

Review on study of Behavioral Approach to Leadership

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Abstract- It's all about the attitude and style that a leader adapts to represent himself. The behavioral propensity is the backbone which majorly emphasize and reflect the leader's capabilities and qualities. Their behavioral approach mainly emphasizes on the aspect as to what the leaders do and how they proceed with the things. This approach reflects the commitment which is combined with excellence gets positive impact from the followers reflecting the leadership skills. This feature differentiates it from the earlier discussed chapters, Trait Approach and the Skills Approach.

When speaking of Behavioral Approach, the researchers figured there is more to it. It can be linked to more aspects that dealt with different features. Generally speaking, the approach is divided into two aspects - Task behavior and Relationship behavior.

The researchers assessed that the Task behavior reflects the capabilities to complete the objective and achieve the end result. Whereas, the Relationship behavior focuses on the behavior of the leader towards his/her followers and how leader interacts and make them feel more comfortable in their presence.

Index Terms- Contribution, Drawbacks, University of Michigan, Mechanism, Ohio State, Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.

I. INTRODUCTION

A great leader excels in combining the two attributes of the Behavioral approach in order to make an impact on the followers which helps in achieving the desired results.

Many researchers have devoted their time and energy to come up with more elaborated theory that deals with the behavioral approach. In 1940s, The Ohio State University was the first to carry out detailed investigation on this approach. Stogdill's work in 1948 indicated that there is more to the Behavioral approach than the leaders' traits. The Ohio State University was not the only one who was fascinated by the deeper knowledge of the Behavioral approach. Around the same time, there was another group of investigators from the University of Michigan who were committed to study further on how the leaders of small groups operated.

The subject had much to explore that many researches joined in to conduct a series of investigation. In 1960s, another group of researchers led by Blake and Mouton investigated the behavior of managers and how they used different approaches to carry out their tasks and implement it into their work fields.

II. MECHANISM OF BEHAVIORAL APPROACH

When speaking of the mechanism of Behavioral Approach, it does not come with prescribed guidelines. A leadership approach provides an outline for recognizing the characteristic of an effective leader. It only tells how a leader must behave but also how to demonstrate the two very different forms of behaviours - Task level and people level. These two components are the base line of behavioral approach which distinguishes an effective leader. It reminds the leaders of their efforts toward task level and people level. An effective leadership depends on the situation, as in some places the leader needs to be more task oriented whereas in other places there may be a need of someone who and guide and nurture the people working for him/her.

III. CONTRIBUTION OF BEHAVIORAL APPROACH

There has been a major role of behavioral approach in provide a guideline for effective leadership. Initially, the researcher responded to leadership solely as a trait which has been earlier discussed in the book. However, the perception of behavioral approach has widened the frame of research, it no longer emphasises on the personality of the leader but focus on the actions of the leader.

The research conducted by the Ohio State, University of Michigan and the work of Blake and Mouton (1964,1978,1985) along with Blake and McCause(1991). Their work justifies the feasible approach in determining the leadership style and their processes.

The most important contribution of the behavioral approach to leadership is the clarification of the two different forms of leaders, one who is task oriented and other whose focus point is more people oriented. These two methods when balance together yields an effective leadership process.

The Behavioral approach provides us an ideal frame to understand the idea of an effective leader. It's a roadmap that throws light on the leader's behavior towards the two dimensions -task and relations. It helps them assess their actions and give scoop of improvement in areas where needed.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF BEHAVIORAL APPROACH

While there is a huge contribution from the behavioral approach, there are several limitations that come along with it. Firstly, the primary limitation of the behavioral approach suggested by the research is that it does not render strong link of

the leaders' behavior with the performance outcomes (Bryman-1992; Yukl-1994). The research fails to deliver consistent connection between task and relationship behaviors while providing job satisfaction along with productivity. As per Yukl (1994, Pg. 75), "results from this massive research effort have been mostly contradictory and inconclusive."

Another drawback of this approach is that it fails to find an all-embracing method that fits every situation. The research reflects inconsistent findings that fails to achieve a universal approach of the leadership behavior.

The behavioral approach indicates that the successful leadership style is based on high task and high relationship, however, some researchers (like Blake & McCause -1991; Misumi -1985) indicated that the high task and high relationship approach may be effective but not in all situations, where some situations may call for high task behavior and some may require sensitive and supportive approach. In conclusion, with the progress of the research on the subject, it remains debatable whether the High task and high relationship style is ideal for leadership behavior.

