

Managerial and Leadership Behavior

Part 4

Describing, Comparing, and Reconciling "One Best Style" and "Situational" Approaches

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Describing, Comparing, and Reconciling “One Best Style” and “Situational” (Contingency) Theories

Introduction

Today, managerial style theorists and practitioners are “on two different tracks.”

On one track are the many who believe that there is “one best style”—a style that is both highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented at the same time. Proponents of “one best style” include McGregor (1957), Likert (1961), O’Brien (1982), Atkins (1991), McManus-Geier (1980s), Merrill-Reid (1999), Zoll (1974), Hall (1988), Thomas-Kilmann (1974), Simpson (1977), Lefton (1977), and Blake and Mouton (1964, 1982). The latter are probably the most noted because of their well-known Managerial Grid® and “9,9” style. As acknowledged by Blake, Carlson, McKee, Sorenson, and Yaeger (2000), The Managerial Grid® has a long, strong OD history because of its focus on experiential learning and its emphasis on participation. (Also, Grid International, 2004.)

On the other track are the “contingency” or “situational” theorists, who believe that there is no one best style for all circumstances. These include Kerr et al (1974), Burns and Stalker (1961), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), and Hersey and Blanchard (1969). The latter are probably the most noted because of their well-known Situational Leadership model.

Confusion as to which theory is correct largely stems from somewhat conflicting evidence. Although many of the experts mentioned above have touted “one best style,” Benson (1994) and Norris and Vecchio (1992) have cited evidence that one style is not always effective and that a case-by-case or situational approach can sometimes be best. On the other hand, Avery and Ryan (2002) and Blank, Weitzel, and Green (1990) have observed that, while situational principles are popular and seemingly effective, there are times when they fall short.

This article compares these two seemingly opposing definitions of managerial styles. It then tries to reconcile them by comparing their use of the term “styles,” synthesizing the best concepts of both, and merging the two tracks of thought onto one.

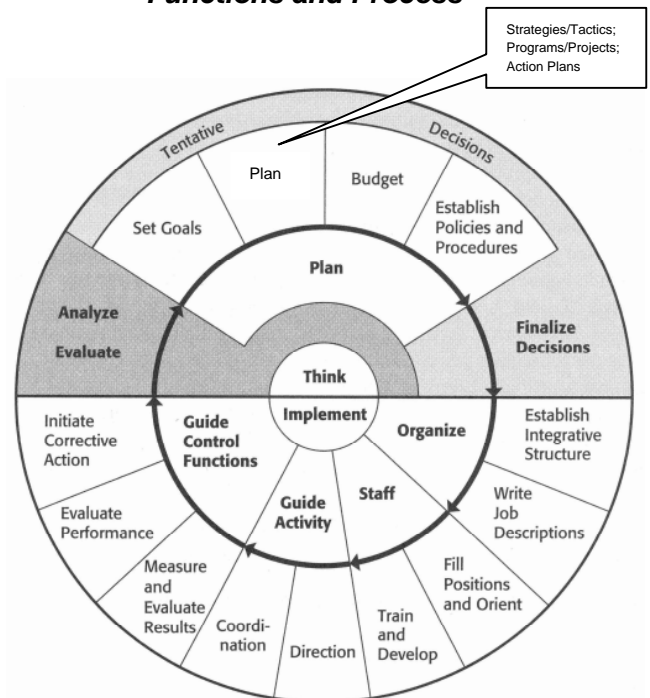
Defining Management and Leadership

Before we begin discussing managerial and leadership styles, we should provide our description of management, which also applies to leadership.

Most books on management (especially the introductory ones) begin with chapters that outline major functions of the “managerial process”: **P**lan, **O**rganize, **S**taff, **D**irect, **C**oordinate, **R**eport, and **E**valuate (POSDCORE—or similar variations thereon). In a later chapter they cover the analytic approach to problem solving and decision making—as if these were separate “functions.” We always had a problem with that. It seemed to us that you can’t begin planning without first fully analyzing the many factors or variables that make up and/or influence an organization’s external and internal situation. It also seemed to us that, if alternative sets of goals and plans were being formulated, at some point managers (or leaders) would need to test, compare, and choose among those alternatives (i.e., make decisions).

So way back in 1976, and for purposes of conducting our management training seminars, we designed our own version of the major management functions organized into the process illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Managerial/Leadership (Integrative) Functions and Process



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Table 1: Relationships Between the Managerial/Leadership Process and the Analytic Approach to Problem-Solving Process — and also to Communication, Learning, and Other Processes

	MANAGERIAL / LEADERSHIP (INTEGRATIVE) PROCESS	PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS	COMMUNICATION PROCESS	LEARNING PROCESS
	Preparation Steps	Preparation Steps	Preparation Steps	Preparation Steps
What has happened, or what is going on —and why?	Analyze Situation (including evaluation of past results and performance)	Analyze Situation	Analyze Situation What needs communicating Analyze receivers Analyze oneself Analyze environmental obstacles	Analyze Situation What should learn/develop; Factors affecting learning; Possible principles, modes, and methods use
What needs to be done, or what might be done —and how?	Set Goals and Plan Set Goals: what accomplish Formulate Plans (how to): Strategies and tactics, programs and projects, action plans Budget resources	Formulate Solutions Set Goals: what accomplish Formulate Plans (how to): Strategies and tactics, programs and projects, action plans Budget resources	Formulate Plans Set goals: what accomplish Formulate communication plans: Strategies, tactics, projects, and action plans specifying audience, ideas & feelings to convey, modes to use, the when and where, and facilities/equipment needed, etc. Budget resources	Formulate Plans Set goals: what learn Formulate learning plans: Strategies, tactics, and action plans that apply appropriate principles, modes, and methods of learning Budget resources
What course of action should be taken?	Make Decision(s) Analytically test, compare, and select among alternative [sets of] goals, plans, budgets, policies, and procedures	Make Decision(s) Analytically test, compare, and select among the alternatives (solutions)	Make Decision(s) Analytically test, compare, and select among alternative [sets of] goals, plans, budgets, etc.	Make Decision(s) Analytically test, compare, and select among alternative [sets of] goals, plans, budgets, etc.
Take action; do something	Implement Plans to: Organize Staff Guide, coordinate activity Guide control processes	Implement chosen solutions Obtain and evaluate feedback; revise solutions as appropriate	Implement Communication Plans Communicate using chosen modes or media Obtain and evaluate feedback Revise communications	Implement Learning Plans Learn information and ideas, develop skills, modify attitudes and behavior Reinforce what learned

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Figure 2: Adaptation of Blake and Mouton's Five-Style Managerial Grid®

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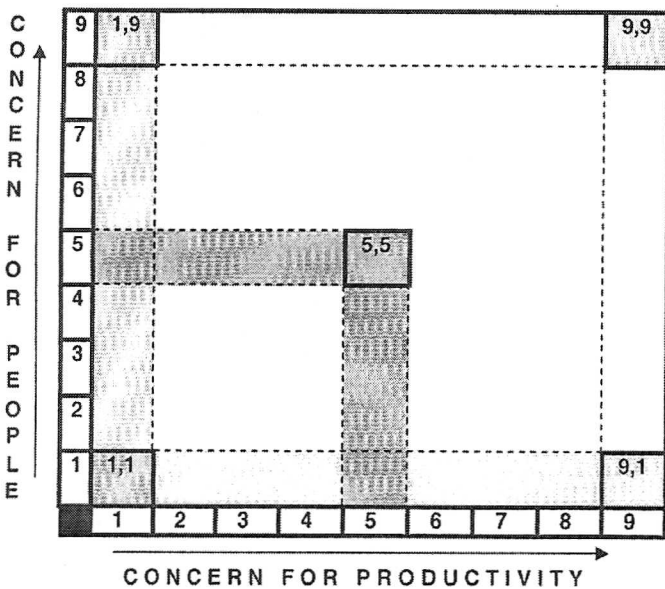
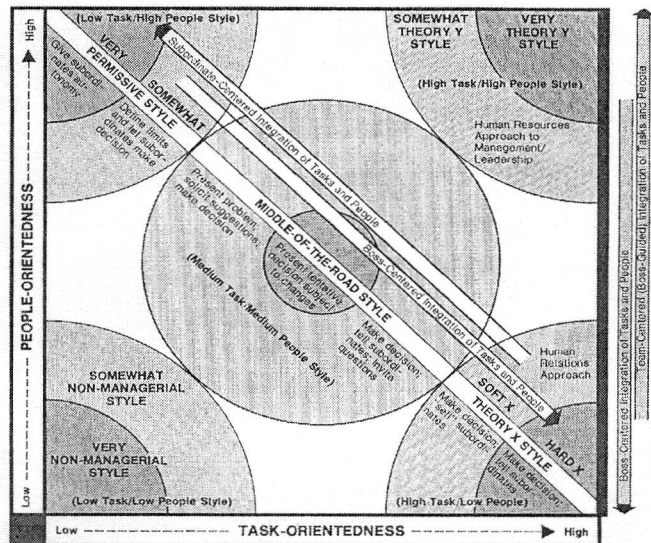


Figure 3: Another Version of a Five-Style Grid



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Our version starts with the think-work functions: first, analyze the situation; second, formulate alternative goals and associated plans; and then third, choose among alternatives (decision making). Next, one shifts gears and implements the plans that one formulated and chose—the plans for organizing, staffing, guiding and coordinating activities (according to strategies, tactics, programs, projects and specific action plans), and then guiding the performance of control functions. Note that analysis is the initial and probably most important function, because how well it is performed will affect (a) how well goal setting, planning, and decision making will be performed, and (b) the effectiveness of the resulting goals and plans. Furthermore, it is also part of formulating alternative goals, plans, and solutions and then comparing and choosing among them.

We call the managerial functions “integrative functions” because they are used to *integrate tasks with tasks, people with their tasks (jobs), people with people, and people with their organization*. Leaders—including military leaders—perform the very same functions. We will have more to say about that later.

By adding analysis and decision making functions to the original process, what did we just recognize? That, as shown in **Table 1**, *the managerial process is really nothing more than the analytic approach to problem-solving process—just in a slightly different (planning-implementation) context*. That’s rather significant, because it also enables us to show in **Table 1** that the analytic approach is also used for structuring and increasing the effectiveness of strategic and annual planning processes, “change management” processes, project management processes, communication processes, and learning processes (because planning and problem-solving situations are major modes of learning).

Table 1 also shows that—especially during team planning, problem-solving, and decision-making processes—participants are almost certainly *performing most if not all of those processes at the same time!* So they can use the same analytic approach to structure how they are communicating and what they are learning during those major think-work processes. It also means that *by learning how to structure any one of these processes, one is also learning the basics of structuring the others*. And it further means that *each time one of these processes is taught, covered, and/or practiced, there is an opportunity to relate it to the others and reinforce the learning and skill develop-*

ment involved in all of them. That is an extremely important aspect of effectively developing and reinforcing practical management and leadership skills!

The importance of establishing what is shown in **Figure 1** relates to our definition of any particular managerial style (of the five we discuss): *the way in which one behaves toward and interacts with subordinates in the process of performing (or getting performed) those functions that integrate tasks with tasks, people with people, people with their tasks, and people with the organization*.

Now we can turn to summarizing the case for “one best style,” which is stated more completely in Chapter 8 of *Next-Generation Management Development* by Cecil and Rothwell (2007). After that, we will review basic concepts regarding “situationalism,” discuss a number of reservations about it, and go on to explain why situationalism continues to be popular. Then, we will attempt to reconcile the two theories by putting them into perspective—that is, by showing how one might be considered a sub-set of the other. Finally, we present a participative, developmental, “high task, high people” development approach.

Summary of the Case for “One Best Style”

Both Blake and Mouton’s Managerial Grid® (**Figure 2**), others’ models, and our own Managerial Target® embody an inherent conclusion that there *is* one best “style”: the “Y,” team, participative, System 4, or “9,9” style—what we call the “high task, high people” style (or “approach”) and sometimes call the “synergistic style.” Newborough (1999) explained its efficacy by pointing out that it balances people and process.

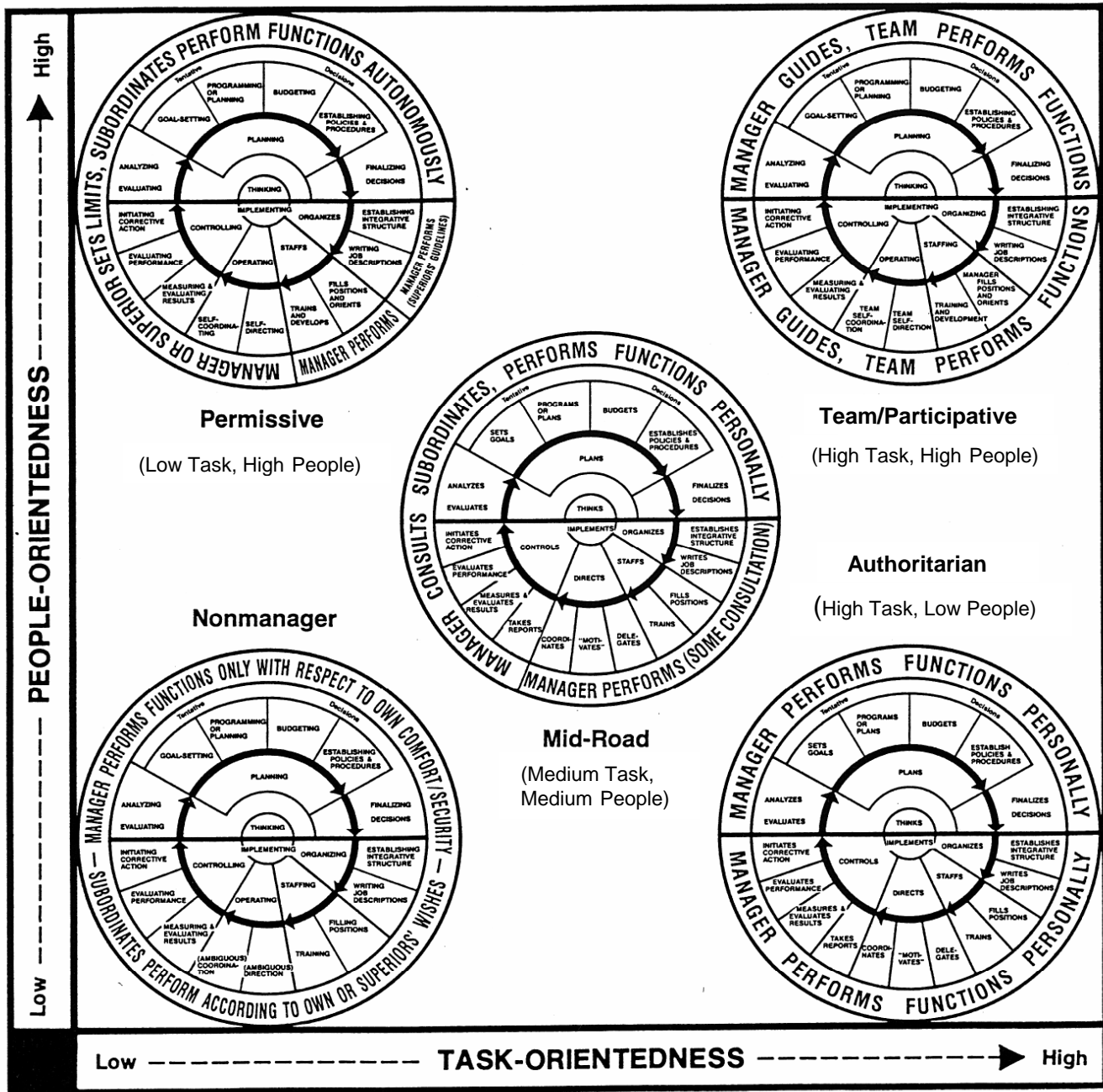
We use the terms “Theory Y,” “team,” “participative,” and “high task, high people” (HT,HP) interchangeably. It is how we tip our hat to Douglas McGregor (1957), who was first to describe a style—the “Theory Y” style—that was more or less both highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented at the same time. In fact, it is the *spirit and intent of Theory Y* that has become ingrained in most if not all “one best style” concepts. It is essentially the Golden Rule applied in organizations: “Do unto your subordinates as you would have them do unto you.” Some invoke the Platinum Rule: “Do unto subordinates as *they* would have you do unto them.” Or, how about, “Treat your subordinates as you would have them treat you—if you were they and in their shoes.”

