has over subordinates.
- And leader-member relations refers to the degree of trust or confidence followers have in their leader.

Fiedler argued that specific leadership styles are better for some situations than others; instead of changing styles, the leader should instead change the other factors, like the task structure.
Further, leadership is generally categorized as either transactional or transformational.

Transactional leadership is characterized by rewards, in this, accomplishments are recognized and rewarded; active management by exception, where corrections are made when someone departs from the established standards; passive management by exception, the leader only gets involved when standards are not followed; and laissez faire, where the leader avoids responsibility and making any decisions.

Transformational leadership is more focused on getting everyone to a similar level of mutual achievement and is characterized by individualism, where people are given personal attention; stimulation, where the leader promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving; inspiration, where high expectations are communicated and symbols are used to focus efforts and important purposes are expressed in simple ways; and charisma, the leader provides vision and a sense of mission, instills pride, and earns respect and trust. Transactional leadership was once viewed as the most important type, a combination of the two is now accepted as the most effective.

Types of leadership power

It's important to understand that the person with the power can either use it in a good way or a bad way. A leader uses these five kinds of power to get people to do certain things in certain ways:

- Reward
- Punishment
- Subject matter expertise
- Formal structure, or legitimate power
- Referent power