Implementation

It is an effortless process to implement behavioral approach at all levels of institutions. It enables the managers to evaluate their own behavior and determine whether their approach is correct or not and how they can change their approach for the betterment at all levels. The behavioral approach acts a mirror reflecting the most basic image, showing how they are doing as a leader and giving a review of their performance.

For effective leadership, there are numerous training and development programs that are designed to help implement the behavioral approach. The basic design of these programs is to help assess the leaders' task and relationship behavior which is done through a questionnaire.

A good instance of the training and development that solely deals with leadership approach is Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid. Seminars that focus on leadership Grid deal with the expanding the productivity, building self-confidence and improving employee satisfaction. These seminars offer self-evaluation, small-group experiences where a detailed analysis and assessment takes place that allows the manager to incorporate the effective leadership skills.

Behavioral approach is the base for many training and development programs that focus on the effectiveness and productivity of the leader.

Leadership as a Tool

Researcher along their journey to understand the behavioral patterns of leaders have used many different tools where the most frequently used methods have been the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Stogdill, 1963) and the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCause, 1991). The two methods provide a frame that gives a level of understanding towards a leader's approach to task and people. LBDQ is a design that is basically used for research work and has come into extensive use since 1960s. Leadership Grid is a design that is particularly used for training and development and continues to be used till date for training managers, support staff and supervisors in the leadership programs.

For finer understanding of how a leadership behavior are studied and to assess one's own behavior, a leadership behavior questionnaire is added to this section to increase your understanding of the study. The questionnaire comprises of 20 items/questions that help in assessing the two approaches: task oriented and relationship oriented. Going through the items of the Leadership behavior questionnaire will help you in understanding your own leadership behavior.

Leadership Behavior Questionnaire

Directions:

Going through each item one by one and think about how frequently you/the person to be evaluated engages in the stated behavior. Circle the specific item if you engage in the activity and rate yourself according to the given options.

Option:1 (Never), 2 (Frequently), 3 (Occasionally), 4 (Often), 5 (Always)

1.	Helps team members to get along with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Adopts a friendly approach towards members of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Sets standards of performance for each member of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Acts in a predictable way towards the group members.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Maintain active communication level with group members.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Encourage group members to perform efficiently	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Appreciates and encourage suggestions made by others.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Shows concern towards other people's well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Flexible while making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Makes others feel comfortable in the group.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Defines role responsibilities for each group member.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Provides a structure to how the work has to be done.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Gives suggestions on how to solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Clarifies his/her own role in the group.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Opens up about the thoughts and feelings to group members.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Clarifies his/her perspective to others.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Develops a plan of action for the group members.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Gives instructions to group members on what they are supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5

19.	Treats others fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Provides a standard for what is expected of the group.	1	2	3	4	5

Score Card:

The leadership Behavior Questionnaire is a design that measures a leader’s style based on task and relationship. Assess yourself on the questionnaire by doing the following:

1. Adding the responses on the odd-numbered items will give you the task score.
2. Adding the responses on the even-numbered items will give you the relationship score.

Total scores: Task: _____ Relationship: _____

Scoring card explanation:

- 45–50: Very high
- 40–44: High
- 35–39: Moderately high
- 30–34: Moderately low
- 25–29: Low
- 10–24: Very low

The score received for the Task segment refers to the level at which you help the others by identifying and providing their roles and letting them know what is expected of them. It narrates your tendencies to be task oriented when in leader’s shoe. The score received for the Relationship segment refers to the level you create to make your subordinates feel better about themselves and with each other in the group. It reflects on how people oriented you are.

The results that you achieve on the Leadership Behavior Questionnaire provides you with an answer to whether you are Task oriented or People oriented. It describes the approach that you choose to adopt when in leading position. It suggests, what you score is your leadership style. It answers a few basic questions like, whether you are more likely to lead the team with more importance to task or to relationship? Once you receive the results of the Leadership behavioral Questionnaire, there’s an important question to ask, if there are ways to change your behavior to shift and focus on other approach.

To know about your own style of leadership, you may want to have the questionnaire filled by a few of your group members based on their perception of you as a leader. This will provide additional data to relate to with your own results.

V. SUMMARY

The Behavioral approach is prominently contrasting to trait and skills approach towards leadership, reason being that behavioral approach deals with what the leaders do instead of who

they are. It’s more to do with the behavior than to the do with the person. The approach suggests two primary style of behaviors: Task oriented and Relationship oriented. How the leaders make use of the two behavioral approaches to influence the people is the main focus point of the behavioral approach.

The behavioral approach emerged from three different researches concluded by Ohio State Studies (1945s), the University of Michigan (1950s) and the research done by Blake and Mouton on the Leadership Grid (1964).

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