Table 2: Summary Comparison of Five Distinctive Managerial/Leadership Styles

TYPE OF MANAGER (Managerial Orientations)	High Task, Low People Manager or Leader	Low Task, High People Manager or Leader	Medium Task, Medium People Manager or Leader	Low Task, Low People Manager or Leader	High Task, High People Manager or Leader
COMMON NAMES OR DESCRIPTIONS	Authoritarian Traditional, Hard Directive/Controlling	Permissive Soft Laissez Faire	Middle Road Firm-but-Fair Consultive	Non-Managerial	Participative, Team Synergistic
OTHER NAMES					
General					
Blake, Mouton, & Bidwell (1962)	9,1	1,9	5,5	1,1	9,9
McGregor (1957, 1960)	Theory X	(Soft)	(Middle Road)		Theory Y
Likert (1961)	System 1 (to System 2)		System 3		System 4
O'Brien (1982)	High Assertiveness, Low Responsiveness	Low Assertiveness, High Responsiveness	Medium Assertiveness, Medium Responsiveness	Low Assertiveness, Low Responsiveness	High Assertiveness, High Responsiveness
Atkins (1991)	Controlling - Taking	Supporting - Giving	Conserving - Holding		Adapting - Dealing
McManus (1980s)	Dominance	Steadiness		Compliance	Influence
Merrill & Reid (1999)	Driver	Amiable	[Analytical]		Expressive
Conflict Management					
Zoll (1974)	Domination	Suppression	Compromise	Evasion	Synergistic
Hall (1986)	Win - Lose	Yield - Lose	Compromise	Lose - Leave	Dominant - Warm
Thomas-Kilmann (1974)	Competing	Accommodating	Compromising	Avoiding	Collaborating
Simpson (1977)	Power	Suppression	Compromise	Denial	Integration
Performance Evaluation					
Lefton (1977)	Dominant - Hostile	Submissive - Warm		Submissive - Hostile	Dominant - Warm
GENERAL BEHAVIOR	director, controller, commander, dominator, driver, taker, competitor, utilitarian, results seeker, blamer, attacker, disciplinarian	"country-clubber," pleaser, supporter, giver, accommodator, suppressor, yielder	compromiser, balancer, performer, workaholic	avoider, isolationist	thinker, communicator, achiever, developer, team-builder, integrator, positive stroker, confronter, influencer
	superior, self-centered, aggressive, hostile, exploitative; dreads failure, avoids defeat	warm, submissive, amiable, responsive, insecure, dependent, affiliative, benevolent, associative, protective	consultive, changeable; anxious about criticism and censure	apathetic, indecisive, evasive, pessimistic, compliant, submissive; fears rejection, avoids separation & hopelessness	self-actualized, optimistic, realistic, self-assured, assertive, responsive, supportive, expressive
What Emphasizes or Attempts to Maximize	Productivity	Satisfaction	Balance/compromise between Productivity and Satisfaction	Comfortable atmosphere for Self	Productivity and satisfac- tion (through participation and development)

Significant Underlying Personal Traits	Ego; high economic and political values; low people-oriented values	High people-oriented values; low economic and political values	(varies)	Mature balance between selfish and selfless orientations
Attitudes about Self and Subordinates in terms of [Ego States] and Life Positions ("I'm OK, You're OK")	[Parent] I'm OK, but you're not OK (or are not as OK as I am)	[Child] You're OK, I'm not OK (or Am I OK)?	People who help me or don't bother me are "OK." The rest are "not OK" or don't matter	[Adult] I'm OK, and You're OK (but we can all become better and do better with help from each other)
Socio-Technical Factors [by Trist (1960)] Analyzes or Considers	Considers only task-related and organizational factors	Considers mostly individual and social factors	Only thinks about personal situation when trying to maintain the comfortable, worry-free atmosphere has established for self	Analyzes all variables: task-related, individual, social, organizational, and outside/external
What Integrates	Mostly integrates tasks with tasks ("mechanics" of the operation)	Mostly integrates people with people (social interactions and atmosphere)	Integrates little if anything	Integrates tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with the organization
Basic Approach	Superior-centered direction and control	Subordinate-centered autonomy	No approach (stays out of the way)	Team-centered (with superior-guided participation of subordinates in integrative functions)
What "Runs" or Manages	"Runs" what can see (tasks and people's activities)	"Runs" what can feel or sense (people's emotions and interactions)	Does not "run" or manage much of anything	Manages what can see (tasks, activities, interactions), what cannot see (thinking processes, attitudes, needs), and what can feel or sense (emotions)
What Communicates	Instructions, decisions, orders	Feelings / support	Seldom communicates	Advice / information; guidance
Behavior in terms of The Golden Rule	Does to subordinates (directs and controls them) so that they will not make (boss-embarrassing) mistakes	Does well (is nice) to subordinates, so that they will like and do well to (be friends with) him or her	Doesn't do much to or for anyone, so that no one will bother him/her	Does to subordinates as would have own boss do to him/her (or perhaps better, as subordinates would have done to them)

Figure 4: Five Distinctive Styles In Terms of Performance of Integrative Functions

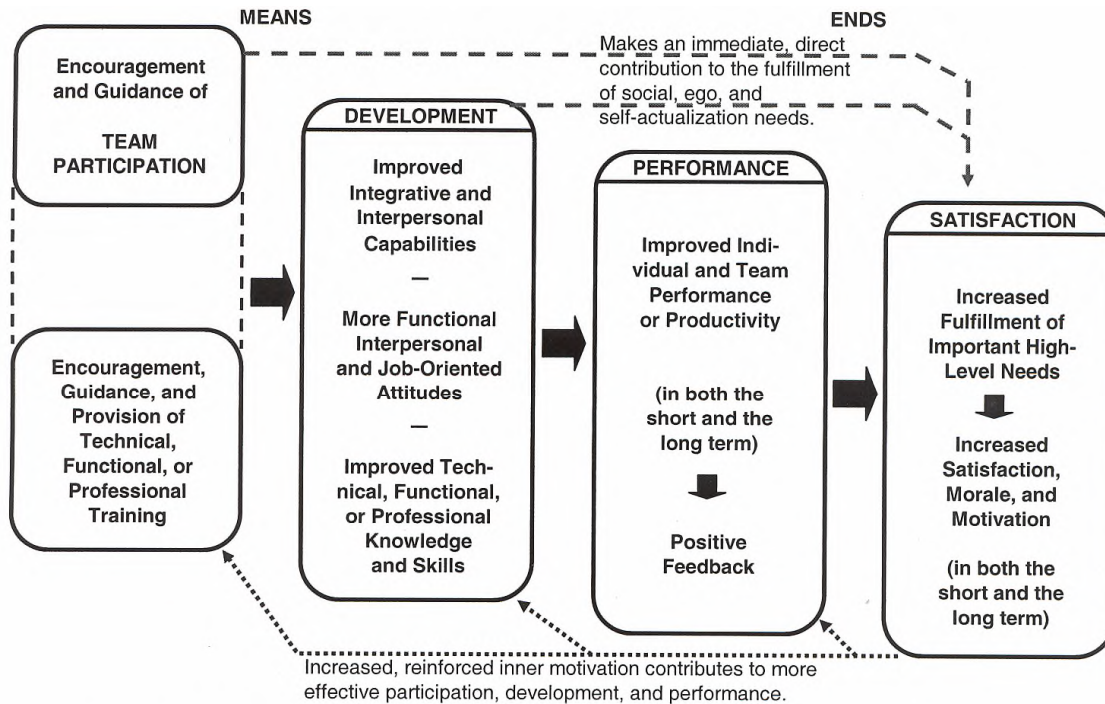


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Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid® model (Figure 2) indicates the five most distinctive combinations (intersections) of one's "concern for productivity" and "concern for people." The "9,1" position is associated with a high concern for productivity but a low concern for people—a "hard,"

"Theory X" (McGregor), authoritarian, or "directive and controlling" style. The "1,9" position is associated with a low concern for productivity but a high concern for people—the "soft," "permissive," or "country club" style. "5,5" is between the hard and soft styles and represents a

Figure 5: Adaptation of Raymond Miles' Human Resources Approach (Model)



This adapted version of Miles' original model is used here by permission.

“medium productivity, medium people” combination—also called the “middle-of-the-road” or “consultive” or style. The “1,1” position represents a low concern for productivity coupled with a low concern for people—the “non-managerial” style. Blake and Mouton believed that the “9,9” position, or high in both concerns, represents the ideal or “one best style.” The “9,9” is equated with McGregor’s Theory Y style. It is what we call the “high task, high people” or “HT,HP” style. (The other seventy-six combinations include, for example, “3,8,” “7,2,” and “6,5.”)

Our version, **Figure 3**, also shows the range of styles identified by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) on the diagonal line between 1,9 and 9,1. The five most distinctive styles are described in **Table 2** on pages 4-5. If one defines a managerial or leadership style as the way an individual behaves toward and interacts with his or her subordinates in the process of integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with the organization through the performance of integrative functions, the five distinctive styles can also be illustrated as in **Figure 4**.

Put in a related way, HT,HP is a matter of using participative, developmental practices to enable personnel to take part in making decisions affecting their jobs and work lives—that is, to help make their jobs “their own babies.” Not their bosses’ babies (jobs). Not their organizations’ babies (jobs). Their own babies. And everyone knows how much more our own babies mean to us than other people’s.

The “high task, high people” style does not just balance productivity and people. It *integrates* a high emphasis on productivity (task accomplishment) and a high emphasis on people in an *interactive* manner. An adaptation of the Human Resources model by Raymond Miles (1975), **Figure 5**, provides additional rationale. The following explains what the model illustrates:

We can describe Miles’ “human resources approach” simply in terms of means and ends: Participation and development are the means, and maximized individual and team performance and satisfaction are the ends.

The model enables us to recognize two extremely important phenomena: *Task-related results can also be people-related results—and people-related results can also be task-related results. Likewise, task-oriented behavior can also be people-oriented behavior—and people-oriented behavior can also be task-oriented behavior.* Here is why:

While participation, development, performance, and satisfaction could each be considered essentially either task-oriented or people-oriented, each can also be people-oriented or task-oriented and produce indirect if not direct people-related or task-related results. Examples: The expectation of high performance is normally considered task-oriented. But because exceptional performance contributes directly to an individual's sense of accomplishment and self-worth, and, thus, to his or her on-the-job fulfillment and satisfaction, it produces people-related results in addition to task-related results. Therefore, an emphasis on high performance can be considered people-oriented as well as task-oriented. Similarly, development can be considered essentially people-oriented, since development helps to fulfill ego and self-actualization needs/motives (Maslow, 1943). But because development also contributes to better individual and team performance, it produces task-related results as well as people-related results. Thus, emphasis on development can be considered task-oriented as well as people-oriented.

So, in one way or another, people's performance, development, and even satisfaction can *all* be considered task-related results. And in one way or another, their satisfaction, development, and even performance can *all* be considered people-related results. Therefore, task-related results can also be people-related results, and people-related results can also be task-related results. Thus, *task-oriented behavior can also be people-oriented behavior; and people-oriented behavior can also be task-oriented behavior.*

In addition, the spirit and intent of McGregor's Theory Y style and similar "high task, high people" styles is *to emphasize productivity for the sake of people as well as for the sake of productivity, and to emphasize people for the sake of productivity as well as for the sake of people.* HT,HP is the style that enables a manager to *integrate tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization* most effectively in these respects.

Several conclusions seem obvious:

1. It is both desirable and possible to behave in a highly task-oriented manner *and* a highly people-oriented manner at the same time. One need not make trade-offs between the two—especially if one behaves in an

HT,HP manner within the context of Miles' human resources approach to management.

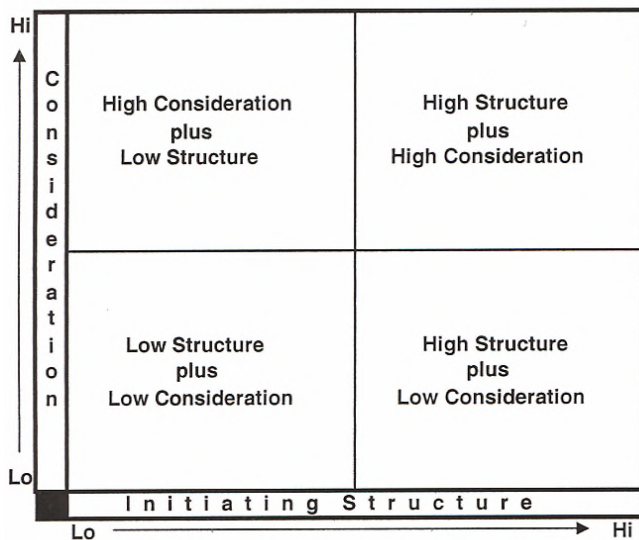
2. A major reason for HT,HP's greater effectiveness is that its participative, developmental practices do more than any other style to fulfill and "leverage" subordinates' ego and self-actualization needs, thereby helping to maximize their job satisfaction, motivation, morale, and performance.

The above points underlie this assertion: *If it is desirable and also possible to behave in a manner that is both highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented at the same time, then why not do so?*

Not only does "one best style" make sense conceptually, but there is also corroborating evidence. Various authorities' studies confirm the superiority of HT,HP (or whatever they called their similar styles). For example, Blake and Mouton (1982,) reported the following: Research at the University of Michigan's Institute of Social Research involved the System 1-2-3-4 model of Likert (1967). System 4 is based on *interdependent task- and people-oriented behavior*, and, therefore, approximates the "9,9" style. The research data indicated that "the closer a work group's leadership style is to System 4, the higher the productivity" (p. 32). Likert's conclusion was verified in many studies involving more than 20,000 managers and 200,000 employees. It should be pointed out that Likert's research approach involved moving System 4 managers from high-producing units to low-producing units and evaluating productivity on a before-and-after basis. System 4 managers significantly improved productivity in units that previously had non-System 4 managers. Blake and Mouton also cited corroborating research findings of Chris Argyris (1964) and Jay Hall (1986, 1988).

