

CREATING EFFECTIVE LEADERS THROUGH SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH

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Abstract <p>The objective of this thesis is to discuss situational leadership model as an approach to leading followers, as well as help the student to understand ways to implement different leadership styles in practice. It shares a few tips on how to be a situational leader hence being effective and how to apply different leadership style on different situations.</p> <p>The theoretical framework focuses on explaining situational leadership model and the different leadership styles there is as well as matching the styles to correct development level of followers. A survey was conducted using questionnaires that were given physically to MFA students to see their abilities when it came to leadership. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions 8 of which were case studies, out of 50 possible participants the response was 88 %.</p> <p>The analysis concluded that, the more the students got exposed to leadership background the more they were able to switch between the different leadership styles with the 3rd years matching situations presented in the questionnaire better than the 1st and 2nd years students but the students had no knowledge of what situational leadership model was. The thesis will contribute towards knowledge of the situational leadership model as well as a discussion for further research by other students.</p>		
Keywords Situational leadership, Model, Leader, Effective, Implementation, Leadership, Competence, Commitment, Development		
Miscellaneous		

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1. Introduction

Faced with rapid changes and the need for effective leaders, It is not necessary to re-invent leadership models and theory as there classic models already existing and are useful today as they were when they were first developed. The Hersey and Blanchard model, for example, shows us different leadership styles and that as leaders we need to change the leadership styles to suit the followers, which is the only way for us to be effective.

This thesis will point out how to be an effective leader through a situational leadership model, how the student's, as leaders can learn to be flexible in leading the followers' hence being situational leader and not just 'bosses'. As a leader identifying and understanding the development level of the followers is important, the thesis identifies and explains the different development levels of the follower in a working environment as well as leadership style which matches the situation at hand.

To quote a famous author (Ken Blanchard) "In the past, a leader was a boss. Today, leaders must be partners with their people". In today's world, leaders need a way to deal, manage and resolve different issues arising at work in order to build the kind of organization which is positively effective. This thesis targets all those who would like to be future effective leaders. With the help of the questionnaire which had 8 case studies, the results showed that, MFA students do not have an understanding of what a situational leadership model is. By the end of the thesis, students will have an idea about situational leadership model and hopefully how to implement these models in a working environment.

The thesis shares a useful framework, picked up by the writer from her practical training in leadership. Situational leadership teaches leaders to recognize the needs of individuals or a team, then using the best leadership style to respond appropriately. The first month was rather hard for the writer after being given a leaders' role since she did not have past experience in leadership and had to rely on the little skills she had gained from her studies. With the help of the on-job-training at her workplace, she was able to adapt rather quickly to this methodology and apply it in a practical sense.

2. Situational leadership

2.1 Situational leadership models

The situational leadership concept was originally developed by Paul Hersey, author of the book *Situational leader* and Ken Blanchard, a leadership guru in (1969). The theory was first introduced as 'life cycle theory of leadership' (Blanchard & Hersey 1996) and later renamed to situational leadership theory' (1972). After being applied, they found that some aspects of the model were not being validated in practice. Therefore, Ken Blanchard created a second updated model called *Situational Leadership II (SLII)* (2002).

According to David Wyld (2010), 'Situational leadership brings attention to the role of the follower'. This leadership is about being flexible and using the needed leadership style to nurse a given development level of a follower to be successful in a given working environment.

As of the leadership journal (2009) 'the theory of situational leadership asserts that no one style of leadership pertains to all given workplace situations'. This means that, the leadership style changes according to the followers' knowledge and skills in a given task. Using a situational leadership model, a leader should be able to place less or more emphasis on the task, and more or less emphasis on the relationship with the people he is leading, depending on what is needed to get the job done successfully.

There many models by different Authors which describe leadership styles. Situational leadership is just one model of many and one of the most widely known approaches, see the following (Bass 1990; Northouse 2004; Vecchio 1987). For example Goleman's point about leadership is that a leader with official authority has the ability to influence his followers' emotional state to a great extent. The leader sets the emotional tone most of the time. Goleman identifies two leaders: Resonant and dissonant leaders and from these leaders he identifies six leadership styles: visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coercive (Goleman 2002). These styles are matched according to the situation arising in an organization. They have been practiced and are still being used today. However some critics think only a

number of these leadership styles are effective, for example Alicia Kritsonis (2004) thinks 'only first four of these six styles consistently have a positive impact on a company's environment and financial success'. What's new about Goleman model of leadership is 'an understanding of the underlying emotional intelligence capability that each approach requires' (Goleman 2002).

Situational leadership and situational leadership II have great similarities; they both define the development level of follower's and the leadership styles required from the leaders to best handle the development levels. In the Hersey-Blanchard model, leadership is defined as task related, they both have four leadership styles to match the followers' behavior levels.

The main difference between the Hersey and Blanchard books is the definition of followers'. Paul Hersey uses 'ability' and the 'willingness' to define a follower's readiness (Hersey 2009) while Ken Blanchard SLII model uses 'competence' and 'commitment' to rate a follower's development level (Blanchard 2008).

In the model Blanchard and Hersey talk about two fundamental concepts, development level and leadership styles, Hersey and Blanchard's (1969)

2.1.1 Development levels

There are two aspects to development level, which leaders should develop for their follower's to be self-motivated rather than dependent.

Competence is the knowledge and skills a follower brings to a specific goal or task. Commitment is the follower's motivation and confidence on that goal or task. The Blanchard and Hersey situational leadership model states that the leadership styles need to be reflected on followers' level of competence and commitment (Blanchard 2008). These two dimensions are then divided into four development levels of the followers'.

Low competence/ High commitment, the follower lack ability but is motivated (D1): For example a new member of staff for a certain task, who does not have any past experience on a certain task but is excited about the job and willing to learn.

