THE PROCESS OF LEADERSHIP

With Reference to Its Implications for Industrial Relations*

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The process of leadership constitutes an interesting and fruitful area of study in organizational behavior. From the standpoint of "systems theory", leadership is viewed as one of the linking processes which connect the parts (subsystems) of the organization. The role of leadership in industrial relations is gaining increasing recognition as well. Just as society looks for a leader to define its purpose and lead it forward, so both management and labor have been concerned in the selection and development of men who can successfully attack the many perplexing problems that confront them. The psychological aspects of effective executive leadership is the subject of this article. However, the writer also wants to stress the point that so far no serious attempt has been made to bridge the gap between leadership research in organizational behavior and studies on union leadership and union democracy.

From a rather broad perspective, three different types of approach can be discerned in terms of organizational behavior-oriented theory and research on leadership. These are 1. the trait approach, 2. the behavior approach, and 3. the situational (modern) approach, each of which will be summarized throughout the following paragraphs below.

I. THE TRAIT APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

Most of the early leadership research has been of the trait approach type. The philosophy of the trait approach is simple and logical: successful leaders are assumed to possess more (or less) of certain traits than are unsuccessful leaders. The emphasis in this approach is on the personal characteristics of good and bad leaders. It says that the best way to investigate leadership is to look at good and bad leaders and see how they differ in terms of their traits. The usual method followed in such studies is to:

1. Identify a group of "good" leaders and a corresponding group of poor or "bad" leaders.
2. Measure these leaders on a variety of personality traits and individual characteristics.
3. Determine if the good leaders possess a significantly different amount of any trait or characteristic than do the poor leaders. If so, this trait is defined as a critical leadership trait.

One of the early studies utilizing the trait approach involved 100 business executives for whom personal data were obtained (Henry: 1949). Analysis of the data attempted to identify a personality pattern which was common to all the successful executives. These were executives who had a history of continuous promotion, who were regarded by their superiors as still promotable, and who were at the time in positions of major responsibility and were earning salaries within the upper ranges of the then current business salaries. Executive effectiveness was, therefore, defined primarily in terms of the perceptions and preconceptions of the executives' superiors.

The attributes of the successful executives were perceived to be the following:

1. High drive and achievement desire.
2. Strong mobility drives.
3. A perception of superiors as "controlling but helpful", not as "prohibiting and destructive."

4. High ability to organize unstructured situations.
5. Decisiveness.
6. Strong self-structure. They are able to resist pressure from other people and have high faith in themselves.
7. Active, aggressive, striving.
8. Apprehension and fear of failing.
9. Strong reality orientation-interest in the practical, the immediate and the direct.
10. Identification with superiors and detachment from subordinates.
11. Loyalty to overall goals of the company rather than complete concentration on the self.

In another study Ghiselli (1963) found all of the following traits to differentiate between high-level managers, middle-level managers, and low-level managers:

Intelligence : Of a generally verbal and symbolic nature.
Supervisory ability : Ability to direct others.
Initiative : Willingness to strike off in new directions.
Self-assurance : The favorability of self-evaluation.

Occupational level : Degree to which one sees himself as belonging with "high" rather than "low" socioeconomic status individuals.

Other researchers who have identified clusters of traits associated with leadership include Fiedler and Meuwese (1963): intelligence; Nash (1965): verbal pursuasiveness, and Dunnette (1967): dominance, self-confidence, assertiveness, high aspiration level. Additional authors could be added to this list, each with his own cluster of traits. Indeed this is one of the difficulties involved in the trait method of studying leadership. The number of descriptive adjectives which can be used to classify people is endless; there are nearly as many traits of people as there are adjectives. Are they all really different? Which ones are similar? Which ones should we measure since we obviously cannot study them all?

A second difficulty exists in trying to measure traits. There are many personality tests available today, each of which lists the traits it purports to measure. Frequently, however, two tests which

claim to measure the same trait turn out to be quite different and two other tests which ostensibly are designed to measure traits quite different from each other may turn out to have very similar contents. A common solution is to have judges rate each person on every trait, rather than giving tests. The subjective nature of trait ratings, however complex and sophisticated the system used, is at best only a substitute for more objective criteria.