It should be unnecessary to recount the legion of studies and articles that have trumpeted the successes achieved by organizations that have adopted team management, quality circles, and similar participative management approaches. The authors have conducted in-house, top-down management training and organization development (OD) programs that participants have praised because of the significant changes and benefits derived from their organizations' adoption of "high task, high people" attitudes, practices, and behavior. Nevertheless, while many if not most managers, supervisors, and their subordinates would agree that HT,HP is the best all around, many managers and supervisors are unable to utilize that style for various reasons. Two often-cited reasons are the complexity of socio-technical systems and the different and constantly changing circumstances with which managers must deal. We address those issues shortly.

Figure 6: Ohio State Model (used by permission)



The Basics of Situationalism

Formerly called the “Life Cycle Theory of Leadership,” the Situational Leadership model was developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1969, 1982) based on the Ohio State model, which is shown in **Figure 6**. The Ohio State model identifies four styles in terms of combinations of levels of two behavioral dimensions: “consideration” and “initiating structure.” However, in their Situational Leadership model, Hersey and Blanchard replace “consideration” with “relationship behavior” and replace “initiating structure” with “task behavior.” Their model prescribes which combinations to use under particular circumstances.

Two fundamental concepts are embodied in the situational model:

First, according to Hersey and Blanchard, there are two basic behavioral components (rather than trait or attitudinal components) of various managerial or leadership styles:

- a. (Level of) *Task Behavior* (directive behavior)—the extent to which an individual organizes and defines subordinates' roles by outlining what to do, when, where, and how; and the extent to which the manager defines organizational structure, formalizes channels of communication, and specifies procedures for accomplishing tasks.

- b. (Level of) *Relationship Behavior* (supportive behavior)—the extent to which an individual engages in personal relationships with subordinates; the amount of socio-emotional support and “psychological strokes” an individual provides to subordinates; and the extent to which an individual engages in interpersonal communications and facilitating behavior patterns.

Second, at least according to Hersey and Blanchard, there is no single, all-purpose, superior managerial or leadership style. Successful managers or leaders are those who can behave in a variety of ways, and are therefore able to adapt their behavior so that it deals appropriately with situational factors—especially a subordinate’s maturity with respect to performing a specific task.

The situational model identifies four styles:

- The *telling style* is the *high task behavior plus low relationship behavior* combination in the bottom right quadrant. It is for those who are low in maturity with respect to a given task and need direction.
- The *selling style* is the *high task behavior plus low relationship behavior* combination in the upper right quadrant. This one is for those who are a bit higher in maturity but still need some coaching.
- The *participating style* is the *low task behavior plus high relationship behavior* position in the top left quadrant (It should not to be confused with Blake and Mouton’s “9,9” or our *high task, high people style*). This style is for those with moderate to high maturity who do not yet have the necessary self-confidence and enthusiasm.
- The *delegating style* is the *low task plus low relationship* quadrant at the bottom left. It is for subordinates who are high in maturity and have both the ability and motivation to be self-managing.

As a subordinate matures with respect to a specific task, the appropriate style shifts from *telling* (bottom right quadrant), then up to *selling* (top right quadrant), then over to *participating* (top left quadrant), and then down to *delegating* (bottom left quadrant).

Situationalism is described in more detail below—but mostly in terms of what we consider to be its flaws and limitations when compared with “high task, high people.”

Table 3: Checklist of Socio-Technical Factors That Influence Organizational Behavior

TASK FACTORS

Job descriptions

Objectives
 Activities
 Technical or functional
 Managerial / supervisory
 Analyzing, goal setting
 Planning, budgeting
 Problem Solving
 Decision making,
 Organizing, staffing
 Directing, coordinating
 Reporting, evaluating
 Equipment or tools
 Material inputs and outputs
 Information inputs and outputs

Work load - work flow

Communication facilities

Working conditions

Task interrelationships

Technology

Job input requirements

General or basic abilities
 Specialized skills
 Knowledge and experience
 Other behavior patterns

General natures

(Mechanistic or Organic)
 Complexity
 Variability
 Clarity of definition
 Amount of change
 Certainty of information
 Time to outputs or results
 Tangibility and measurability
 (of outputs or results)

ENVIRONMENTAL INPUTS

Business-oriented factors

Customers; suppliers
 Competitors
 Industry associations
 Worker unions

Institutions

Government agencies
 Religions
 Capital markets
 International institutions

People-oriented factors

Families; peers
 General public, community
 Social norms and customs
 Religious affiliations
 Social & recreational groups
 Interest groups

Other

Technology; economy
 Transportation facilities
 Nature, weather, energy
 Goods and services

INDIVIDUALS' CHARACTERISTICS

Motivators

Basic needs or drives

Physiological, safety
 Social, self-Image
 Self-actualization

Values

Intellectual, economic
 Social, political
 Aesthetic, religious
 Practicality, achievement
 Variety, goal-orientedness
 Orderliness, decisiveness
 Support, conformity
 Recognition, independence
 Benevolence, leadership

Interests (occupational)

Mechanical, outdoor
 Computational, scientific
 Clerical, persuasive
 Artistic, musical, literary
 Social service

Goals and expectations

Capabilities

Abilities

Academic intelligence
 Vocabulary, social Insight
 Mechanical visualization
 Mechanical intelligence
 Clerical speed & accuracy
 Physical coordination
 Reading, communication

Specialized (job) skills

Knowledge & experience

Physical traits

Personality traits

Self-confidence
 Dominance, sociability
 Social conscientiousness
 Adaptability, maturity
 Original thinking, vigor
 Responsibility, self-control
 Emotional stability

SOCIAL VARIABLES

Group formation

People's needs & drives
 Tasks' interdependence
 Proximity & work flow
 Frequency of interactions
 Members' characteristics
 Valued or shared traits

Intra-group relationships

Group norms & customs
 Members' status & roles

Group maintenance

Enforcing sanctions
 Conflict resolution
 Image reinforcement
 Membership norms

Sources/frequency of conflict
 Interaction w/ other groups
 Influence on organization

ORGANIZATIONAL INPUTS

History and traditions

Key elements of success

Objectives and strategies

Resources

Structures

Key integrative points
 Key decision-making points
 Formal structure
 Units or departments
 Vertical relationships
 Horizontal relationships
 Levels and spans of control
 Informal structure

Policies, rules, procedures

Formal
 Informal

Inter-unit interactions

Sources of conflicts

Contacts with environment

Systems

Information systems
 Control systems

Practices

Performance evaluation
 Wages, salaries, benefits
 Hiring, selection, promotion
 Training and development

Natures of tasks

Natures of people

Managerial or leadership styles

and practices

Authority base
 (position vs. expertise)
 Formality to subordinates
 Nature of communications
 Advice and information
 Instructions and decisions
 Degree of control
 Specificity of subordinates'
 responsibilities & authority
 Conflict resolution
 Subordinates' participation:
 Goal setting & planning
 Problem solving
 Decision making
 Development of methods,
 procedures, policies
 Assumptions/facts about
 subordinates
 Task orientation
 People orientation
**General nature of organiza-
 tion** (mechanistic to organic)

Reservations About Situationalism Via Comparisons with HT,HP

The following are Blake and Mouton's and many of our own reservations concerning situationalism.

Very Weak Foundation (Misleading Instrument) for Validating Situationalism's Basic Premise

Hersey and Blanchard's assertion that no "one best style" exists is largely based on results obtained using their "LEAD Instrument" (1973), which was formerly called "LASI" (1972). This instrument was designed to determine individuals' primary and back-up leadership styles. It contained descriptions of twelve leadership situations, each followed by four alternative responses. Each of the four possible responses was essentially a version of each of their four different styles. Those filling in the instrument were to choose which of the four styles best fit a particular situation. Hersey and Blanchard claimed that one of their four styles was chosen as most appropriate for each of the twelve situations—but not for all of them. Thus, they concluded that there was no "one best style" that fitted all situations.

The claims made by Hersey and Blanchard based on the LEAD Instrument have been challenged by Blake and Mouton (1982a). The points the latter raised do serious if not crippling damage to Hersey and Blanchard's case and severely undermine the credibility of situationalism.

A. Blake and Mouton found a glaring omission in the LEAD Instrument. In their opinion, none of the four alternatives for any of the twelve situations was a "9,9" alternative. To put the LEAD Instrument to the test, they (1) formulated a "9,9" alternative for each situation and added it to the instrument (giving respondents five style choices), and then (2) administered the modified instrument to one hundred highly experienced managers from forty-one different institutions, companies, and agencies.

According to Blake and Mouton, the "9,9" alternatives were "consistently chosen" as being the most effective for dealing with each of the twelve leadership situations—regardless of the level of subordinates' maturity involved.

"The One Best Style emerged as superior to the situational alternatives with a highly significant degree of confidence, with all X^2 s significantly far beyond the .001 percent level of confidence" (p. 40).

Blake and Mouton repeated the same experiment with thirty-six MDs and PhDs in the mental health profession, and also with thirty-eight MDs and PhDs who were academic administrators. They stated that these findings were comparable to those obtained in the first experiment.

As a result of these experiments, Blake and Mouton made the following observation: "*These data lead to the conclusion that no justifiable basis exists for rejecting the One Best Style when the instrument used to evaluate leadership eliminates it from consideration*" (p. 40).

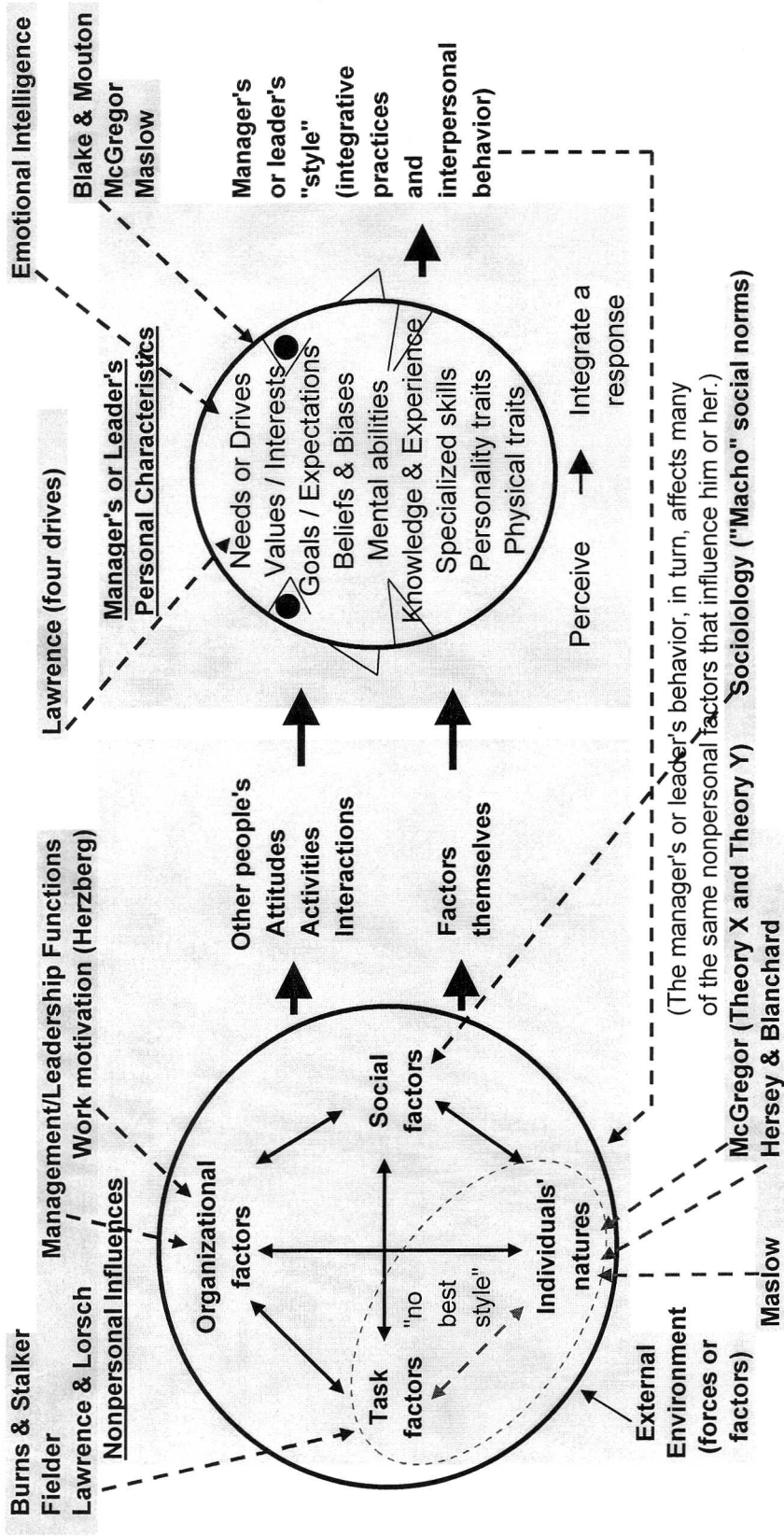
B. Blake and Mouton offer a reason for the omission of "9,9" alternatives from the LEAD Instrument. They point out that "task behavior" and "relationship behavior" are behaviorally and operationally independent of each other, and, therefore, are simply added together in the situational model. (The same applied to the Ohio State model.) In their Managerial Grid®, however, the levels of "concern for productivity" and "concern for people" are *interdependent and interactive*—not simply added together. (The same applies to task- and people-orientedness on our Managerial Target®, which we describe shortly.) Thus, according to Blake and Mouton (1982a), *using the situational leadership model makes it impossible to describe a "9,9" orientation by adding a given level of "task behavior" to a given level of "relationship behavior"* (p. 42). (In Blake and Mouton's view, a "9,9" in situationalism would be more or less equivalent to a paternalistic or "soft X" style.)

C. Blake and Mouton substantiate the greater accuracy and validity of instruments involving interactive variables by citing the research findings of Likert (1967) and others cited on page 8.

Questionable Use of an Earlier Four-Style Model As the Basis for Designing the Situational Model (and the Instrument for Validating It)

As mentioned above, Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model was essentially based on the four-style Ohio State model, which simply described four distinct styles. Essentially only a *descriptive* model, it was *not* also an *explanatory* model that outlined why different managers or leaders might behave in various ways based on their personal characteristics—such as their levels of concerns for productivity and people or their drives, values, personality traits, attitudes, and goals. Neither was it a particularly *prescriptive* model, because it did not suggest when and/or how to use any particular style.

Figure 7: Terms in Which Managerial and Leadership Behavior Have Been Discussed



It seems to us that, because Hersey and Blanchard began with a four-style model and redesigned it by changing the axis labels, they would necessarily end up with a four-style model. As discussed below, they also ended up with a four-style model largely because of the limited “LEAD” instrument they used to validate “no one best style.”

Nevertheless, they do deserve credit for doing something that the one-best-style proponents had not done: they dealt much more explicitly with how to go about developing subordinates. They converted the earlier Ohio State model into a highly developed *prescriptive* model. (But as we will discuss shortly, theirs is not also an *explanatory* model such as ours is.)

Even so, because we are advocates of “one best style” (using a five-style system as did Blake and Mouton and a number of others), we disagree with many aspects of their “system.”

We believe that a limited (narrowly-focused) or inadequate analysis of managerial, leadership, and organizational behavior concepts and of other, interrelated motivation and behavior concepts (such as trait theories and transaction analysis concepts) may have largely contributed to the choice of a framework having only four styles.