Some competence/Low commitment, the follower has some ability but is not motivated (D2): Follower has a little experience on the task but due to unmet expectation he/she loses his motivation to work on the task.

Moderate competence/ Variable commitment, follower has ability but is not confident to utilize it (D3). These followers often know what to do but are in self-doubt, which makes them insecure about performing the task given.

High competence/ High commitment, follower has competence to perform and is confident (D4). They are high in knowledge as well as the ability to work unsupervised.

2.1.2 Situational leadership styles

‘Leadership style is a pattern of behaviors leaders’ use over time as perceived by others’ Blanchard et al., (2008).

Hersey n Blanchard argues (Mark 1997) ‘major factors affect an individual’s response to leadership is the amount of direction and support the leader provides’. As of Blanchard et al.,(2008) ‘situational leadership styles are divided into four categories: directing, coaching, supporting and delegating’.

Based on the writer’s opinion gained from experience as well as reference from books especially Hersey and Blanchard Articles, the following examples define more in depth what this leadership styles are and how one can identify a situation and apply the best style of leadership. The examples below are based on the case study, see (Appendix 25)

Directing/Telling style is where the leader provides specific directions about roles and goals and closely tracks the followers’ performance in order to provide frequent feedback on results. For example;

‘‘Your company has hired new staff for your department; they have no idea how to do the task but are willing to learn. What do you do as a leader?’’

Here follower lacks the knowledge and skills when it comes to performing a specific task. On the other hand, the employee is interested, enthusiastic about the task and ready to learn it.

In this case the leader needs to explain about the working system in details to the new staff; it's more about the leader being high in directing than supporting. Since their new and do not have past experience on this kind of task, the leaders job is to make sure they understand what the task is and what is required from them making sure they both have a clear picture of the expected end results. The leader will have to work with them day by day telling them exactly what to do and when to do it, they have low competency but are willing to learn hence directing style is needed.

Coaching/selling style is when the leader explains why, solicits suggestions, praises behaviors that are approximately right and continues to direct task accomplishment.

For example;

“As a leader you notice one of your staff in reception area is excellent in checking-in and out of guest and you always leave him to do the work, but when it comes to problem solving he doesn't know how to handle it well. What would you do?”

These level, followers have developed some skills but are often frustrated due to unmet expectations. Soon after beginning a new task, followers commonly experiences a period of disillusionment (difficult task, different than expected) which decreases there level of commitment.

The follower is in the second development level whereby he has some competence but the commitment is low. The leaders role is to coach him more on the task instead of telling him what to do, working together with the follower and help him to learn how to handle different problems, as well as praising him when doing well but also it is the leaders job to say what is right at this level. The follower needs a supportive leader by his side to continue coaching him till he/she can have confidence to do the task alone.

Supporting/participating style the leader and the follower make decisions together. The role of the leader is to facilitate, listen, encourage and support the follower. For example:

“Members of your team are unable to solve a problem themselves. In the past you have normally left them alone as group performance and interpersonal relationships have been good. What kind of leadership style is best when matched to this group?”

Most individuals at this level go through a self-doubt, questioning if they can perform the task on their own. Their commitment fluctuates between excitement and insecurity. Followers have developed a fair level of knowledge and skills but the motivation level is varying.

The best leadership style would be supporting, as leader and follower make decision together and the leader shows more supporting behavior and low directing behavior. In the past it was delegating as the team was left alone but now they need help to solve the problem, they need the leader to help in the decision towards the problem. The team has variable competence and seems to be committed as they have been working to solve past problems on their own.

Delegating is when the leader empowers the employee to act independently with the appropriate resources to get the job done. The leader shares responsibility for the goal setting and is available, but does not interfere with the followers' work. For example:

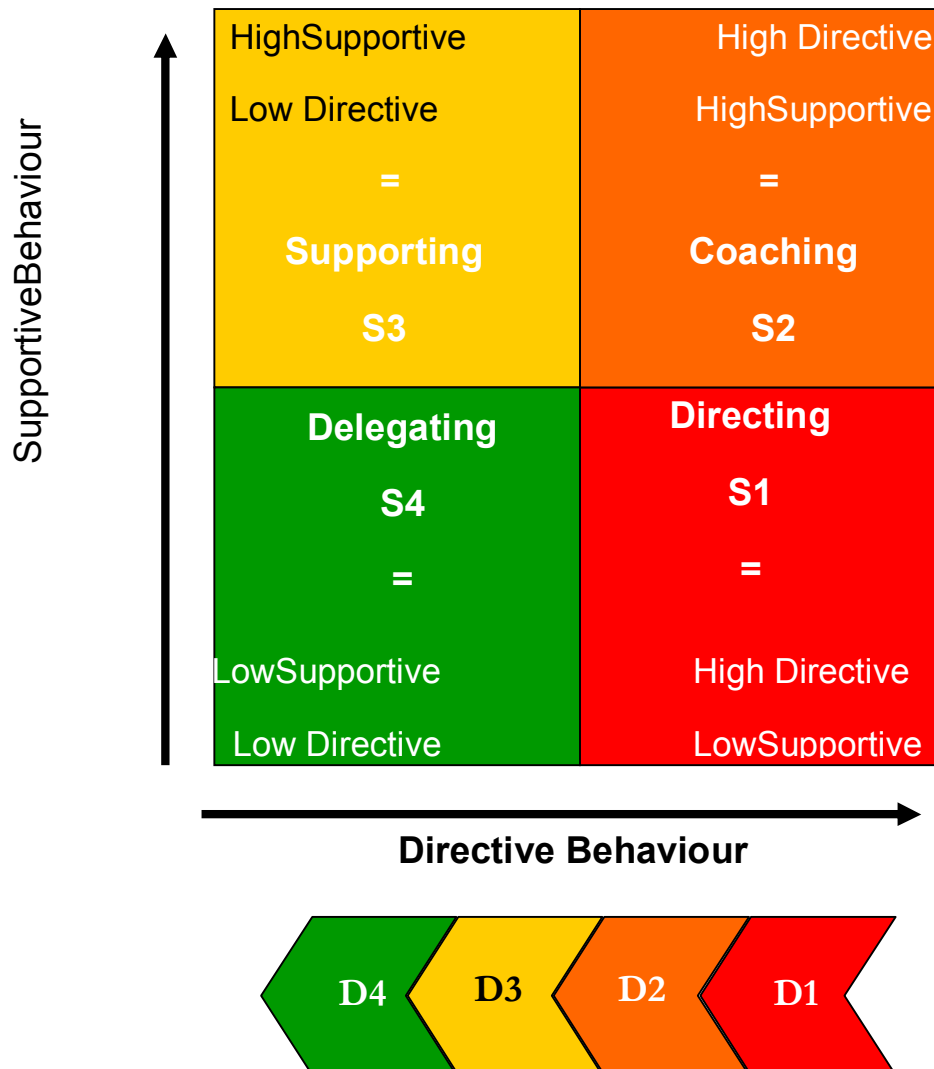
“As a leader you notice a group of followers operating extremely well on given task, they get along together and deliver the best. You want to insure that this continues, what do you do?”