II. THE BEHAVIOR APPROACH

Under this heading, the writer wants to refer first to a group of studies which are somewhat linked to the Behavior Approach, namely research on "autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership", and then treat briefly the three schools which are more closely identified with the Behavior Approach.

A. Autroeratie, Democratie And Laissez Faire Leadership:

One of the classic studies in the field of leadership was that performed by Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939). In this study:

Four clubs of 11 year old boys were formed in such a way that they were equated with respect to certain personal and sociometric characteristics of their members. Four adults performed a sequence of planned leadership roles ("authoritarian", "democratic", and "laissez faire") so that, with minor exceptions, each adult played each leadership role and each club was exposed to each style of leader. Activities were held relatively constant between the various clubs by the device of permitting democratic and laissez faire clubs to select an activity and then imposing the same activity on the club(s) concurrently being led by an authoritarian leader.

The results that bear most directly on problem solving can be summarized briefly. Authoritarian leadership appeared to induce the following characteristic reactions in the clubs: great dependency on the leader, marked intermember "irritability and aggressiveness", low frequencies of "suggestions for group action and group policy",

dissatisfaction with club activities, and high quantity and low quality of productivity (which dropped off as soon as the leader left the room). Under laissez faire leadership, the clubs showed little dependency on the leader, great "irritability and aggressiveness" among members, high frequencies of "suggestions for group action and group policy" accompanied by great discontent about progress and achievement, considerable dissatisfaction with club activities, and apparently intermediate productivty. Democratic leadership produced low dependency on the leader, low incidence of intermember "irritability and agressiveness", high frequencies of "suggestions for group action and group policy", great satisfaction with club activities, and an intermediate quantity of productivity of high quality.

Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) address themselves to the problem of how the modern manager can be "democratic" in his relations with subordinates and at the same time maintain the necessary authority and control in the organization for which he is responsible. These authors present a continuum of possible leadership behaviors available to a manager. Each type of action is related to the degree of authority used by the boss and to the amount of freedom available to his subordinates in reaching decisions.

The authors then suggest that the successful leader will be able to move back and forth across the continuum depending on the forces at work within himself, his subordinates and his organization. Of particular importance are the forces at work within his subordinates.

Generally speaking, the manager can permit his subordinates greater freedom if the following essential conditions exist :

1. If the subordinates have relatively high needs for independence. People differ greatly in the amount of direction that they desire.

2. If the subordinates have a readiness to assume responsibility for decision making.

3. If they have a relatively high tolerance for ambiguity. (Some employees prefer to have clear-cut directives given to them; others prefer a wider area of freedom).

4. If they are interested in the problem and feel that it is important.

5. If they understand and identify with the goals of the organization.

6. If they have the necessary knowledge and experience to deal with the problem.

7. If they have learned to expect to share in decision making. (Persons who have come to expect strong leadership and are then suddenly confronted with the request to share more fully in decision making are often upset by this new experience. On the other hand, persons who have enjoyed a considerable amount of freedom resent the boss who begins to make all the decisions himself).

Further, the authors feel that the manager will probably tend to make fuller use of his own authority if the above conditions do not exist; at times there may be no realistic alternatives to running a "one man show".

B. Bale's Research At Harvard :

Bale's findins have stressed the point that leadership behavior may be performed by any group member. However, certain persons seem to engage in leadership behavior to a greater extent than others early in the life of a group. By using a detailed observation technique, Bale observed the behavior of newly formed laboratory groups and discovered three distinct facets of leadership behavior : activity, task-ability, and likeability. He emphasized that the person who is both the best idea man and the best liked member is the *best* leader, (that is, has better performance).

C. Ohio State University Leadership Studies :

During the 50's, researches at Ohio State University developed over 1800 items descriptive of what supervisors do in their leader-

ship roles. These items (for example, initiation, domination, evaluation, communication) were then classified into two broad categories of leader behavior. They were labeled Consideration and Initiating Structure (Fleishman : 1953).