Managerial and leadership behavior—especially within the context of the many socio-technical factors affecting behavior in organizations—is phenomenally complex. **Figure 7** is a diagram of the Socio-Technical Systems model—a “meta-systems” model—developed by Eric Trist (1960). (**Table 3** on page 10 is a one-page list condensed from our more detailed seventy-four-page list of those factors.) Behavior in a unit or a whole organization is the *net effect* of many if not most of those variables either directly or indirectly influencing many if not most of the others. The number of cause-effect interrelationships is absolutely mind-boggling.

Figure 7 shows that theorists have described and explained managerial and leadership behavior in many different terms and from a variety of angles. Fiedler, Burns and Stalker, and Lawrence and Lorsch discussed managerial behavior in terms of the mechanistic and organic natures of personnel’s tasks. Maslow, McGregor, and Hersey and Blanchard discussed managerial and leadership behavior in terms of the (perceived) personal natures of subordinates. Sociologists discuss the behavior of leaders and followers largely in terms of culture and social dynamics. Herzberg discussed the attitudes and behavior of subordinates (workers) in terms of causal organizational (non-personal) hygiene and motivator factors. Blake and Mouton explained superiors’ behavior in terms of their levels of concerns for productivity and people. In an early major book, the author did the following: (1) described

different managerial and leadership styles in terms of associated attitudes and behavior patterns; (2) partly explained those attitudes and behavior patterns in terms of non-personal socio-technical influences; (3) further explained the attitudes and behavior patterns in terms of personal characteristics, and finally (4) prescribed how to more effectively and permanently improve managers’ and leaders’ behavior by improving the influences of a number of the most important personal and non-personal factors affecting them.

We cannot help believe that if Hersey and Blanchard had also considered the personal characteristics of managers and leaders and the influences of many socio-technical variables on the behavior of superiors and subordinates—as well as the personal characteristics (maturity levels) of subordinates—they might have arrived at a five-style model instead.

Questionable Evidence in Support of Situationalism’s Efficacy

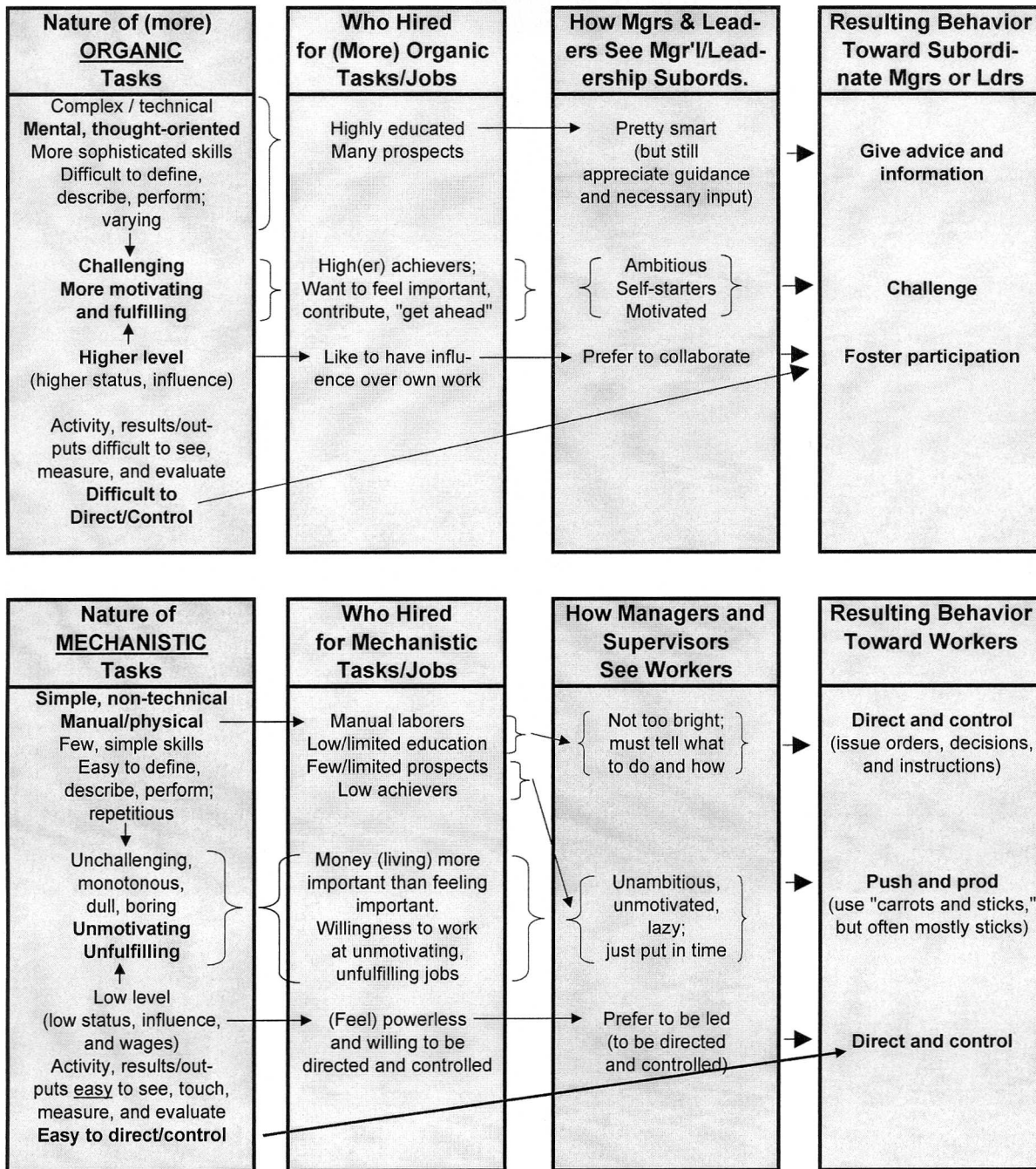
In addition to the results of their LEAD instrument, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) point to the research findings of Korman (1966) and Fiedler (1963, 1967) as “clear evidence” that there is no single all-purpose leadership style. They propose, therefore, that effective leaders must adapt their behavior to deal with the situation. To them, the situation is a function of the leader, the subordinates, and other situational variables in the environment

We disagree. In our opinion, the evidence is *not* clear and their proposition has *not* been proven. The following are the reasons for our position (in addition to the research findings cited on page 8). These reasons largely revolve around the mechanistic or organic characteristics (natures) of the tasks that make up people’s jobs. These are basic definitions for those who may be unfamiliar with the terminology:

Mechanistic tasks are essentially worker-level tasks. They are simple (manual or physical), routine or repetitious, clearly and easily definable (in terms of procedures and results), and unchanging. They use highly certain information, involve activities that can be observed, have immediate outputs or results that are tangible and easy to measure and evaluate, and are the easiest to direct and control.

Organic tasks are higher-level, more complex tasks. They are more thought-oriented, varying, and ambiguous (in terms of procedures and results). They experience frequent or unexpected change, use uncertain information, and have delayed results or effects that are intangible and often very difficult to measure and evaluate).

Figure 8: How Natures of Tasks (and People) Can Influence Managerial/Leadership Styles



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Some Possible Reasons:

Lower economic strata
Parents rather uneducated
Parents not value education

Disdain for . . .
more educated people
more economically
successful people

Some Possible Reasons:

Upper middle to upper strata
Parents educated
Parents value education
Parents push achievement

Look down on the less educated
Look down on lower economic strata
Cannot identify with workers
Worked to learn in school while
worker classmates "fooled around"

In, for example, a manufacturing or military organization, tasks at the very bottom are generally the most mechanistic, tasks at the top are generally more organic, and the supervisory and middle-level jobs get less mechanistic and more organic the higher one goes.

These are our reservations concerning the evidence offered in support of situationalism:

First: In *Next-Generation Management Development*, we examined the research findings of Burns and Stalker (1961), Fiedler (1967), and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967). In general, their research indicated that a directive and controlling, Theory X style seems to be most effective where tasks are mechanistic. In discussing these findings, we raised several reservations, to which we will add another.

A. In our opinion, these researchers' conclusions largely stem from using traditional criteria for measuring the short-term efficiency of operations to evaluate Theory X and Theory Y styles in mechanistic settings. If both operational and humanistic criteria involving task- and people-related results in the long term as well as the short term had been used, some researchers may very well have concluded that a more HT,HP style (such as the Theory Y or team style) can be more effective over time than the X style in mechanistic situations. (See Likert on page 8.)

B. It appears to us that *the (early) contingency theorists were dealing with mechanistic situations as though they had to remain mechanistic*. But the opposite, we think, is actually the case. It has been amply demonstrated that *the systemic use of job-enriching, participative, developmental practices greatly improves situational variables* such as (a) the natures of tasks (making them less mechanistic and more organic through job redesign and participative practices), (b) personnel's attitudes, skills, and interactions, and (c) integrative processes. In effect, participative, job-enriching, developmental practices change the circumstances that might otherwise seem to warrant the use of a more Theory X style. This has been substantiated by results obtained through the implementation of Quality Circles and other participative approaches (such as Likert's System 4) where tasks are mechanistic. These results cast considerable doubt on the assertion that a situational approach is more effective. In our view, therefore, using the Theory X (or situational telling) style in mechanistic situations is more a matter of (inadequately developed supervisors) using the most expedient and easily applied style than using the most dynamic, effective style.

What the research really reflects, we think, is the way things are—not the way things should and can be. Various socio-technical/cultural phenomena cause many managers and leaders to use the telling, Theory X, “9,1,” authoritarian, or “high task, low people” (HT,LP) style more effectively than the Theory Y, “9,9,” participative, or “high task, high people” (HT,HP) style. These factors can include: the mechanistic (unmotivating) tasks of workers (which can cause supervisors to view them as unmotivated and not too smart); the authoritarian styles of bosses and colleagues (which reinforce the associated attitudes and behavior in others); the mechanistic (highly structured) nature of the organization (which affects bosses' and colleagues' attitudes and behavior); and masculine social norms (which foster and reinforce macho, authoritarian attitudes and behavior). The next section explores these phenomena further.

Issues Regarding Choice of Style Based on the Reported Effectiveness of Styles at Different Organizational Levels

Natures of Tasks At Different Levels, and the Natures of People Who Are Generally Hired to Perform Them

Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1982) have reported that certain styles (or combinations thereof) seem to work best at certain organizational levels. For example, they said that, in general, the high task behavior and low relationship behavior style works better toward the bottom, but low task behavior and low relationship style works better toward the top (pp. 256-257). More specifically:

- a. a combination of the telling style and a back-up selling style seems to be most effective for first-line supervisors (to use on workers, who, because their maturity is not high enough, need direction and control).
- b. a combination of the selling style and back-up telling and participating styles seems to be most effective for lower-level managers (to use on supervisors);
- c. a combination of telling, selling, participating, and delegating styles seems to be most effective for middle managers (to use on lower-level managers); and
- d. a combination of participating and delegating styles seems to be most effective for upper managers (to use on middle managers).

Let us put the above in a slightly different (but still erroneous) way: Participating and delegating styles are not effective at the worker level, (supposedly) because one does not mature in the willingness and ability to be self-directing and self-controlling—and does not gain the type of experience that warrants participation and delegation—until one has moved up the ladder into at least a (lower) middle management job. Put yet another way, maturity seems to be a function of level—and at the lowest levels are the most mechanistic tasks, and the people who perform those tasks have the lowest levels of education, thinking skills, and achievement motivation. (Thus, they get paid the least, which helps minimize per-unit production costs.)

As we discuss more fully in Chapter 9 of *Next-Generation Management Development*, and as illustrated in **Figure 8** (page 14), these phenomena are not surprising and can be explained as follows: The characteristics of very mechanistic tasks at the worker level (e.g., simple, routine, repetitious, low in status, unsatisfying, etc.) make those tasks inherently very dull, un motivating, and unfulfilling. As a result, workers can tend to behave as though they (a) are unmotivated, unambitious, and not too bright; (b) prefer to be led; and (c) need to be prodded, directed, and controlled. According to McGregor (1957, 1966), such behavior leads to supervisors' formation of Theory X assumptions and views about people (especially workers), and those views induce Theory X or authoritarian supervisory behavior toward subordinates. Thus, the characteristics of mechanistic jobs at least indirectly exert Theory X influences on supervisors' attitudes and behavior. On the other hand, more organic tasks at successively higher levels, which are inherently more interesting and fulfilling, influence higher-level managers to behave in a more consultive if not participative manner. (As we will further discuss later, we think that not being asked to do things much differently from what one is already doing constitutes a major reason why many people find situationalism so appealing.)

Again, it seems that Hersey and Blanchard are describing the way things generally are—not the way they can and should be. For example: Mechanistic tasks can be made less mechanistic and somewhat more organic through job enrichment (job redesign) and the use of participative practices.

Influences of Human Nature at All Levels

The following discussion also relates to **Figure 8**.

One of the most powerful influences on behavior in organizations is the human ego. Like a two edged sword, it is largely responsible for great works, high performance, and innovation, but it is also largely if not mostly responsible for the

interpersonal difficulties that undermine functional interpersonal interactions and effective performance in organizations.

Early in the development of organizational behavior theory, Maslow (1943) asserted that most people operate at the ego need (self-image/identity) level, having satisfactorily fulfilled physiological, safety, and social needs (at least in U.S. society). Berne (1961) took Maslow further when he identified the Parent, Child, Adult ego states involved in transaction analysis. Then Harris (1973) translated those ego states into life positions such as “I’m OK, you’re OK” (the adult, HT,HP or participative orientation), “I’m Ok, you’re not OK” (the parent or authoritarian orientation), and “You’re OK, I’m not OK” (the child or permissive orientation).

Maslow, Berne, Harris, and many others have all recognized that people need a healthy self-image or identity. We need to feel that we are “OK.” But since we have no way to determine what our potentials may be (how OK we might be or become), we have no better way to determine how OK we are than to *compare ourselves with others*. In other words, for us to be OK (in some comparative respect or “yardstick” that we choose because it is important to and/or flatters us), someone else has to be relatively less OK in that respect. For example, those who are financially well off also tend to be high in the “economic value” (the concern for economic success, money, material things, and practicality). Because they are relatively high in what is most important to them, they use their “most self-favoring yardstick” to compare themselves with others, who they see as being “not as OK as they are” if they make or have less money (etc.). Similarly, those who are higher in an organization tend to be relatively high in the political value (concern for power, authority, and influence over others). These people see those who have less power, authority, or influence as being less OK. We find that as people rise in organizations, the levels of their political and economic values tend to rise. Having some money often fuels a desire to get even more. Similarly, gaining some power often fuels a desire to get more. And power is often used to control subordinates so that they don’t “mess up” and undermine the superior’s ability to get promoted and obtain more power and money.

Not surprisingly, then, the better-educated people (with more knowledge and better thinking skills) get hired into middle and upper levels of organizations, where the pay is much better and the power or authority is greater than at lower levels. In addition, the people who have been promoted over their coworkers or colleagues tend to feel that they are more OK because they must have been seen as being more technically proficient and/or better leaders or managers. So, for several very human, ego-related reasons, they feel more OK than those at the levels below. As a result, they look

down on them—and have difficulty identifying with them, largely because of their different backgrounds. Both phenomena make it difficult for them to interact with those below them more or less as equals.

The above discussions raise several questions: Is situationalism a function of the maturity of subordinates, or is it really a function of . . .

- a. the natures of tasks at different organizational levels (and the natures of the people normally hired to perform them); and/or
- b. a function of a supervisor's or manager's characteristics, attitudes, and skills (or lack thereof); and/or
- c. being promoted into middle or higher levels in order to be considered "mature."