On this level the followers have mastered the task, they are committed and highly motivated. With the proper support, an individual can eventually become a self-reliant achiever (D4) who demonstrates a high level of competence and commitment.

As of this situation it is best to reduce the leadership and let the followers take over as much as possible because the group works together very well and they have the knowledge and skill needed to do the task. If this group receives any of the other leadership style they will feel over supervised and this will led to frustration so the leader needs to be low in supporting as well as directing behavior. Their competence and commitment is fully developed at this level and they can be trusted to do the task without constant leadership or directing.

Fig : Situational leadership model

Model by Ken Blanchard (2008)



This model provides a quick guidance to help leaders assess the followers' level of commitment and competency then matching leadership styles. D stands for development level of follower (high/low), while S refers to leadership style (directing, coaching, supporting and delegating) needed to match development levels of the followers' establishing a nice leadership approach as a leader.

According to Papworth, Milne & Boak (2009), 'effectiveness is maximized by matching level of leadership style with follower readiness.' Therefore, a D1 an enthusiastic beginner/follower level would respond better to directing, leader's behavior (S1), a D2 follower who has some ability on the task would respond better to

coaching, leaders behavior(S2), D3 follower have the knowledge but often disappointed, they respond better when supported (S3) . While D4 respond better to delegating since they have the commitment and competence to work independently (S4).

Effective leaders are versatile in being able to move around this model according to the situation of the followers' so there is no one style which is always right because a follower can be on one development level on one task and on a totally different level with another task.

From personal experience, a situational leadership model provides a very sound and fundamental starting point to anyone wanting to be an effective leader. This model also acts as a reminder to leaders that the skill levels and task confidence of followers' should be given continuous attention through training and development efforts since the development level goes through a cycle from D1 to D4.

2.2 Implementing situational leadership

The concept of leadership is really important in an organization because leaders are the people who make things happen. Without leaders many organizations would find it difficult for work to be done. Situational leadership mainly help leaders to learn and gain skills needed to be the best.

Leadership at workplace can be a challenge if the leader does not have the characteristic of an effective leader, simply because their followers to be led and if a leader cannot lead as of the situation of every follower, work will not be done well and visions will not be achieved. As Hersey points out in an interview with Schermerhorn on Mid-American journal of business (1997) 'Situational Leadership teaches is that you need to do your diagnosis first and then act on it to provide those things that can make a difference.' Meaning leaders should note their SWOT analysis and improve on the weakness before trying to do diagnosis on followers.

After going through the first part of the thesis you will understand, implementing situational leadership at workplace is simply learning the weakness and strength of each leadership style and how this knowledge can be applied in situations arising. To

be a successful leader, one must quickly recognize the type of leadership to use to each follower as per their situations at hand.

The purpose of situational leadership is to help the followers to develop competence and commitment to the task given, teaching them how to provide their own direction. Situational leadership creates an open communication at workplace and also develops self-reliance to the followers. 'In a working environment, leadership becomes the ability to influence and motivate followers to contribute towards organizational goals' (House, 2004).

Effective Leaders should be able to develop their followers over time so they can reach their highest level of performance on specific goal or task. This development helps the followers to become self-motivated and self-directed. Leaders should be able to make an over view of their followers to know what to improve and how, check their work to see the level of knowledge and skill they have on each given task. This way the leader will know what kind of leadership style to imply.

Discussion with the followers is important so they may know what is required from their part after making a joint agreement of the leadership style according to the followers' development level. As a leader follow-up are significant, only this way can a leader know the level of skill and knowledge a follower has on that assigned task.

2.2.1 Implementation steps

First identifying the task or job to be done, making sure there is a clear description in the leaders and followers mind of what the task is. The key determinant is the follower understanding of what the leader want done and how the final good performance is like. A leaders needs to be specific on the task, for example he/she can be specific on one follower or a team but then less specific on another follower depending on the knowledge and skills of the follower.

Secondly access the competence and commitment. A leader should identify the readiness of the follower to that given task. Diagnose the performance readiness of the follower they are trying to influence. This is checking how ready the follower is by recognizing their ability and willingness on that task. This two variables ability and willingness are interactive meaning that one impacts the other.

Thirdly match leaders' response. Match the leadership style to the level of development of each follower or a group of followers.

2.2.2 Leaders diagnosis

Diagnosing of oneself as a leader is significant because this way you will get the knowledge to deal more effectively at work. According to situational leadership, leaders can no longer rely on one style instead they can learn to change their behaviors'. Situational leadership teaching helps leaders to learn how to positively impact different kinds of situations. According to Hersey interview with John R. Schermerhorn (1997) 'through the models and theories training, can leaders become more effective leaders in different situations'.