Initiating structure involves a manager's acts oriented toward defining or structuring his and his work group's set toward getting work done and toward goal attainment; high scores on initiating structure denote attitudes and opinions indicating highly active direction of group activities, group planning, communicating information, scheduling, trying out new ideas, etc.

Consideration involves managerial acts oriented toward developing mutual trust, which reflect respect for subordinates' ideas and consideration of their feelings; high scores on consideration denote attitudes and opinion indicating good rapport and good two-way communication, whereas low scores indicate a more impersonal approach to interpersonal relations with group members (Fleishman and Peters : 1962).

Fleishman and Harris (1962) showed that both the amount of consideration and the amount of structure exhibited by a supervisor were related to the effectiveness of their subordinates. They defined effectiveness in terms of the amount of turnover and the number of grievances exhibited by the subordinates.

The Appendix at the end of this article shows the relationships obtained by Fleishman and Harris. Note the trends shown in part d and f. Note that for supervisors low on consideration the amount of structure in their behavior has no importance. All these supervisors had high grievance and turnover rates. Similarly, for supervisors high on consideration, structure also does not seem to be particularly important. All these foremen had low grievance and turnover rates. For supervisors of medium consideration, however, structure becomes very important. This would indicate that consideration, at its extreme values, is a more "dominant" leadership trait, and that only when one is dealing with supervisors of average consideration can structure have an effect.

The Detroit Edison study findings have disclosed the impact of change. They suggest that during the time of change the techni-

cal and / or administrative capacity of the superior may be of greater
impoitance to the subordinates than consideration or human re-
lations. This also might explain, in part, why organizations may be
more tolerant of authoritarian leadership during times of crisis or
emergency. It may also explain why "human relations" has turned
out to be so important in work groups that have not changed for
many years. In this case, the initiating structure or technical ad-
ministrative functions can be handled as well by the subordinates
as by the superior, so the only thing left is "consideration".

D.   University Of Michigan Survey Research Center Studies :

The work of Likert and his colleagues at the University of
Michigan is similar to that of the Ohio State group. Likert *et al*
distinguished two main categories of leader behaviors, called the
job-centered and *employee-centered* leadership behavior. The in-
formation was frequently gathered from a questionnaire distributed
to group leaders. They arrived at the conclusion that in general the
employee-centered supervisors tend to have higher-productivity
groups; (1961).

The research findings of all these Behavioral schools do sug-
gest that there are two basic, commonly agreed styles of leadership:
task orientation and interpersonal orientation. Three types of cri-
ticism can be raised against the Behavior Approach. First, the dif-
ferent schools of thought have used different sources to assess the
leader's behavior : leaders, members and observers. Investigation
has shown that there is little agreement among different raters of
an individual's behavior. Thus, it becomes difficult to assess what
the leader is actually doing. Secondly, there is lack of agreement
about what style is most effective. Emprical findings indicate that
in some cases being interpersonally oriented is related to effective-
ness while others point to a task-oriented style as being more ef-
fective, and some conclude that the leader who is rated high on
both dimensions is best.

Thirdly, almost all of these studies have been conducted within
the context of the American culture, and therefore seem to be cul-
ture-bound, with some bias toward general, (democratic, interper-
sonal - oriented) leadership as opposed to close (autocratic, task-

oriented) leadership. Other cultures may happen to favor more authoritarian leadership styles as being more effective.

Therefore, a combination of the trait and behavior approaches in conjunction with an emphasis on task and situational demands was tried next. This brings us to the modern "situational" approach and the "contingency model" of Fiedler.

III. THE SITUATIONAL APPROACH

There are two major theories of leadership in this category. One is known as the "open systems approach in leadership" emphasized mainly by D. Katz and R. L. Kahn (1966). The other is Fiedler's "contingency model" (1967).

A. The "Open Systems" Approach :

This theory begins by identifying and sorting out the repeated cycles known in systems analysis such as input, transformation process, output and renewed input, taking into acount the impact of the environment and the ability of the organization to change through feedback and other mechanisms. "Leadership is defined as any act of influence on a matter of organizational relevance which goes beyond routine and utilized bases of power which are decreed. These acts are seen as different for different organizational levels and situations and each requires for successful use a different cognitive style, different kinds of knowledge and different characteristics". (Scott and Mitchell, 1972).