Also consider this: If an individual does not possess the personal characteristics, attitudes, and skills necessary to behave effectively in an HT,HP manner, will that individual simply (re)turn to the traditional "high task, low people" (authoritarian) style that requires little skill, is easier to use, and basically forces productivity out of subordinates?

It appears, therefore, that *the use of situationalism does not really change things appreciably, partly because it does not involve behaving too much differently than many managers or supervisors are already behaving* (because of the natures of tasks and/or the natures of people performing them).

In our view, applying the situational model essentially perpetuates what already tends to happen in organizations. An example: If telling and selling styles are used on workers and supervisors, those are the styles that they will learn and will be more likely to use when they are promoted. As a result, their managerial or supervisory behavior will foster supervisory or worker behavior that seems to call for direction and control. In addition, if jobs at the worker level are not enriched through participative practices and job redesign, they will tend to remain relatively mechanistic—and will continue to exert the same mechanistic influences on worker, supervisory, and managerial attitudes and behavior as before.

Other Issues Involved in Choice of Style

In contingency approaches to management and leadership, one chooses a style that "best fits" the situation. The choice of style can depend on either the natures of tasks, the natures of personnel, the nature of the organization, other socio-technical variables, or some combination of these variables.

However, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) contend that is is

nearly impossible to consider and deal with all the interacting influential variables every time a decision has to be made. Therefore, they focus on the relationship between the manager and subordinates, asserting that "if the follower decides not to follow, it really doesn't matter what the boss thinks, what the nature of the work is, how much time is involved, or what the other situational variables are" (p. 146). Given this focus, they identify the main contingent variable as being the *maturity of subordinates*. Maturity is a function of both willingness and ability to be self-directing and self-controlling with respect to a given task (p. 151, 157).

Hersey and Blanchard cite three steps for determining which of their four styles to use with an individual or group in a particular situation. First, the leader must decide what activities to influence. Second, he or she must determine the maturity level of the subject individual or group with respect to the chosen activity. Third, the leader must decide which of the four styles best fits the maturity level (p. 156).

"High task, high people" (synergism) is very different from situationalism in the following respects.

- A. In the "high task, high people" approach, one does not choose among different styles to deal with subordinates. Instead, one uses participative, developmental practices and chooses the task- and people-related inputs that will best develop subordinates and enable them to be more efficient and effective integrators of their own activities.

Also in the HT,HP or team approach, subordinates are encouraged and enabled to be co-integrators of tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, and people with people. Thus, they are provided with both task- and people-related inputs in order to increase their "maturity"—not only with respect to their technical or functional tasks, but also to their abilities to (a) participate in integrative functions, and (b) plan and coordinate their activities among themselves.

In contrast, situationalism seems to place relatively little emphasis on actively developing subordinates' maturity with respect to integrative and interpersonal skills—especially at lower levels of an organization. It also seems to place relatively little emphasis on increasing subordinates' knowledge of (maturity with respect to) other team members' tasks and problems. This indicates to us that personnel—especially those who work at lower organizational levels—are neither encouraged nor expected to participate in integrative processes. It also indicates to us that situationalism places more emphasis on boss-centered vertical integration (a "wheel structure" with the boss in the center and subordinates at the ends of the spokes) than on team-

oriented integration (“organic” or “each-to-all” network, wherein all members of the team interact with each other freely). On the other hand, HT,HP emphasizes and is aimed at improving both.

- B. In the HT,HP approaches, one does not choose among different styles to deal with only one or two variables operating within and upon organizations. One does not, for example, just deal with the relationship between the manager and subordinates. Instead, one applies the style (approach) that deals with the many socio-technical variables that affect personnel’s attitudes and behavior (e.g., natures of tasks; characteristics of personnel; structure of the unit or organization; and social norms). By focusing almost entirely on subordinates’ maturity, situationalism has less chance of influencing or improving the many other important variables that also affect personnel’s performance, satisfaction, and development. Thus, *it does not improve all that may need improving, thereby allowing many factors to continue exerting dysfunctional influences on attitudes and behavior.*

Because HT,HP approaches are aimed at dealing with and improving a whole system of socio-technical variables, they can actually be considered more “situational” than situationalism.

- C. In HT,HP approaches, one need not consider and deal with a variety of contingent factors “every time a decision has to be made.” Instead, a boss meets with (immediate) subordinates at some initial point in time to formulate (a) plans for dealing with or improving socio-technical factors as a team, and (b) guidelines regarding which individual or group should be involved in making which day-to-day integrative decisions. Thereafter, they follow the plans and guidelines that they established participatively, but revise them when appropriate.

A rhetorical question: Since it is both desirable and possible to behave in a “high task,high people” manner rather than choosing styles for many tasks, *wouldn’t it just be so much simpler and easier for everyone in an organization to always be aiming at behaving in an HT,HP manner?*

Inconsistency of Behavior

We associate several problems with changing from one style to another in order to deal with situational variables (such as subordinates’ maturity with respect to many specific tasks).

- A. When reading the descriptions of Hersey and Blanchard’s four styles, one cannot help noticing that there are less than fully effective if not somewhat dysfunctional behavior patterns associated with each. (None are actually “high task, high people” styles.) Thus, adopting any one of them either partially or for a short period of time means adopting at least some integrative practices and interpersonal behavior patterns that will not maximize task- and/or people-related results.
- B. Because Hersey and Blanchard (1982) recommend that different styles may be appropriate for different tasks (p. 151), changing styles to fit different or changing circumstances can easily confuse subordinates. For example, say that a manager has four subordinates whose jobs each consist of four different tasks. Let us also say that the four individuals’ maturity levels with respect to their four tasks are not the same. This means that the manager can (a) apply four different styles to subordinate A for that subordinate’s four different tasks; (b) apply four different styles to subordinate B for that subordinate’s four different tasks; and so on. It also means that the manager can be using (a) different styles with different subordinates for the same tasks, and (b) the same styles with different subordinates for different tasks. And he or she might be changing styles almost from minute to minute. Not only are subordinates subjected to different styles, but they can see others being subjected to the same styles under different circumstances.

In large organizations having many personnel and many tasks, personnel will constantly be witnessing and subjected to inconsistent supervisory behavior. This can create confusion and does not set a consistent example for subordinates to follow, imitate, and learn. In turn, these phenomena can easily create (a) considerable apprehension about what to expect next, and (b) instabilities in working relationships, which interfere with productivity.

- C. We and others have found that managers and leaders can themselves become somewhat confused and frustrated when, in attempting to adapt their behavior to different or changing circumstances, they think in terms of changing from one style to another. This has been especially true in situations where some of their subordinates’ jobs are relatively mechanistic and others’ are relatively organic. In such situations, managers and leaders are constantly compelled to judge which behavior patterns associated with which styles best fit which subordinates under which circumstances. Because the choices are not always clear and often make such judgments difficult, and because most

managers and leaders usually make such judgments in response to circumstances that have already occurred (and are therefore inclined to make them ‘on the fly’), their confusion and frustration can often be responsible for errors in judgment that result in dysfunctional responses.

Very Limited Ability of Managers and Leaders to Change Styles Readily

As fully explained in Chapters 9 and 10 of *Next-Generation Management Development*, there are many influences on managers and leaders that (a) can affect their motivation, attitudes, and behavior, (b) cannot necessarily be altered easily, and (c) can even override attempts to change behavior (styles). Chapter 9 discusses non-personal influences such as the natures of subordinates’ tasks, bosses’ styles, colleagues’ styles, the nature of the organization, social norms, and outside influences. Chapter 10 uses our Managerial Target® (Figure 9 on page 20) to explain how different levels of four groups of traits can result in very strong tendencies to use different managerial or leadership styles.

While Hersey and Blanchard (1982) acknowledge that high concerns for both productivity and people and Theory Y attitudes about people are essential for effective management (p. 102), they dismiss the importance of personal characteristics. They contend that years of research have failed to show any relationships between traits and leadership effectiveness (p. 83). Thus, in their situational model, they focus on actual behavior rather than on associated traits and attitudes.

We could not disagree more. When people are not really thinking about what they are doing (which is most of the time), they tend not to behave as they may have learned. Instead, their personal characteristics—especially the values and personality traits that have become very ingrained over time (but also characteristics such as attitudes and personal goals)—mold their behavior, overriding what they may have learned about choosing and using various styles. Therefore, particularly in the short term, it can be very difficult if not virtually impossible for most individuals to alter their behavior successfully from one style to another.

Over more than forty years, we have developed the only model that successfully relates levels of *groups of traits* to an individual manager’s or leader’s tendency to use a some particular managerial or leadership style—most of the time and in the absence of overriding non-personal (task-related, organizational, social, and outside) influences.

We developed The Managerial Target® because we dis-

agreed with one aspect of Blake and Mouton’s two-dimensional (two concerns) model. We believed, for example, that someone might be high in their concern for people, but if they did not also have the necessary (levels of) people-related capabilities or competencies, they would not actually be able to behave in a “high people” manner. The same can be said for “high productivity” behavior. It takes both the motivation and the abilities to behave in a “high task” and/or “high people” manner. Capabilities are similar to “potential energy.” It takes motivation to convert the potential energy into kinetic energy (actual motion).

On the Target model, we use the term “orientedness” (instead of “concerns” or other possible terms) because it encompasses (a) actual behavior, (b) underlying motive/attitudinal traits, (c) underlying capabilities or competencies, and (d) associated attitudes. Equally important, the Target directly relates (groups of) capabilities and motive/attitudinal traits to associated attitudes and to actual behavior.

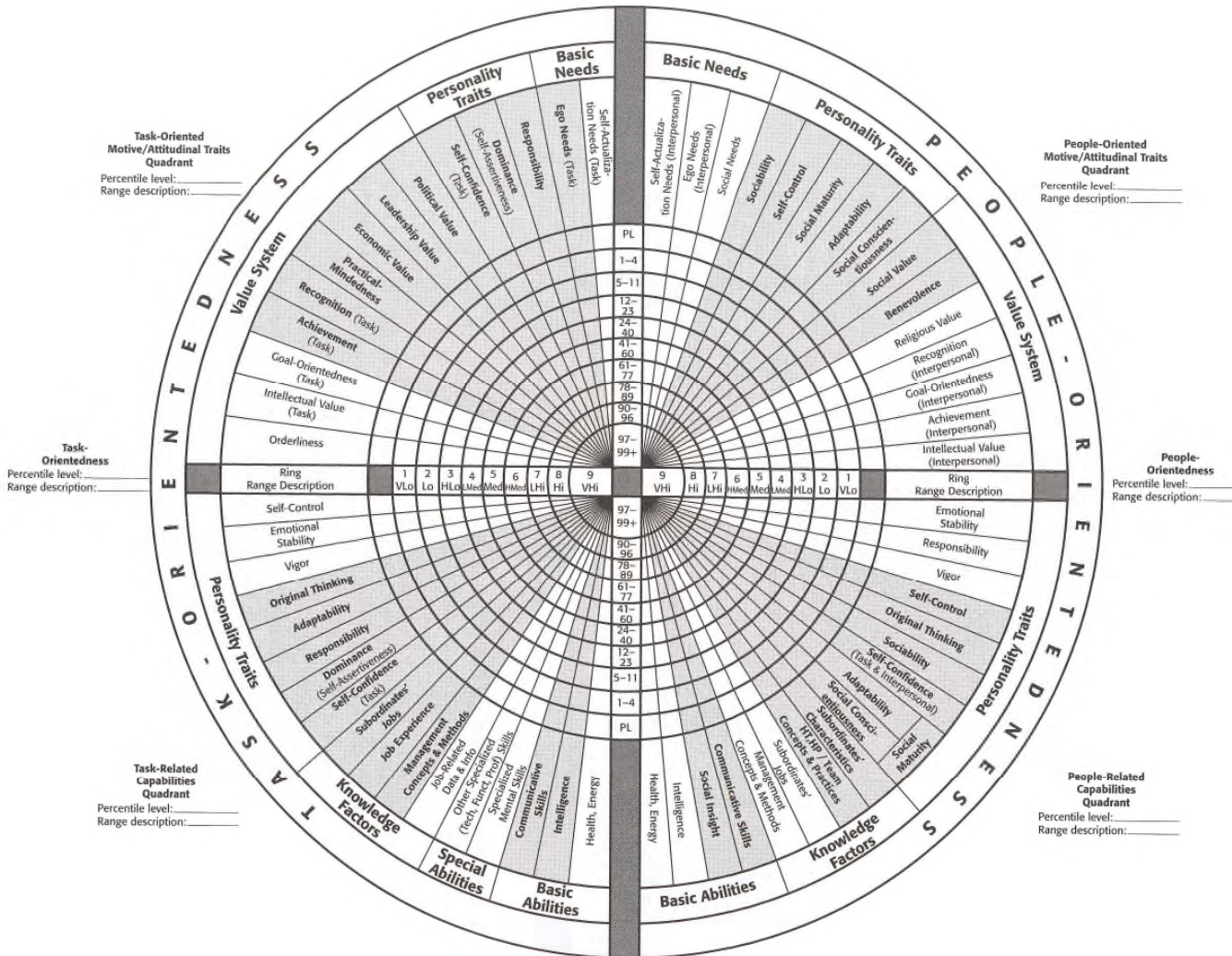
[We should point out several possible reasons why the researchers mentioned by Hersey and Blanchard were unable to find relationships between personal traits and managerial or leadership effectiveness. First, they were probably looking for relationships with single traits rather than groups of (task- and people-related) traits. Second, because of the number of personal and non-personal socio-technical variables and the mind-boggling complexity of interactions among them, they were probably not able to filter their data so as to account for the behavioral influences of non-personal variables, many of which can override behavioral tendencies attributable to personal traits.]

These are the four groups and some of their most important associated traits. (Back in 1976, our managerial and leadership style model was the first to be four-dimensional rather than two-dimensional, and also the first to use a circular rather than grid framework.)

Task-oriented motive/attitudinal traits in the top left quadrant: rather selfish traits such as the economic value [concern for (one’s own) economic success, money, material things, and practicality] and the political value [concern for (one’s own) power, authority, and influence over others]. [Allport, Vernon, Lindzey (1960).]

Task-related capabilities (competencies) in the bottom left quadrant include: technical, functional, or professional knowledge; knowledge of management concepts, methods, and practices; and managerial and interpersonal skills.