Training oneself first before leading others is essential, this way one will learn the strength and weakness he/she possess and act on weakness. SL and EI models offer training which leaders themselves can use. As noted by Northouse (2007), 'SL training possesses several distinct strengths'. Specifically, the theory has stood the test of time in the marketplace of leadership training programs, as it is well-known and commonly used for training leaders'.

As effective leaders, it is significant to also realize 'Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training and experience' (Jago 1982, 315).

2.3 Definition of competence and commitment

As seen earlier, the level of competency and commitment defines the leadership style to be applied to a follower. Followers have different competencies and commitment depending on their levels of knowledge on a task, but how do we define this key element in a follower?

Competence is the skill and knowledge a follower has on a given goal or task, it is best determined by the demonstration of performance. A follower at work can be on a different level of competency depending on the task given, Blanchard (2004).

This can, however, be developed over time with appropriate direction and support from the leader. Competence is acquired through formal education, on-the-job training, coaching and experience. Experience is the combination of the different skills that can be transferred from a previous job for example organizational, planning, problem solving or communication skills to name a few. These skills are generic by nature and are transferable from one goal or task to another.

Commitment according to Blanchard (2004) 'is combination of followers' motivation and confidence on a goal or task. 'Motivation is the level of interest and enthusiasm a person has for doing a particular task' Blanchard et al., (2004, 49). Interest and enthusiasm are exhibited behaviorally through animation, energy levels, and verbal cues. Confidence, on the other hand, is characterized by a person's self-assuredness. It is the extent to which a followers trust their own ability to do the goal or task. If neither motivation nor confidence is low or lacking, commitment as a whole is considered low.

2.4 Discussion

The situational leadership model gives us an understanding of what situational leadership is. It is up to the leaders to know how to apply it to the situation at hand in a working environment when leading followers; towards the organization vision. It is significant to remember effectiveness is maximized by matching the level of leadership style with follower readiness.

Well known leadership theories such as Hersey and Blanchard's 'Situation Leadership Model' (SL) and Goleman's 'Emotional Intelligence theory (EI), have been accepted by organizations worldwide. Implementation have been done, and they have been praised for their measurable benefits in leadership for example, Eric Ellsworth, president and CEO of the million YMCA of Greater Indianapolis, 'believes in being a situational leader and has succeeded through that' (Cassano 2008). If these theories or models are applied well to the maturity of the followers, then the work will get done and leaders will be effective, hence creating a constructive working environment.

Emotional intelligence has also been explored by different researchers trying to see if Goleman's model EI is an important factor which determines leadership behavior.

Many studies have found a positive effect of EI leadership on leadership effectiveness for example (Higgs & Aitken 2003; Hayashi, 2005; Wolff 2002)

Consistency is very important throughout the whole process of changing leadership styles, because too many of these changes can create confusion on a follower. Leaders get the most out of the followers if leadership is matched correctly with the development level of a follower. Problems then occur due to wrong matches.

Regardless of different models or theories used to describe leadership, Hersey/Blanchard or Goleman's, there seems to be a similarity of agreement, that flexibility is the key to success.

3. Effective leadership

3.1 Definition of effective leadership

To be an effective leader, it is significant to understand leadership theories and models, to understand situational leadership, one should first define leadership. According to Kent (2005) 'many people think of leadership as being synonymous with headship or management'. Although 'there is constant debate of leadership and management roles, since they both achieve organizational goals through task allocation, it is important to understand that they are distinctly different' (Zaleznik 1977).

Vroom & Jago think 'A common view that all leadership definitions share is that leadership is a process of influencing others' (2007). The word 'process' is most crucial, as leadership is not something possessed by a leader, but something a leader attempts to do.

According to Kaplan (1996) 'there is no one way to define leadership effectiveness'. Basically it is possessing character which helps in taking the company vision forward, knowing how to adapt the leadership styles with followers' development and knowing the right time to apply each style. Blanchard believes 'effective leaders adapt their style according to the development level of the people they are managing' (Blanchard 2008)

3.2 Effective leadership at workplace

The situational leadership model states that, 'difference between the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the four leadership styles is the appropriateness of the leader's behavior to the particular situation in which it is used' as discussed by Smith (1989).

Effective leaders should be flexible and can adjust their styles as followers and situations change over time in work environment. 'Situational leadership argues that in order to be effective managers we need to adapt our styles, according to the maturity of our people to carry out the task their working on' (Mark 1997, 31). Situational leadership model also points out that if the correct style is used to the lower-readiness followers, then they will mature and grow in their ability to perform and confidence. According to Hersey 'situational leadership model is about being more effective as a leader (2009).

Underpinning most of the models created about leadership including, 'situational leadership model' Hersey-Blanchard's and Goleman's emotional intelligence theory. There is a tangible link between effective leadership and organization success, some of the studies carried out have confirmed this assumption for example, (Higgs & Aitken 2003).

Hersey and Blanchard situational leadership has been in business sector and incorporated into 400 out of the 500 'fortune500' companies; see (Northouse2010, Fernandez & Vecchio 1997). Some organizations have implemented the situational leadership and led to effective leaders, for example As of Avery & Ryan (2002) 'Managers in Australia after being interviewed felt that situational leadership was a more effective tool when it became part of their organization.' These studies imply situational leadership theory and models shape leadership effectiveness; while this is true they argue 'that the enthusiasm from this organization maybe attributed to respondents lack of experience with other tools' Avery & Ryan et al.,(2002). This could be true if leaders do not practice or have no knowledge of other methods of leadership styles presented by other Authors.

Leadership styles have been criticized by different researchers for examples 'a number of criticisms of SL have been identified in the academic literature' of Northouse

(2007),so in order to lead effectively, it's best for a leaders to also pay attention to the critics and see what other best leadership style can be used instead.