This is a rather broad theory, and for the present, provides limited empirical relevance. The evidence supplied so far seems to suggest that interpersonal-oriented leadership style may be more applicable at lower levels. Open systems approach, however, in conjunction with Fiedler's contingency model to be presented below, appears to be a promising and fruitful area for leadership studies in the future.

B. The Contingency Theory Of Leadership :

Fiedler's (1964) research program on leadership effectiveness was concerned with predicting group performance and it used a

measure related to two types of leadership. In a simple test an individual thinks of all the people with whom he has ever worked and then he is asked to describe the one person with whom he had most difficulty in working —his least preferred co-worker (LPC). The description is made on twenty items such as friendly or unfriendly, cooperative or uncooperative. The so-called LPC score is obtained by giving each of the twenty scale items a weight of one to eight points, with eight points indicating the favorable pole of the item, and totaling the points for the various items. Thus, a person with a high LPC score is one who describes his least preferred co-worker in relatively favorable, accepting terms: someone with a low score decribes his least preferred co-worker in relatively unfavorable, rejecting terms. Leaders with high LPC group scores tend to have a relationship-oriented style, while leaders with low scores tend to be directive, managing, task controlling in their leadership behavior.

The research program involved a wide variety of groups, from basketball teams and surveying parties to military combat crews, and various laboratory and field experimental groups engaged in creative tasks. These studies have yielded high correlations between the LPC score of the leaders and measures of actual group performance. However, in some studies the permissive, considerate leaders had the best performing groups while the managing, controlling, directive leaders had groups which yielded the best results in other cases.

In order to tell which style fits which situations, Fiedler went on to categorize groups.

1. Leader-member relations. The factor that would seem most important in determining a man's leadership influence is the degree to which his group members trust and like him, and are willing to follow his guidance. The trusted and well-liked leader obviously does not require special rank or power in order to get things done.

2. The task structure. "Task structure" refers to the degree to which the task (a) is spelled out step by step for the group and, if so, the extent to which it can be done "by the numbers" or according to a detailed set of standard operating

instructions, or (b) must be left nebulous and undefined. Vague and ambiguous or unstructured tasks make it difficult to exert leadership influence, because neither the leaders nor his members know exactly what has to be done or how it is to be accomplished.

3. Position power. Thirdly, there is the power of the leaderhip position, as distinct from any personal power the leader might have. Can he hire or fire and promote or demote? Is his appointment for life, or will it terminate at the pleasure of his group? It is obviously easier to be a leader when the position power is strong than when it is weak.

When groups are then classified on the basis of these three dimensoins, the classification system that can be represented is a cube (Exhibit 1). As each group is high or low in each of the three dimensions, it will fall into one of the eight cells.