Figure 9: The Managerial Target®



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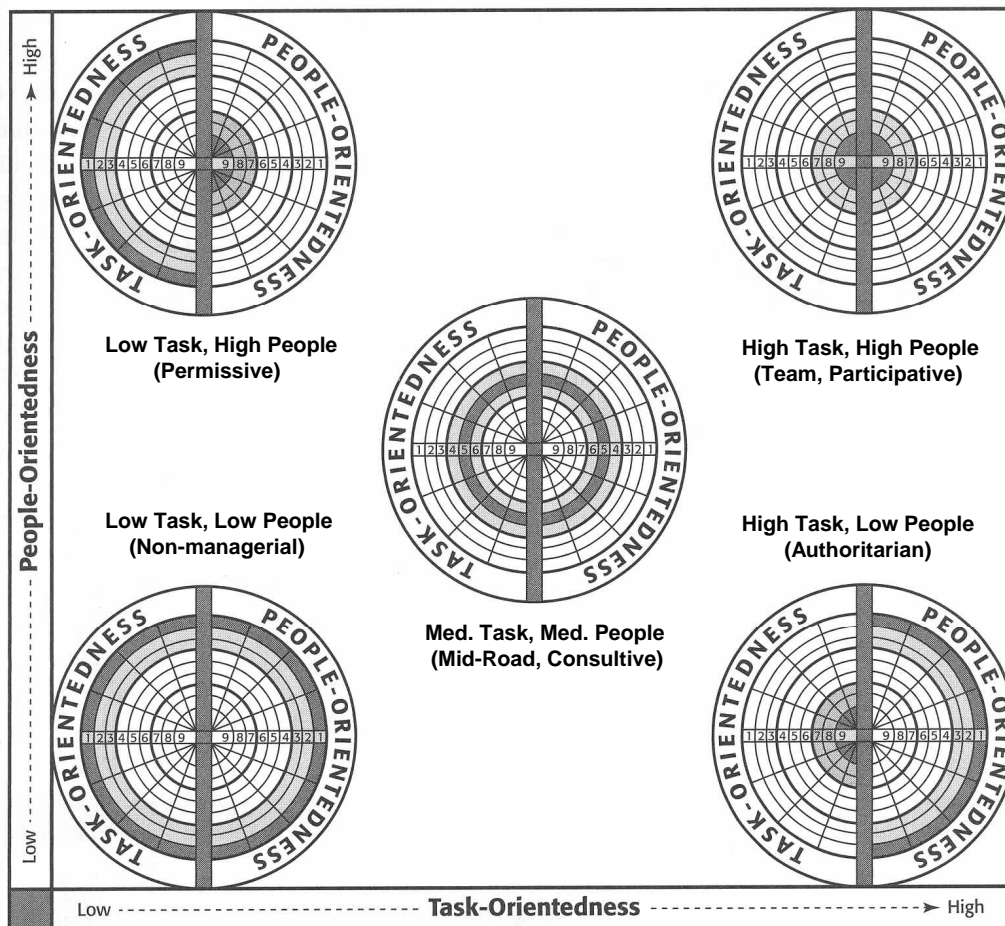
Weighted averages of the percentile levels of traits in each of the two quadrants above can themselves be weighted and averaged to calculate one's overall level of "task-orientedness."

People-oriented motive/attitudinal traits in the top right quadrant: more selfless traits such as the social or altruistic value (love of and concern for others) [Allport, Vernon, Lindzey (1960)], the benevolence value [Gordon, 1960], and

the social maturity, conscientiousness, and self-control personality traits [in instruments by Gordon (1963, 2005), Gough (1996), and others].

People-related capabilities (competencies) in the bottom right quadrant include: knowledge of HT,HP concepts, practices, and interpersonal behavior patterns; interpersonal awareness and sensitivity; and communication (sending and receiving) skills.

Figure 10: Locations of Distinctive Managerial Target® Styles on a Grid Framework



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Weighted averages of the percentile levels of traits in each of these two quadrants can themselves be weighted and averaged to calculate one's overall level of "people-orientedness."

[Motive/attitudinal traits quadrants are weighted twice as heavily as the capabilities quadrants when calculating overall levels of task- and people-orientedness.]

Our psychological testing has indicated the following. In general . . .

- individuals who are high in task-orientedness but low in people-orientedness (HT,LP) tend to be authoritarians;
- individuals who are low in task-orientedness but high in people-orientedness (LT,HP) tend to be permissive;
- individuals who are medium in task-orientedness and medium in people-orientedness (MT,MP) tend to be more middle-of-the-road or consultive;
- individuals who are relatively high in both task-orientedness and people-orientedness (HT,HP) are the most inclined to behave in a team, participative, developmental manner.

Figure 10 (page 21) shows where different combinations of levels of task- and people-orientedness (such as the HT, HP style) would be positioned on a grid framework. The “bulls-eye” or HT,HP style—at which we recommend that managers and leaders always aim—is at the top right corner.

The Managerial Target® explains authoritarian (HT,LP), permissive (LT,HP), and mid-road (MT,MP) tendencies very well. However, very few people can be HT,HP by nature, especially in terms of their task- and people-oriented motive/attitudinal traits. The reason: there are negative or reverse correlations between both of the more selfish task-oriented m/a traits (the economic and political values) and the more selfless people-oriented social value. When either the political or economic value is high, the social value tends to be relatively low. And vice versa. In other words, one cannot be high in the economic, political, and social values all at the same time.

So, for a person to behave in an HT,HP manner, he or she must have a “balance” between the task-oriented (selfish) and people-oriented (selfless) motive/attitudinal traits—a balance that comes from a decent upbringing (successful socialization process). Then he or she must develop high levels of both task- and people-related capabilities—especially the knowledge of and ability to apply HT,HP concepts and practices.

Although it is extremely difficult, particularly in the short term, for most individuals to alter their behavior successfully from one style to another, those who are “medium task, medium people” by nature will be able to make slight changes over time. However, those who are “high task, low people” (“9,1”, authoritarian, or Theory X) or “low task, high people” (“1,9” or permissive) by nature will tend to make much smaller changes, much less easily, and over a longer time.

Given the discussion above, we advocate integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization within a consistent “high task, high people,” participative, developmental context.

We would like to add here what many have observed: that leaders need to become better managers, and managers need to become better leaders. We believe that *really good* managers and leaders are nearly the same under the skin. They both perform all the integrative functions (to varying extents), and they all possess many if not most of the same desirable (mature) levels of values and personality traits and the same high levels of task- and people-related skills.

Limited Incorporation of Theory Y Into Situationalism

The HT,HP approach is based on (a) Douglas McGregor’s Theory Y, (b) the Golden Rule (as it applies to organizations), (c) Raymond Miles’ Human Resources Approach (the use of participative, developmental practices), and (d) the general description of a “9,9” or “high task, high people” style (with specific developmental practices or tactics added).

Situationalism, however, while theoretically based on Theory Y, seems to be operationally inconsistent with its spirit, intent, and scope. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) say the following: “Although high concern for both production and people (9,9 attitude) and positive Theory Y assumptions about human nature are basic ingredients for effective managers, it may be appropriate for managers to engage in a variety of behaviors as they face different problems in their environment” (p. 102)

The fact that “high task behavior” and “high people behavior” do not operate interdependently and interactively in situationalism is more or less reflected in each of the following specific areas. Since many of these areas are closely related, some of the same points—as well as earlier points—will be raised in several contexts.

Situationalism’s Primary (and Limited) Focus On Only One Managerial/Leadership Function

Please refer again to **Figure 1** (page 1), which is our version of a management/leadership functions and process model. Note that the *staffing function* involves orienting, training, and developing personnel.

In our view, that is the function around which situationalism was designed and primarily operates. It is as though Hersey and Blanchard not only filled the gap in “one best style” descriptions by elaborating on developmental aspects, but got “carried away” and *designed an entire management and leadership styles system around that one function*. That raises the following points:

A. Figure 1 shows that effective managers and leaders do not only manage or lead by analyzing operations, by setting objectives (Drucker, 1954), by assigning responsibility, by monitoring and evaluating results (Drucker, 1964), or by any other single function. *They must manage or lead by performing and guiding the performance of all the managerial and leadership functions.*

HT,HP involves subordinates' participation in most if not all managerial/leadership functions—especially when decisions will directly or significantly affect them. In doing so, it sets an example for subordinates to follow, imitate, and learn—and thereby more effectively develops their abilities to be more self-directing and self-coordinating than situationalism does.

B. Orienting personnel to their jobs and their work procedures, giving them instruction in procedures for applying methods and using tools, providing on-the-job training, and helping them to develop their task-related skills all basically fall within the staffing function—and all amount to increasing “subordinates’ maturity with respect to their tasks.” *But that is what all managers or leaders should do—regardless of style considerations. Proper performance of the staffing function already involves orienting, educating, training, and developing each subordinate (with respect to his or her various tasks) in an individualized manner.*

In other words, it is our view that Hersey and Blanchard’s model is primarily rooted in, and essentially operates from, that one managerial and leadership function—staffing.

Limited Role of Participation in Situationalism

While Hersey and Blanchard (1982) acknowledge that involving personnel in decision making and problem solving tends to be effective in our society, they caution that the success with which participation can be used basically depends on the maturity of subordinates with respect to their tasks (p. 119).

The sub-sections below provide examples of limited participation in integrative activities—examples mentioned by Blake and Mouton (1982a) and examples of our own. We think that this limited participation may very well be due to situationalism’s being rooted in the staffing function rather than encompassing all the managerial/leadership (integrative) functions that constitute an entire process.

MBO Processes

The MBO process is one of several contexts within which Hersey and Blanchard (1982) mention participation. They emphasize the importance of a leader working with individual subordinates to formulate performance goals (pp. 120, 258-259). As the individual contracts performance goals with each subordinate, he or she also contracts with the subordi-

nate concerning the managerial behavior (styles/inputs) that will be used to influence the subordinate’s behavior (pp. 258-260). We detect several differences between HT,HP and situationalism with regard to the MBO process.

A. While situationalism involves contracting the inputs (styles) that a boss will be using with a subordinate, we get the impression that this process involves much more one-way than two-way communication—especially for subordinates having lower levels of maturity. HT,HP, on the other hand, emphasizes two-way communication with all (immediate) subordinates at all times. Subordinates are encouraged to question, to explore and discuss, to suggest alternatives, and to request any different or additional inputs that they might think necessary.

B. Situationalism seems to place little if any emphasis on having a manager initially meet with immediate subordinates *as a group* to formulate overall unit performance, development, and satisfaction goals. We could find no reference to the “linking pin” aspects of an MBO approach in Hersey and Blanchard’s description of “situational MBO.” It appears that situational boss-subordinate interactions resemble the authoritarian or mechanistic “wheel structure,” wherein the boss is at the center of the wheel and each immediate subordinate is at the end of one of the spokes. In other words, they appear to involve one-to-one relationships with individual subordinates, but not “each to all” relationships among group members—especially at lower organizational levels, but even when subordinates have reached the higher levels of maturity that call for “participating” and “delegating” behavior.

Analytic and Decision-Making Processes In General

Hersey and Blanchard deserve credit for having subordinates involved in formulating their performance and development goals and developmental plans. Unfortunately, we could find very little mention of subordinates’ (participative) involvement in (a) analyzing individual (and unit) performance and operations, (b) translating individual (and unit) operating/performance goals into individual (and unit) operating strategies, tactics, projects, or plans of action, and (c) taking part in making decisions regarding alternative sets of operating plans.

Job Descriptions and Procedures

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) recommend that managers outline job descriptions and working procedures, especially

for subordinates at the lowest levels of maturity (pp. 153, 200-201). To Blake and Mouton (and also to us), this approach seems somewhat Theory X (directive). In addition to stifling creative thought and self-expression, it fails to incorporate other Herzberg (1966, 1968) “motivator factors” into subordinates’ jobs. As do Blake and Mouton, we recommend taking a more participative, Theory Y approach. In this approach, the manager might say the following:

“What do you think the objectives of this task should be? What end result(s) should be accomplished? [The subordinate cites several objectives, but omits an important one.] Those are good objectives. Considering _____, what other objective might be appropriate? [The subordinate picks up on the hint and states the other objective, or is perhaps given more clues and coaching to get to the desired answer.] Good! Now, given those objectives, what do you think the procedures should be? [The subordinate outlines several procedures, one of which could have adverse implications for (a) personal efficiency and effectiveness, or (b) other people’s jobs, performance, or attitudes.] Several of those procedures sound fine. In fact, they have worked very well in the past. One of these procedures, however, might cause some problems. If you did it this way, what do you think would happen if _____? How do you think it would affect _____? [The subordinate thinks for a moment and recognizes the potential problems.] OK. What might be a better way of doing it? [The subordinate sees the point and reformulates the procedure.] Fine. Now why don’t you try these procedures and see if they work for you. As you work at them, become comfortable using them, and see how you and your job interface with other people and their jobs, you may come up with better ways to perform your tasks. After all, the manual’s way may not be the best way for you, and procedures are being improved almost every day.”

This is a more socratic way of giving instruction or teaching. It involves asking questions, getting the individual to do his or her own thinking, guiding the process, and leading the individual to his or her own conclusions. This, we think, is more “Theory Y” than simply telling an individual what to do, when, and how. It may take a little more time, but the results are much better.

We have another reservation about situationalism’s treatment of job descriptions and work procedures. We get the impression that Hersey and Blanchard’s references to job descriptions revolve around the technical or functional aspects of the job (especially at worker and supervisory levels). While situationalism encourages each subordinate to become

more self-directing and self-controlling, it seems to encourage self-direction and self-control only with respect to a subordinate’s own tasks. It does not seem to emphasize giving subordinates responsibilities for integrating their activities and interactions as a group.

In contrast, HT,HP does emphasize giving subordinates responsibility for doing the following (under manager or leader guidance): (a) integrating their tasks among themselves; (b) integrating themselves with their tasks; and (c) integrating themselves with each other (interpersonally). As we understand situationalism, these responsibilities may not be assigned even at the highest level of task maturity or at the higher levels of the organization (managerial levels). We see this as another indication that situationalism places more emphasis on boss-centered (vertical) integration than on team-centered, organic, “each-to-all” integration.

Delegation (of Decision-Making Authority)

In situationalism, the delegating style is used when a subordinate has reached the highest level of maturity with respect to a particular task. This is not the case with HT,HP.

In our synergistic HT,HP approach, delegation and participation are used together throughout the developmental process. This approach explicitly acknowledges that (a) some decisions regarding an individual’s tasks should be delegated to and made by that individual; (b) some decisions regarding the integration of subordinates’ tasks should be made by the manager or leader; (c) some decisions regarding the integration of subordinates’ tasks should be delegated to and made by the subordinates involved; and (d) some decisions regarding the integration of various team members’ tasks should be made participatively by the manager and the subordinates involved (e.g., by “linking pin groups” during MBO processes). In the synergistic approach, managers meet with immediate subordinates to establish guidelines for determining which individuals or groups should make which decisions. We could find no similar provision in Hersey and Blanchard’s description of situationalism.

Problem Solving

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1982), subordinates at lower maturity levels may not have the ability or experience to make significant recommendations about their work (pp. 153-154). Blake and Mouton (1982a), on the other hand, have asserted that “the readiness for participation and involvement is present even at this lowest maturity level (pp. 26-27). We definitely agree with Blake and Mouton that maturity level should not preclude individuals from taking part

in problem-solving and decision-making processes that will directly or significantly affect them and their jobs.

- A. Even though people may not have much technical job experience, they are quick to form impressions about (a) their working procedures, (b) the relationships between their tasks and co-workers' tasks, (c) their interpersonal relationships, and (d) their working environment. In our opinion, therefore, any recommendations, ideas, inputs, and feelings regarding these areas can be significant and should be discussed by managers and their subordinates. Quality Circles and other participative approaches have proven the benefits—especially at the worker level.
- B. Problem solving and decision making invariably result in change. In synergistic HT,HP, subordinates participate in identifying and planning changes that will affect them and their jobs. This increases their willingness and ability to implement and/or adapt to specific changes. It also increases their maturity in terms of dealing with change processes. In situationalism, however, subordinates' limited participation in problem-solving and decision-making processes (at lower levels of maturity) has adverse implications for (a) their willingness and ability to implement a specific change; (b) their willingness and ability to adapt to change; and (c) the development of their maturity with respect to participating in and dealing with change processes.