3.3 Effective leaders in time of change

Change is a face that all or most followers' go through; it is simply part of life. According to Wardle (2011) 'change is rarely smooth, but it is an increasingly regular feature of the workplace'. This can be change of anything at workplace from product, customers to company's policies with a need to achieve the set goals. Followers' hate change as it leads them into the world of unknown and their competence and commitment to given new task diminish. Situational Leaders should be properly empowered with the skills needed to effectively manage change at work place with the use of different leadership styles. As of (Walter 1997) 'Change is necessary if we are to grow, learn and improve and that there is no escaping it'.

Effective leaders should be strong to be able to challenge the changing process and recognize good ideas in followers' and themselves. Kotter (1996, 129) thinks 'without strong and capable leadership....restructuring, turnarounds and change don't happen well or at all'. They should adapt to the change as fast as they can and be innovative and never be scared to take risk of failing because it is the only way to learn from mistakes and successes, this is after all part of their diagnosis.

These leaders should envisioning and communicate the future of the organization like where this change will lead in the future so as to win the confidence of the followers. Effective leaders should create an ideal image of what the organization can be and how they will lead the followers' to get to that point by persuading& convincing the followers' to willingly accept the changes by breathing life into the vision they have. Helping followers to see exciting possibilities will boost their motivation and they will be willing to learn.

They should foster collaboration between themselves and followers' this way they will identify the level of skill and knowledge each one has on a given task and be able to match that to their leadership style. Understand that mutual respect sustains extraordinary efforts hence treat their followers in respect, creating an atmosphere of trust is a significant virtue as the followers will feel free to approach the leader.

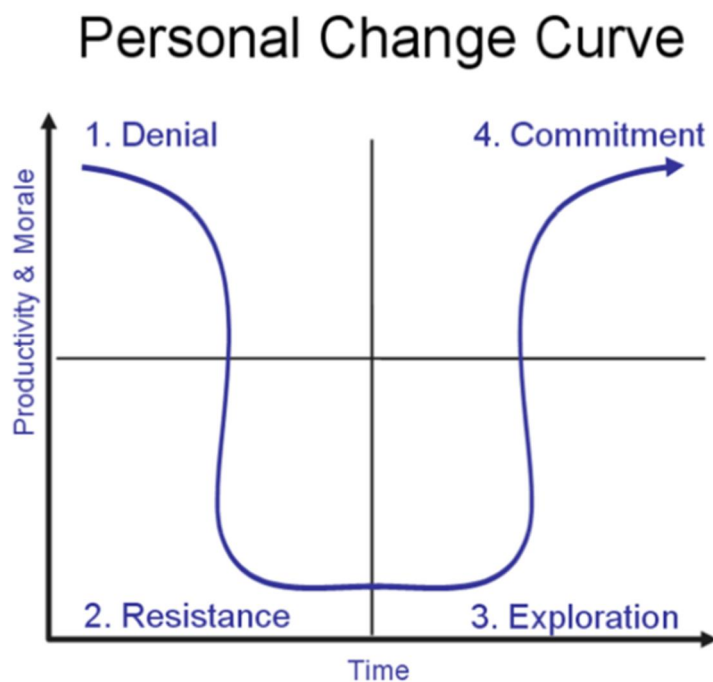
Strengthen followers' through the development cycle making each person feel capable and powerful.

Effective leaders should lead by example, being clear about the vision and values, and then acting consistently with them. Remain vigilant about the little things that make a big difference like motivating followers towards the change, as of Carroll&Flood (2010, 117) 'successful change is possible or that an individual or group can accomplish a desired end is critical to motivation'.

3.4 The Change Curve

The model below shows the stages of change by a follower, as a cycle from 1 to 4.

Fig 2: (Model by Miller 2009)



Denial: Followers in this stage do not want to change from the old ways. Leaders need to apply leadership style (D1) directing. They direct followers on new ways, telling them what need to be done and how as well as handle objections.

Resistance: Observe actions and behavior and notice when using old ways, coaching leadership (D2) is better as the leader will work together to help followers master the new ways while discussing difficulties and focusing on new way.

Exploration: Followers at this stage have accepted change and are mastering the task. As a leader, support followers when trying out new ways, demonstrate brand behaviors' and share performance results.

Commitment: Followers have fully accepted change. As a leader recognize and reward followers, encourage those who 'get' it to help others. Share ideas and results often. This leadership behavior is delegating (D4)

4. Research method

Research can be grouped into theoretical and empirical, depending on their nature. Theoretic research is often used in the field of mathematics; the research is done with the main aim of understanding an issue from the theoretical point of view without adding any practicality in the results. Empirical on the other hand is done to bring practicality on the area of studies, this includes planning the information seeking, finding the information, analyzing the information and later presenting it (Clayton 2010).

Empirical research has two methods, qualitative and quantitative. The methods differ from each other; qualitative research explores attitude, behavior and experience in such methods as questioning a focused group. As of Clayton, 'qualitative research aims to gather in-depth understanding from human behavior.' Quantitative on the other hand tend to generate statistics through a use of large scale research, using approach like structured interviews and it tend to reach more people than qualitative method, et al., (Clayton 2010)

Quantitative research was used in this thesis, the chapter below focuses on the method that was used in order to get a wider perspective on the students' abilities on leadership as of the moment.

4.1 Research questionnaire

The situational leadership questionnaire was used to determine the skills and abilities of the students as leaders and how effective their abilities were. The questionnaire is helpful in pointing out the leaders' strengths and weaknesses. It was based mostly on assumptions to show how well the student could manage as leaders' if given an opportunity. Students are the future leaders, it was important to see the level of leadership skills they possess as of this point and write a thesis which could help improve their knowledge on leadership. This situational leadership questionnaire covers assumptions about specific situations through questions that are geared towards revealing the leader's abilities.