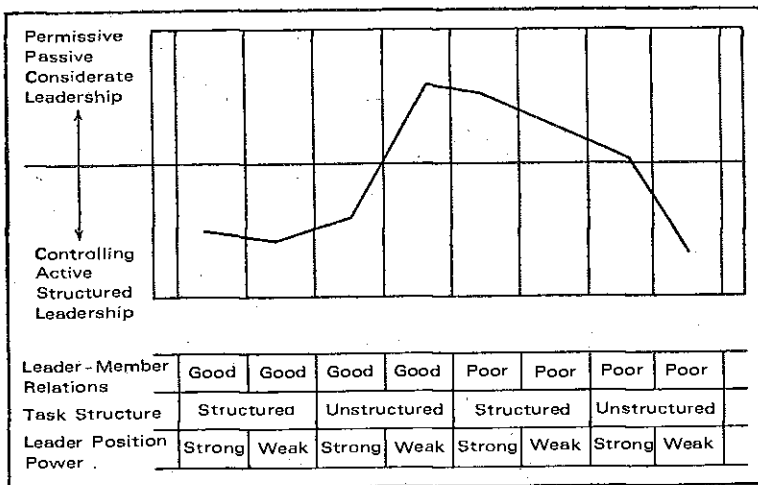EXHIBIT 1

A Model For Classifying Group-Task Situations
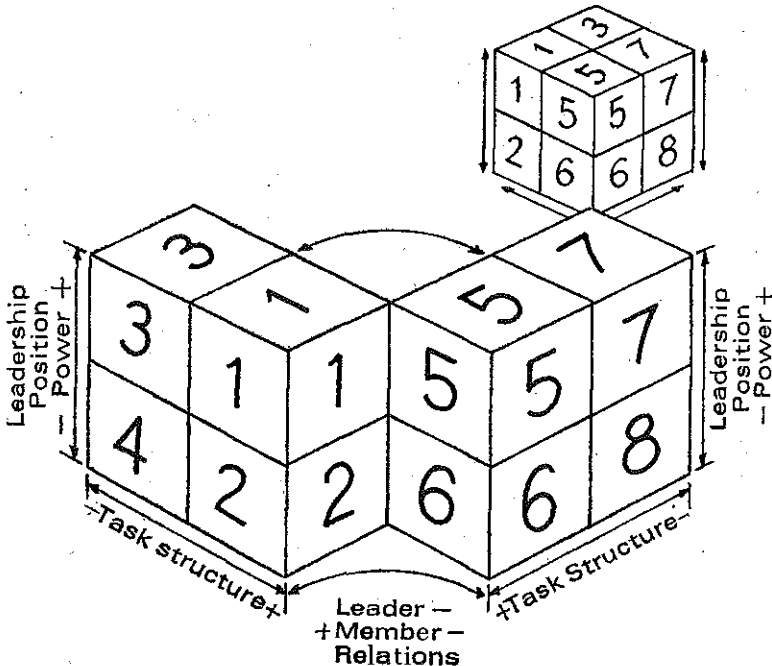
From examination of the cube, it seems clear that exerting
leadership influence will be easier in a group in which the members
like a powerful leader with a clearly defined job and where the
job to be done is clearly laid out (cell 1); it will be difficult in a
group where a leader is disliked, has little power, and has a highly
ambigous job (cell 8). Fiedler considers the leader-member relations
the most important dimension, and the position-power dimension
the least important, of the three.

Fiedler then suggests sorting the eight cells according to leader-
member relations, task structure, and finally leader position power
which allows the cells to be arranged in order according to the
favorableness of the environment for the leader. Such sorting
leads to the eight-step scale indicated in Exhibit 2. This exhibit
portrays the results of a series of studies of groups performing (a)
in different situations and conditions, and (b) with leaders using
different leadership styles. In explanation:

EXHIBIT 2

How The Style Of Effective Leadership Varies With The Situation

Leader - Member Relations	Good	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Task Structure	Structured		Unstructured		Structured		Unstructured	
Leader Position Power	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak

The horizontal axis shows the range of situations that the group worked in, as described by the classification scheme used in Exhibit 1. The vertical axis indicates the leadership style which was best in a certain situation, as shown by the correlation coefficient between the leader's LPC and his group's performance. Exhibit 2 shows that both the directive, managing, task oriented leaders and the nondirective, human-relations-oriented leaders are successful under some conditions. Which leadership style is the best depends on the favorableness of the particular situation for the leader. In very favorable or in very unfavorable situations for getting a task accomplished by group effort, the autocratic, task-controlling, managing leadership works best. In situations intermediate in difficulty, the nondirective, permissive leader is more successful.

CONCLUSION

It seems likely that the ability to lead must be based on the competence to make some kind of unique contribution to the success of the group being led. The group provides status and esteem satisfaction in exchange for contributions to goal attainment. Where these two elements are in balance, a state of equilibrium exists, and the leader is accepted by the group. But when they are not in balance, as when the leader receives esteem or demands status which the group views as excessive in terms of the contribution he makes to the group in return, a state of disequilibrium develops and the leader may lose influence within the group.

A major conclusion of this article is that this state of equilibrium is likely to be reached more often by both the leader and subordinate when the authority relationships are determined through leadership techniques which imply willingness on both sides to attempt to achieve equity for both sides.