Consensus (in Problem Solving and Decision Making)

Blake and Mouton (1982a) observe that situationalism does not embody the concept of consensus (p. 39). Although we have already touched on this in several other contexts, this omission indicates several additional things to us.

- A. Situationalism does not emphasize that a manager work with immediate subordinates as a group to (a) make decisions regarding unit goals, plans, policies, and procedures, or (b) identify and solve problems affecting the unit's overall performance, development, and satisfaction. If it did, it would have to deal explicitly with *how to facilitate arriving at group consensus—which it does not*.
- B. Where subordinates do participate, they are essentially participating only with respect to their own jobs (e.g., in an MBO process or solving individual task-related problems). They are not participating in processes involving the integration of various jobs and people within a group.

Instead, the leader is the integrator of tasks with tasks and people with people. Subordinates are not made “co-integrators.” In other words, the integrative (managerial/leadership) functions essentially belong to and are performed by the manager or leader. (See **Figure 4**.) He or she makes nearly all integrative decisions (including those concerning which style should be used). In short, integrative responsibilities and authority are not shared with subordinates until they have reached the two higher levels of maturity—and then are shared primarily with respect to their own tasks. Thus, there is little opportunity for subordinates to work with each other “synergistically.”

- C. A and B represent further indications that situationalism is more oriented toward boss-centered (vertical) integration than team-centered (vertical *and* horizontal) integration, and, therefore, is closer to a “wheel structure” than an “organic (each-to-all) structure.”

Conflict Resolution

Blake and Mouton (1982a) also observe that situationalism does not explicitly embody the concept of conflict resolution. (p. 44). In both the “9,9” and high task, high people approaches, on the other hand, confronting interpersonal, intra-unit, and inter-unit conflicts openly, honestly, and constructively (in a problem-solving manner) is necessary for fostering understanding, sensitivity to others' problems, and mutual agreement on corrective measures.

This difference constitutes another indication that situationalism is more boss-centered or mechanistic than team-centered.

Developmental Tool

One of our most significant reservations about situationalism is its *limited utilization of participation as a developmental tool* (except within an MBO context).

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1982), managers develop subordinates by adjusting the amounts of task behavior and relationship behavior as they progress from *telling* to *selling* to *participating* to *delegating* (pp. 200-206). In synergistic HT,HP, on the other hand, managers and leaders develop subordinates by always (a) providing formal and informal integrative training, (b) encouraging and guiding participation in integrative processes, (c) providing supplementary inputs (including advice and information), and (d) setting a “hi task, high people” example.

Reservations Regarding Motivational Phenomena

Motivation (General)

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1982), situational motivation largely stems from a desire to “keep the boss of one’s back.” (p. 258). They suggest that, as subordinates increase in maturity and come closer to the leader’s expectations of desirable behavior, the leader should reinforce the slightest improvements by providing (increasing) positive feedback and socio-emotional support. As subordinates approach the highest level of maturity, direction and socio-emotional support are no longer needed. The need for socio-emotional support is replaced by the need for autonomy (pp.209-210).

In the opinion of Blake and Mouton (1982a), situationalism utilizes Pavlovian means (giving and withholding rewards) to make a connection between *stimulus* and (desired) *response*. To them, situationalism employs participation as a reward to enhance motivation (p. 44). Having nearly the same impression, we view this aspect of situationalism as being somewhat manipulative. Partly for this reason, we believe that situationalism is closer to the Miles’ *human relations approach* than to his *human resources approach* illustrated in **Figure 5** (page 7).

In the “9,9”, “high task, high people” or synergistic approaches, on the other hand, motivation is increased by improving both maintenance and motivator factors identified by Herzberg (1968)—especially motivator factors. Motivator factors are improved by encouraging and guiding subordinates’ participation in integrative processes. Participation provides subordinates with opportunities to offer input, to express themselves, to be creative, to develop, and to fulfill ego and self-actualization needs through their work. This fosters involvement, job motivation, and both dedication and commitment to decisions being made.

Job Enrichment

As we mentioned earlier, there are two modes of job enrichment: (a) redesigning jobs; and (b) incorporating integrative responsibilities (and motivator factors) into jobs through the use of participative practices. Both modes must be used if jobs are to be enriched to the fullest.

Although Hersey and Blanchard (1982) refer to job enrichment several times (pp. 56, 61-63, 138), we could find no mention of how to implement it within the context of any of their four styles. We infer that a situational approach to job enrichment (a) will involve job redesign but not participative

practices (at least until an individual has reached the two higher levels of maturity), and (b) will be initiated by the leader or manager (at least until an individual has progressed to the two higher levels of maturity).

In the HT,HP approach, subordinates not only participate in formulating or revising their job descriptions and working procedures, they also participate on a regular basis in performing integrative functions with the manager or leader and other members of their work group. Thus, synergism makes use of both modes of job enrichment.

Feedback and Reinforcement

Blake and Mouton (1982a) also observed that Hersey and Blanchard rarely mention giving subordinates feedback (p. 39). In the “9,9” and synergistic approaches, on the other hand, both positive and “negative” (constructive, corrective) feedback are given in order to (a) foster learning, (b) improve interpersonal interactions, (c) generate insights into performance, (d) correct mistakes and keep them from recurring, and (e) reinforce improved behavior. The Theory Y-based approaches emphasize giving positive feedback; but they also recognize the need for constructive, corrective feedback.

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) relate reinforcement and feedback issues to the views of subordinates. They point out that, in giving socio-emotional support and delegating more authority, managers should not do so too rapidly. They caution that, especially when subordinates’ maturity is relatively low (as in the cases of workers and even supervisors), subordinates may (a) view overly supportive behavior as being permissive, easy, and rewarding of poor performance, and (b) see their bosses as being a “soft touch.” (p. 203.)

This sounds as though many supervisors and nearly all workers know very little about the managerial approach being applied. It suggests to us that, while situationalism involves training managerial personnel in situational concepts and styles, it does not involve orienting or training lower-level personnel to anywhere near the same extent. In the synergistic approach, by contrast, personnel at all levels are not only oriented to the approach initially, but they also (a) receive thorough training in it, (b) participate in planning and implementing it, and (c) apply it on the job. As a result, they understand that participative behavior is not soft or weak. They also understand how they can benefit from participative practices and high expectations regarding task- and people-related results. In addition, they understand the new “ground rules” that all personnel are being asked to follow.

Blake and Mouton also observed that, while Hersey and Blanchard would have leaders give socio-emotional support and positive feedback to subordinates, they do not mention

having fellow workers give each other support and feedback. (p. 44). In the “9,9” and synergistic approaches, on the other hand, managers are not the only ones who give support, positive feedback, and constructive, corrective feedback. Other members of the group do so, too. In fact, subordinates also give their bosses both feedback and support. Thus, there is emphasis on mutual (team) support and feedback.

The Claimed Inability to Deal with Many Situational (Socio-Technical) Factors

As mentioned earlier, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) assert that managers cannot deal with all the interacting socio-technical variables that influence people on the job (p. 146). However, it is widely believed that most of the really important socio-technical variables *can* be changed, improved, or otherwise dealt with. In fact, a socio-technical factor analysis of why managers behave as they do, which is outlined in Chapters 9 and 10 of *Next-Generation Management Development*, led to the development of the integrated MD/OD project outlined in the book.

That in-house, top-down, nine-month project uses a comprehensive, seven-module training program as the core of an OD project. Modules topics are: (1) management/leadership functions; (2) individual, organizational, managerial, and leadership behavior; (3) individual think-work; (4) interpersonal relations and skills; (5) team think-work; (6) individual and organizational learning; and (7) a summary and synthesis of all the concepts, processes, and models covered. Each of the modules discusses socio-technical variables involved in one or more of the five major areas: task-related or technological; organizational; individual (characteristics); social; and outside. At the end of each module, superiors meet with their immediate subordinates (in linking pin, top down fashion and on a facilitated basis) and use what they have all just learned to determine what they should start doing, quit doing, or do better. In other words, training is used to bring participants up closer to the level of the trainer/consultant/facilitator. This enables them to participate in analyzing what is going on and why in the organization and then in planning what they must do together to improve factors that influence their individual (and unit) motivation, attitudes, interpersonal interactions, and performance.

This type of project has been designed to bring about greater and more lasting improvements than the occasional, unintegrated, one- to five-day training programs. Such programs tend to waste an organization’s money, because, according to the ASTD, participants forget from 85-90% of what they learned (covered) within less than thirty days. The integrated MD/OD project has three major advantages: First,

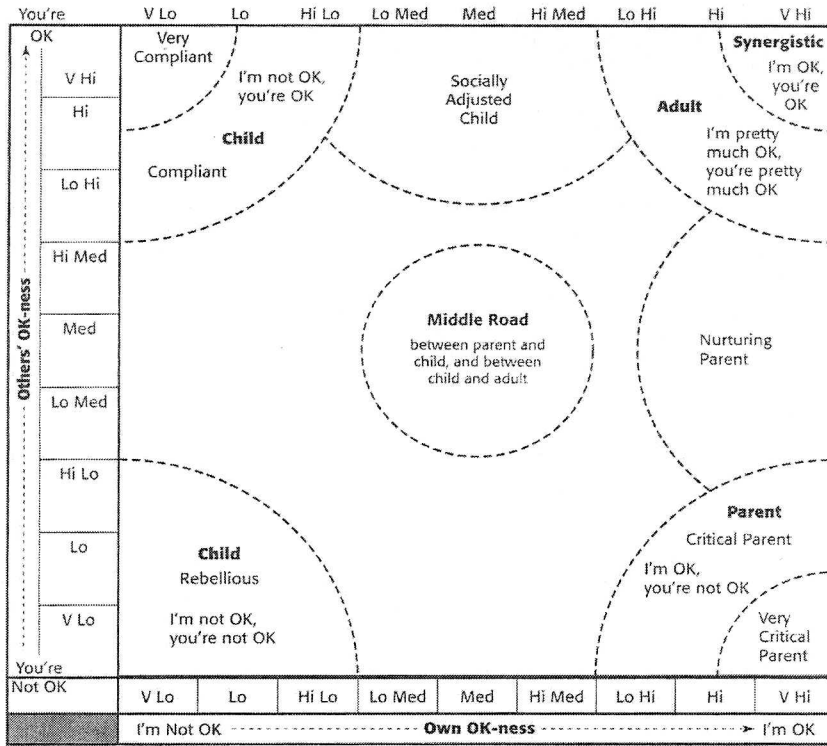
it keeps management and leadership topics in front of participants on a regular basis, so that they actually reinforce rather than forget what they are learning. Second, it enables everyone in the organization to share expectations regarding the use of what has been learned. Third, it enables everyone to mutually reinforce each others’ attempts to improve attitudes and behavior. And fourth, it trains participants in general management concepts, participative practices, and “high task, high people” attitudes and interpersonal behavior—all of which enable them to work together as a team to identify and then change, correct, or improve the most significant socio-technical influences on them.

This HT,HP program acknowledges that subordinates are each different in terms of their capabilities, motives, attitudes, developmental needs, requirements for various task-related inputs, and responses to socio-technical influences. Thus, it deals with individual differences and with various influences on behavior “situationally.” However, it does so within the context of a single style—one context or *approach* for (a) integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with the organization; and (b) dealing with the many socio-technical factors involved. In our view, therefore, the HT,HP approach is just as “situational” as situationalism in some respects, and is actually more “situational” in other respects. It is a “participative situational (socio-technical) approach.”

These are several of the rather impressive results that this project has actually achieved: (a) a more than 50% improvement in the performance of integrative functions; (b) development of a team atmosphere within about one year; (c) a 50 to 100% improvement in superior-subordinate relationships; and (d) a 100 to 200% improvement in interdepartmental interactions.

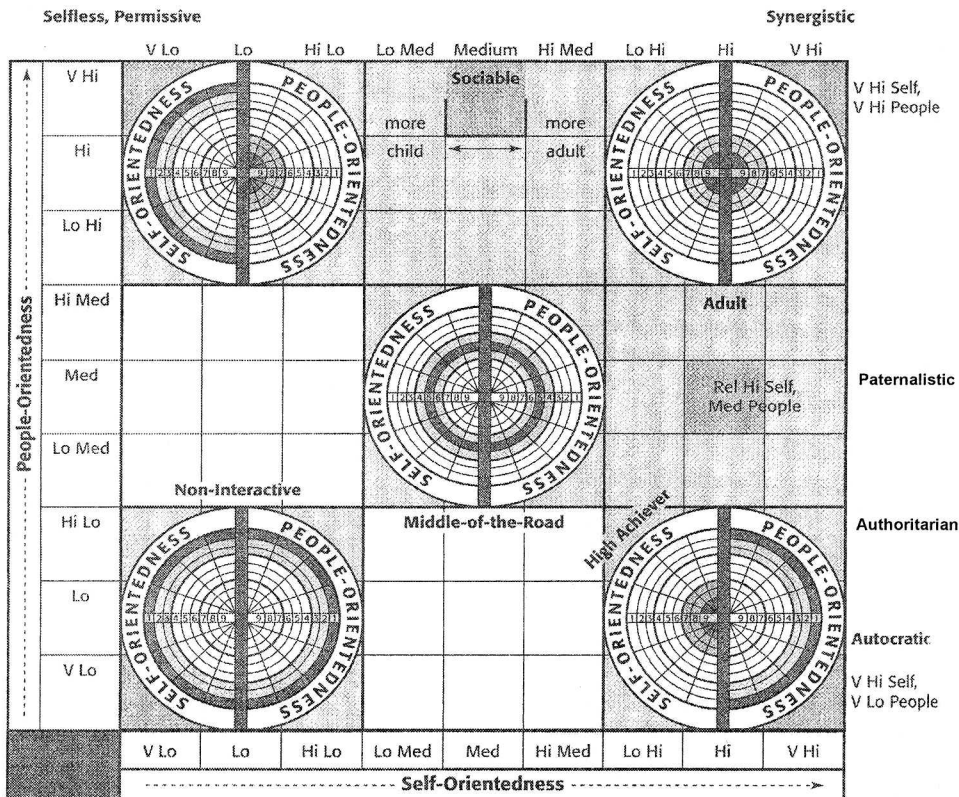
Again, by not dealing with various socio-technical factors and mitigating any dysfunctional influences on personnel, situationalism allows many variables to continue operating as dysfunctionally as they did before, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of innumerable negative organizational phenomena—such as the mechanistic status quo at lower organizational levels. An example: Without (a) enriching worker-level jobs, (b) using participative practices with subordinates, (c) otherwise behaving toward subordinates in an HT,HP manner, and (d) thereby making workers’ job significantly less mechanistic, those mechanistic jobs will continue to exert dysfunctional, essentially X-oriented influences on the following: subordinates’ motivation, attitudes and behavior; superiors’ perceptions of subordinates’ attitudes and behavior; the nature of the organization; social phenomena; and other variables.

Figure 11: Parent, Adult, and Child Ego States and Related Life Positions



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Figure 12: Distinctive Interpersonal Styles on a Grid Framework



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In other words, participative, developmental approaches and integrated MD/OD projects are aimed at improving the factors on which situational approaches are contingent. They are aimed at intervening in complex socio-technical/cultural systems and improving factors' cause/effect relationships, thereby bringing about the most significant degree of organizational improvement.