The questionnaire corresponded to the Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership and a different set of questionnaire were engaged. The questionnaire adopted, consisted of 12 sets of questions, 4 which were general questions about leadership and 8 situational in form of case studies. Each situation had four answers: each expresses the situational leadership styles directing, coaching, supporting and delegating in which the student's as leaders may have taken as best leadership behavior. The questionnaire had no right or wrong answer; the answers were ranged from effective to ineffective, since every situation/question had an answer which could best suit it, see questionnaire (Appendix 1 p. 25)

In the case the students had to identify the situation by accessing the knowledge of the task, of that follower and being able to match it with the best leadership style to lead the follower towards the best results.

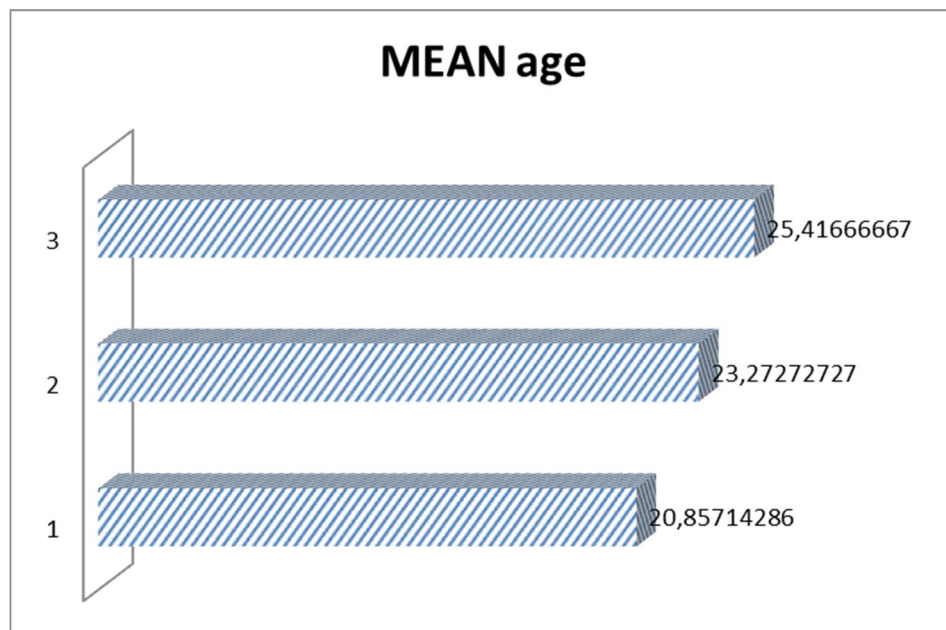
4.2 Execution

The target Respondents were MFA students and questionnaires were distributed to them only. With the help of the tutor, it was easier to distribute the questionnaire to different classes. Also a simple random sampling approach was used to collect the samples, handing out questionnaires in the university lobby to the 2nd and 3rd years. The participants were drawn from three groups, 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year. Totally, 50 sets of questionnaire were distributed to 50 students. Finally, 44 relevant questionnaires were collected, where most of the students (32 students) were 1st and 2nd year students.

4.3 Results

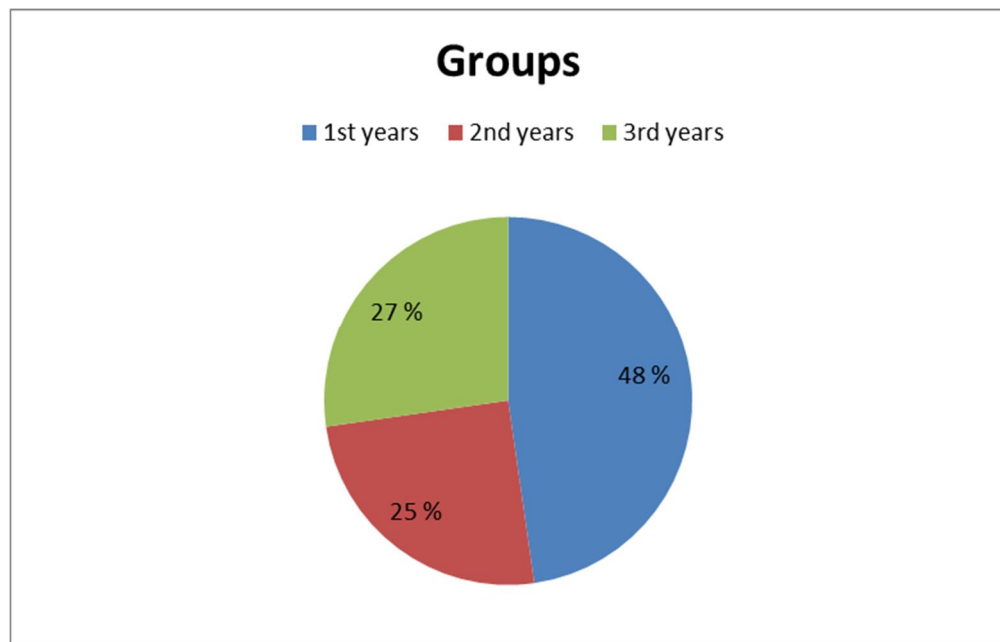
The analysis was intended to show the effectiveness of the style adopted for each situation, with the key answer from personal experience and situational leadership books (Hersey-Blanchard 1969). The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions 8 of which were case studies, with the response rate of 88%.