After reviewing the existing theory and research on leadership from the standpoint of organizational behavior, one might argue that the "open systems" approach in combination with Fiedler's "contingency model" seems to offer promising opportunities for more realistic research in the years ahead. The situational approach

also seems to be applicable to environments other than the American culture as well. In their studies on the Peruvian culture, Whyte and Williams have found that close and task-oriented supervision is viewed as being more desirable and effective than general and democratic supervision, (1969). Similar conclusions have been arrived at by different researchers in Japan and elsewhere. The writer of this article wants to place special emphasis on the need for research in Turkey in this area as well. Furthermore, trait theories should not be discounted too quickly. There may be cultural perceptions of leaders and cultural restrictions which, regardless of the needs of the group or situation, would place a certain person with certain traits in a leadership position. American culture allows sharing of leadership in the informal group, but this may not be true for other cultures where one person may be the leader at all times.

A further point to be stressed is the implications of leadership studies in organizational behavior for industrial relations and union democracy. There is need for research aimed at filling the gap between behavioral research on leadership and studies in areas such as labor union leadership and union democracy, both in this country and abroad.
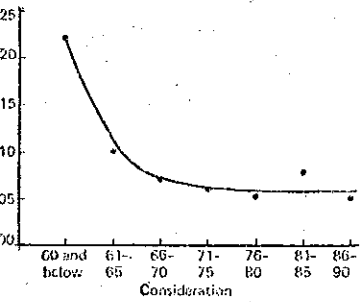
APPENDIX
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TURNOVER / GRIEVANCES AND STRUCTURE / CONSIDERATION
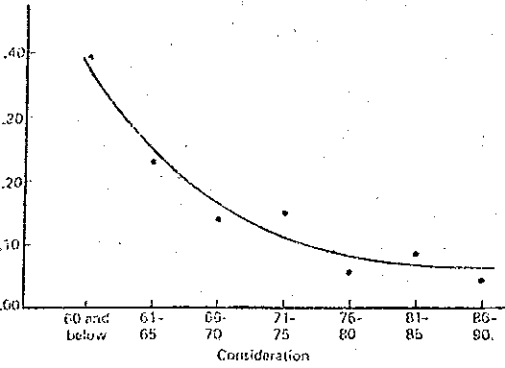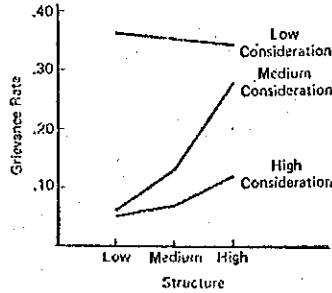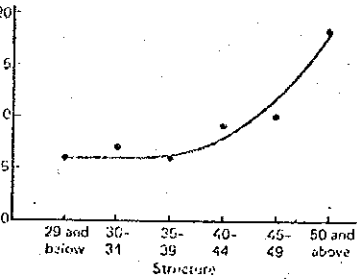

Relation Between Consideration and Grievance Rates.
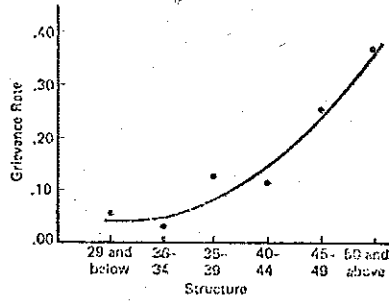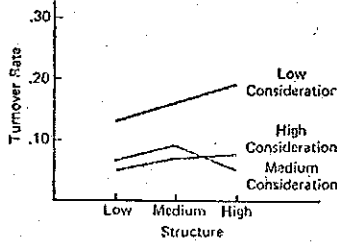
B. Relation Between Structure and Grievance Rates.

Relation Between Consideration and Turnover Rates.

D. Combinations of Consideration and Structure Related to Grievances.

Relation Between Structure and Turnover Rates.

F. Combinations of Consideration and Structure Related to Turnover.

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> The following is a list of some of the work done on union leadership and democracy, though not necessarily based on a behavioral approach. This is by no means an exhaustive bibliography, but may prove helpful for an tempt to combine the purely behavioral approach to leadership with industrial relations - oriented research on union democracy and leadership.

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