Fig 3: Chart

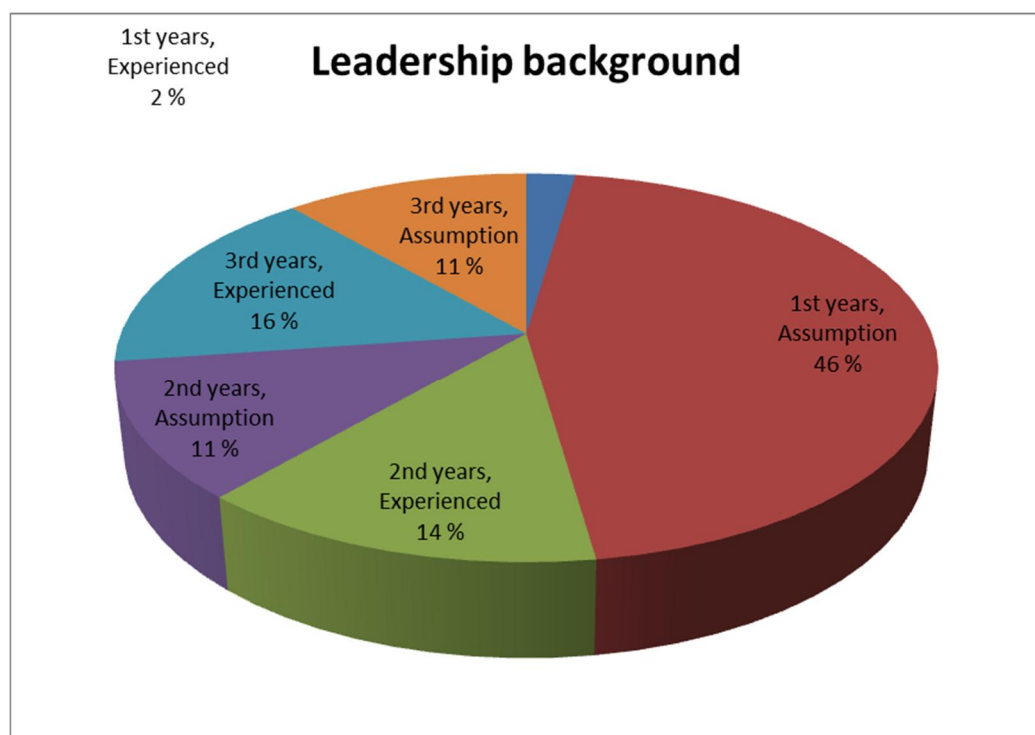


The graph shows the MEAN age of the participants, it shows the younger participants are the 1st years, followed by 2nd and then older students are the 3rd years. The first years ranged from 17-26, second years from 21-27 and the 3rd years 23-29.

From the questionnaire result, it shows that the older students have more basic idea of the situational leadership model and also other leadership models in general more than the 2nd and 1st years.

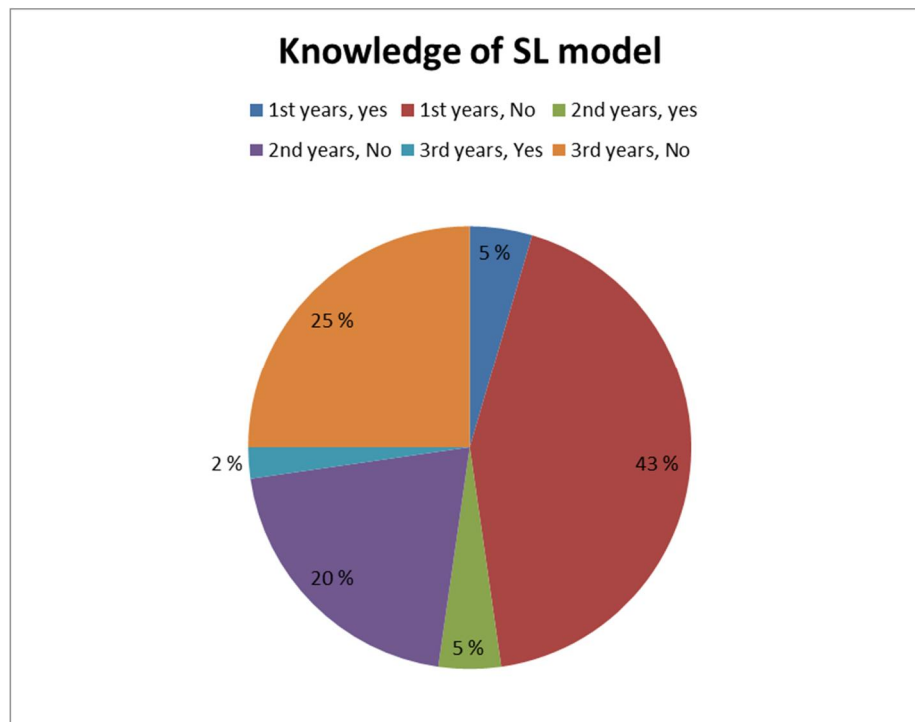
Fig 4: Pie chart

The chart shows the participants of the questionnaire by group/year. It was easy to give the questionnaire to the 1st years than 2nd and 3rd years as they were hard to find around the university premises and also due to the fact that most of the 3rd year were away, some on their practical trainings as well as exchange studies, as the pie chart shows more feedback, 48%, were generated from the 1st years.

Fig 5: Pie chart

The chart shows the student group as well as their background and what they based their answers to the questionnaire on, if the answer was based on assumption or on experience. The 3rd years were higher on percentage of the students who had past experienced and on the case studies this experience proved to be helpful when matching leadership style to development level. The 2nd year students 14% had past experience, while a lot of the answers from 1st years were based on assumptions. The question aimed to identifying if the students background in leadership could help in dealing with situation pertaining leadership.

Fig 6: Pie chart



The chart shows the knowledge of the MFA students when it came to situational leadership model. Only a small percentage were able to explain briefly what the model was but still it was clear they needed more exposure to better understand the situation leadership model and how it works. As the chart shows 43% of the 1st years had no idea about the model, this could be due to the fact that they are young and had just started their education and not so much experienced in leadership. As of the 2nd years 20% had no idea also of the model and the 3rd years 25% could not say what this

model was but some were able to name a few leadership styles from this model as well as from other Authors such as Goleman's.

On the case studies, the focus was on effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the students in leadership, since there were four styles in each situation/question, the effectiveness score would range from -2 to 2 where negative sign represented ineffective score and positive sign represented effectiveness. The groups proved to differ in leadership, most of the 3rd years had experience in leading followers so they were able to match the situation in the case studies to the best leadership behavior they would apply but when it came to the second years, even though half of them were experienced they were not able to lead effectively by matching situation properly. They seemed to prefer more of taking directions themselves and telling the followers in different development level what to do rather than treating each development level differently. The first years were also relying more on the telling style, more on being in charge to get work done. This was a traditional leadership style and even though it works in some situation it is not the best way to go about handling every situation and most of the time this leadership style demolishes the followers' motivation.

5. Conclusion

To be an effective leader, one need to understand there is no single solution to manage followers at work or even one best leadership style to use for all the followers.

However there is a practical, easy way to understand an approach which is situational leadership. This model of leadership contains four leadership styles representing different combination of directive and supportive behavior. These are directing/telling, coaching/selling, supporting/participating and delegating. The right leadership style is primarily a function of the degree of difficulty of the task and the development level of the follower doing that task. A leader can use one leadership style when dealing with one follower and use different style when leading a team or another follower.

The questionnaire gave the writer an overview on where the students' ability to lead was. This thesis will help student to have an idea of the SL model as well as show them how to react to different development levels of followers. Based on the questionnaire feedback, the students do not have a clear understanding of how to be a situational leader, and seems to be confused with the many leadership styles and

models out there. Although this questionnaire was based on assumption and experience, only a few of the respondents at least seemed to be able to lead effectively but with more exposure to leadership models and training the students will be great leaders.

The case study questions were directed towards the ability of the student to identify the situation and, as the leader, respond to the follower in the best possible way. First and second years students could identify the situation but they were not able to match the situation with the best leadership approach. This could have been due to the fact that they were young and inexperienced as the third year. It seems that, as one continued to gain more knowledge of leadership as well as get exposure maybe in practical training or work, their ability to lead also improved, most of the third year students were able to switch between the leadership styles and, most importantly effectively match the situation with leaders behavior.

Based on the questionnaire results, I would say it is important to introduce leadership education to the student from an early stage, 1st years, introducing one model at a time as they are many leadership models to learn.

Appendix 1

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Age: _____

MFA _____

Do you have any leadership experience? _____

(If you do not have experience, please answer based on your assumption)

1 What is leadership?

2 According to your understanding, what is situational leadership?

3 Do you have any knowledge of situational leadership theory and models?

YES _____

NO _____

4 If you have answered yes on question 3. Name any leadership styles you know?

CASE STUDY

1. Members of your team are unable to solve a problem themselves. In the past you have normally left them alone as group performance and interpersonal relationships have been good. As a leader, you would?

A. Involve the team and together engage in problem solving

B. Leave the team to work it out

C. Act quickly and firmly to correct and redirect

D. Encourage the group to work on the problem and be supportive

2. As a leader you notice a group of followers operating extremely well on given task, they get along together and deliver the best. You want to insure that this continues what do you do?

A. Reduce your leadership and let the followers take over as much as possible

B. Be controlling and in charge still

C. Forget all about them and concentrate on other groups

D. Give them a harder task.

2A. please explain why you choose that answer from the question above?

3 Marlon has been a Room Attendant for 3 years. Over that period, he established a good working relationship with his colleagues. Two months ago, Marlon received the Employee of the Month award for his outstanding performance. In what stage is Marlon in term of knowledge and skill on the housekeeping work?

- A. He is on the starting level with skill and knowledge
- B. He has some knowledge and skill
- C. He has good knowledge and skill but not confident
- D. He has sufficient knowledge and skill to work by himself

3A. what leadership behavior would better suit Marlon?

- A. Tell him what to do still on his task, to avoid mistakes
- B. Coaching him day by day on the same task
- C. Support him in his task even though he knows the task
- D. Let him do his job and be there for him when he needs help

4. You are considering a major change at work, for example introduction of a new product beside the one your organization is selling. Your staffs have a fine record of accomplishment. They respect the need for change. You would?

- A. Allow followers involvement in developing the change but not be directive
- B. Announce change and then implement them with close supervision
- C. Allow the followers to formulate their own direction
- D. Incorporate followers' recommendation but direct the change yourself

5. As a leader you notice one of your staff in reception area is excellent in checking-in and out of guest and you always leave him to do the work, but when it comes to problem solving he doesn't know how to handle it well. What would you do?

- A. Work with him and coach him on ways to handle problem situations
- B. Let him figure out the way to do it by himself
- C. Take him to another department and bring someone who knows the job to reception
- D. Tell him what to do step by step

6. You supervise Mark who is a new employee. You had Mark working alongside of an experienced member of your staff for the last couple of weeks to help orient Mark to the job. You now want to give Mark a task assignment on his own, how would you approach Marks situation?

- A. Tell him what to do on the task and leave him to do on his own
- B. Work together with him on the task step by step.
- C. Support him on the task
- D. Give him another experienced member of staff to show him the task

7. Johnny has started his career as human resource officer and was promoted to Asst. HR Manager after 2 years for his good job and commitment. Despite the promotion Johnny has handled an interview only once and he is not at all confident with interviewing. Claire the HR director decides to leave Johnny to handle the daysinterviews on his own while she is in a meeting. Do you think Claire is using good leadership behavior?

YES _____ NO _____

7a. why did you choose that answer on question 7?

7b. what recommendations do you have for handling this case more effectively?

8. Your company has hired new staff for your department; they have no idea how to do the task but are willing to learn. What do you do as a leader?

- A. Direct them on the working system, explaining in details
- B. Let them do what they want as long as they get the work done
- C. Let them learn from the current working staff
- D. Live the entire responsibility to the experienced staff

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