Inability to Interrelate the Situational Model with Other Behavioral Concepts and Models

As you can already tell, we constantly interrelate concepts and models. In fact, the *Unified Practice of Management* model at the end of *N-GMD* visually interrelates and integrates *over one hundred* major management, leadership, and organizational behavior concepts, processes, models, and practices in a single (but two-part) diagram. It shows how they all fit and can be used together for more significantly improving individual, unit, and organizational effectiveness and performance. **Table 1** is an example. It is a simplified, columnar version of Part I of the Unified Practice model.

Largely because of all that integrative work, it is our view that so much more can be done with a five-style model than a four-style model. For example, look at the two models on page 28. **Figure 11** illustrates life positions identified by Berne (1961, 1963, 1964) and associated ego states (I'm OK, you're OK) elaborated on and popularized by Harris (1969). **Figure 12** is our interpersonal styles adaptation of **Figure 10**, which is essentially an interpersonal styles version of **Figure 9**, The Managerial Target®. Those models are able to do what the situational model cannot: provide insights into (a) attitudes about oneself, (b) attitudes about others, (c) attitudes about what others can do for oneself, and (d) attitudes about one's relationships with others. In terms of why managers and leaders may behave as they do, both of these *descriptive and explanatory* models can be directly related to **Figures 2, 3, 4** (integrative functions), **7, 9, 10, and 11**. (Note in **Figure 12** that the term "task-orientedness" in **Figure 9** has been changed to "self-orientedness." This suggests that the "*high task, low people*" style constitutes a rather selfish, utilitarian relationship with subordinates.) Now imagine trying to interrelate all the models just mentioned with situationalism's four-style (four-quadrant) grid model. It simply cannot be done.

Reservations Involving Candor, Trust, and Respect

Blake and Mouton (1982b) observe that candor is not mentioned in situationalism, but that frank, open, honest,

two-way communication is necessary for individuals to work together effectively (p. 38). They also observe that situationalism requires subordinates to earn their superiors' trust and respect in order to deserve having certain responsibilities and authority finally delegated to them (p. 38).

The Y-based "9,9", "high task, high people," or synergistic styles, on the other hand, involve giving subordinates the trust and respect they deserve as human beings—regardless of their level of maturity. They emphasize (a) respecting subordinates for what they already are and for what they have the potential to become, and (b) not disrespecting them for what they are not or have not yet become. Without mutual trust and respect between a boss and his or her subordinates, the rapport necessary for functional relationships will be difficult to develop—regardless of the "situation."

Reservations Concerning Who Gets What Training

First: The emphasis in situationalism seems to be on training managers and leaders in the use of the four styles (and combinations thereof). We infer, however, that it does not emphasize training managers in all of the inputs (concepts, frames of reference, methods, tools, practices, and skills) that we cover in our MD/OD project. Thus, it appears to us that the training envisioned by Hersey and Blanchard is neither comprehensive nor systematic.

Second: While situationalism involves training all managers or leaders in an organization, we infer that, while workers receive considerable technical or functional training, they actually receive (a) little if any formal training in integrative functions and practices, and (b) very little development of integrative and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, if they were allowed to participate in planning, problem solving, and decision making directly affecting their jobs, they would learn practices and develop skills through (a) experience, and (b) the examples set by their superiors regarding how to think as a team. Therefore, we also infer that lower-level personnel are essentially expected to somehow mature in the abilities to be self-directing and self-controlling more or less on their own (through "on-the-job experience").

Third: In our view, situationalism does not constitute an organizational development (OD) approach. Training seems to be conducted in a rather traditional manner, not in the comprehensive, systematic, participative, systemic manner that we have been espousing and practicing for more than thirty-five years. A managerial/leadership training program without OD activities integrated into it cannot be a vehicle for systemically improving major socio-technical factors' influences on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior of workers, supervisors, and their managers or leaders.

In referring to Likert's organizational development approach, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) observe that the training and development effort involved would have to be "massive." (p. 65). They would undoubtedly say the same about our synergistic, integrated MD/OD approach. If we were talking about very large, geographically dispersed, older, traditionally mechanistic organizations that often require "hospitalization" rather than "band-aids," we might agree to some extent. For example, it would be nearly impossible for a military component such as the U.S. Navy to do system-wide, integrated MD/OD. It simply could not "train up" or afford to hire the necessary number of trainers and OD consultant/facilitators. And there is too much personnel turnover in units to change attitudes and behavior permanently.) But if we were talking about more recently established, less traditionally mechanistic, small- to medium-size organizations, we would not agree. We have done it—and very successfully.

In any case, we have become absolutely convinced that anything less than the "synergistic" or "Integrated MD/OD" project we described earlier (a) will never bring about the "systemic improvements" that are possible (and often necessary); (b) will not have anywhere near the same chance of success; and (c) will not provide the greatest return on investment.

Efficacy of Style Models Under Emergency or High Stress Conditions

We could not touch on this issue without first discussing the spirit and intent of Theory Y, combinations of selfish and unselfish personal traits on The Managerial (and leadership) Target®, and the other topics covered above.

Few would doubt that, under emergency, life-threatening, high stress, usually chaotic conditions (e.g., armed combat and emergencies involving firefighters or police), a directive and controlling, "high task + low relationship" style works. If superiors (are following orders and) are going to place subordinates in situations that endanger their lives and limbs, and if there is not time to stand around discussing who should do what and how, they usually issue directive and coordinating orders rather than making suggestions or requests. (However, it must be acknowledged that, under such circumstances, subordinates generally take superiors' "suggestions" or "requests" as though they were orders.)

Does that mean that HT,HP will not work at all—or not work as well—in these kinds of situations? That may depend on how you look at it. We think that HT,HP can apply in the military (and elsewhere) if (a) the spirit and intent of Theory Y and a mature balance between task- and people-oriented

motive/attitudinal traits are both influencing the superior, and (b) prior to emergency situations, subordinates have participated to some extent in planning how to respond in a coordinated, efficient, effective manner.

For example, can it be said that a particular marine corps drill instructor could be behaving toward recruits in an HT, HP rather than authoritarian (HT,LP) manner? We think it largely depends on the person. If that DI has a mature self-image and balance between selfish and selfless motives, and if that DI really cares about recruits as people and is making every effort to instill the individual self-discipline and the team esprit, cooperation, and training that will enable those recruits to fight effectively as a team and thereby save as many lives as possible, then we believe that the DI is behaving in an HT,HP manner. But if that instructor is simply demeaning soldiers and ordering them around because he is (a) egotistical, insensitive, and high in the political value (need for power), (b) "stroking his own ego" (at their expense) by pushing them around and making himself feel superior, (c) just trying to get promoted more quickly, or (d) all of the above, then we think that he is behaving in a selfish, authoritarian or HT,LP manner—because of "where he is coming from." In other words, we think that really good, HT,HP leaders and managers care enough about their subordinates (as well as themselves) to develop the best in them and to provide them with the necessary support—in order to truly earn the right to expect the best from them.

We believe that "where the superior is coming from" by nature is an extremely important consideration that the situational model does not and cannot take into account.

Summary of Reservations About Situationalism and Comparisons with Synergism

Let us summarize what we consider to be situationalism's major issues, flaws, or limitations.

First: Hersey and Blanchard's situational model is founded on a very tenuous premise: researchers have "proven" that no one style works best. We do not believe so for several reasons: First, there is a very large and growing body of proof that various participative approaches (such as Quality Circles, "9,9." System 4, and Synergism) are more effective than using a variety of styles. Second, the research to which Hersey and Blanchard point was done many years ago. At that time, descriptions of "one best style" did not include detailed practices concerning the development of subordinates. In addition, participative practices were not yet fully developed and were not being implemented as successfully as they are today. Furthermore, early attempts to establish participative,

“high task, high people” environments failed to deal with all the socio-technical influences that must be dealt with or improved if the performance, development, and satisfaction of managers and their subordinates are to be maximized.

Second: Hersey and Blanchard’s situational model was based on the four-style Ohio State model, which indicates additive (rather than interdependent, interactive) combinations of “task behavior” and “relationship behavior.” As a result, their model cannot describe an *interactive* combination of “high task and high people” behavior. By comparison, the System 4 and “9,9” styles are based on models indicating interdependent, interactive combinations of task orientations and people orientations (or concerns). More specifically, they are “high task, high people” styles.

Mostly because of the situational leadership model’s four-style design, the LEAD instrument that Hersey and Blanchard used to substantiate it was designed with a *four-style bias*. Blake and Mouton pointed out—and even statistically proved—that an instrument that does not contain a fifth, one-best-style alternative for each of twelve situations cannot be used to prove that there is no one best style. Period.

Thus, since the situational model cannot indicate—and the LEAD instrument cannot measure—a behavioral alternative approximating the “high task, high people” style, Hersey and Blanchard have little if any logical, convincing, or defensible basis for contending that the use of their various styles is more effective than the use of a “one best” “high task, high people” style.

Third: Hersey and Blanchard have observed that certain combinations of their four styles seem to work best at certain organizational levels. The behavior they describe as being most effective at certain levels is very similar to behavior already found at those levels in many organizations (because of the natures of tasks and personnel involved). It appears to us, therefore, that the use of situationalism does not really change things appreciably, partly because it does not involve asking managers and supervisors to behave too much differently than many of them are already behaving.

Fourth: Situationalism fosters inconsistent, confusing behavior. Especially when (a) a superior has a more than just a few immediate subordinates, and (b) those subordinates each perform a number of different (mechanistic) tasks, the “situational superior” is often changing styles to fit subordinates’ maturity with respect to all those tasks. This behavior can become confusing to the superior, who must keep track of all the subordinates, all their tasks, and their maturity with respect to all their tasks. Inconsistent behavior is also confusing to subordinates, because they are constantly observing differ-

ent styles being used, are receiving “mixed messages,” and are receiving inconsistent examples being set by the superior. On the other hand, when superiors are constantly behaving (or at least trying to behave) in a consistent HT,HP manner, no one becomes confused.

Fifth: Situationalism does not recognize that readily and effectively shifting from one style to another to fit different “task maturity situations” is difficult and even unlikely. Because superiors’ values and personality traits have become ingrained over time and seldom change significantly, and also because their behavior is mainly molded by those motive/attitudinal traits when they do not stop to think about how they should behave in a particular situation (which is most of the time), they normally use their “innate” style—regardless of what they may have learned about situationalism. And because of the underlying, ingrained motive/attitudinal traits, that style is very unlikely to change appreciably—not just from one moment to the next, but even over much more time.

Sixth: While Hersey and Blanchard did fill the gap in “one best style” descriptions by elaborating on the development of subordinates in terms of their maturity regarding their tasks, they “got carried away” and designed an entire management and leadership styles system around the *staffing* function. Put another way, we think their model is primarily rooted in, and essentially operates from, that one single managerial/leadership (integrative) function.

Seventh: It very much seems to us that situationalism essentially involves boss-centered (vertical) integration of tasks with tasks and, to some extent, people with their tasks and people with people—especially at lower organizational levels. It seems to resemble a “wheel structure” (where subordinates are at the ends of the spokes and only interact with the boss at the hub) more closely than an “each-to-all” or organic structure (where boss and subordinates all interact freely with each other). On the other hand, the participative or HT, HP approach explicitly emphasizes *team-centered vertical and horizontal integration* of tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization. Superiors work with subordinates to (a) make decisions regarding individual and unit goals, plans, policies, and procedures; and (b) identify and solve problems affecting unit performance, development, and satisfaction.

Eighth: Situationalism is partly based on the premise that an entire system of socio-technical factors cannot be dealt with effectively, and that, for various reasons, subordinates’ maturity is the (manageable) factor on which the choice of style should be based. However, by not dealing with various

other socio-technical factors and improving their influences on personnel's interactions, behavior, and performance, situationalism allows many variables to operate as they did before. Thus, it can contribute to the perpetuation of various dysfunctional organizational phenomena.

An HT,HP approach, on the other hand, is capable of dealing with and improving many if not most socio-technical variables through the use of systematic, participative, developmental practices. It, too, acknowledges that subordinates are each different in terms of their capabilities, motives, attitudes, developmental needs, requirements for various inputs, and responses to socio-technical influences. Thus, it does deal with people's differences *individually* and with various socio-technical influences on behavior "situationally" (or better yet, "systemically"). However, it does so within the context of a single style—one context for (a) integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization, and (b) dealing with the many influential factors involved. In our opinion, therefore, the synergistic approach is just as "situational" as situationalism in some respects, and is actually even more "situational" in other respects. We think of it as a "participative situational (socio-technical) approach."

Ninth: Although situationalism might be considered a "somewhat developmental approach," it (a) does not really use participation as a developmental tool; (b) does not involve providing training in a comprehensive group of integrative and interpersonal concepts, methods, tools, and skills; (c) does not set forth a "macro approach" for developing an effective "high task, high people" organizational environment in a systematic manner; and (d) does not set forth an effective "micro approach" for developing subordinates both individually and as a group. Our HT,HP approach does.

Tenth: Although situationalism is more effective than always using the traditionally authoritarian leadership and management approach, it is our opinion that it essentially embellishes rather common practices in today's organizations with more modern behavioral principles and management/leadership practices. However, while it emphasizes some modern principles and practices, it almost totally disregards others. For example: Behavior toward personnel at the worker level is essentially Theory X, but is "softened" and made more humanistic with certain MBO, motivation, and reinforcement practices. However, participation is not utilized as a job-enrichment and developmental tool. This example makes it seem as though situationalism uses certain modern, humanistic practices in order to help make directive and controlling behavior toward (immature) subordinates more palatable, thereby making it work better. This and other points

raised earlier make it seem as though situationalism emphasizes personnel's performance more than their development and satisfaction, and, therefore, is more selfish than selfless, more task-oriented than people-oriented, and more boss-centered than team-centered. For these reasons, we have concluded that situationalism is closer to Miles' human relations approach (being authoritarian, but nicely) than to his human resources approach.

Eleventh: Although situationalism embodies certain modern management concepts and behavioral principles, it seems to apply them in a somewhat uncomprehensive, unsystematized, unintegrated, inconsistent manner. The result, we believe, is an approach that is less task- and people-oriented, less team-oriented, and less participative and developmental than either System 4, '9,9,' or 'high task, high people.' These Theory Y-based approaches attempt to integrate various concepts and principles into a compatible, unified whole that constitutes an overall context for (a) integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization; (b) constantly improving a system of socio-technical factors affecting personnel's motivation, attitudes, behavior, and interactions; and thereby (c) maximizing their performance, development, and satisfaction. Thus, we are convinced that situationalism cannot accomplish what "high task, high people" or similar approaches can accomplish—particularly over the intermediate to long term.

Possible Explanations for the Appeal and Persistent Popularity of Situationalism

Blake and Mouton (1982b) have suggested various reasons for the appeal and popularity of situationalism. In the section that follows, we will be paraphrasing several of the reasons in their article (pp. 33-34) and then adding several of our own.

First: The times in which we live foster a "do your own thing" attitude. In situationalism, managers and leaders are free to use the "style" they think best under certain conditions, unencumbered by regard for higher, more unified principles and ideals.

Second: Because people are frustrated by the phenomenal complexity of the world (and of the organizations to which they belong), they seek simple, easy ways of doing things. In some ways, situationalism is simpler and easier to apply than participative, developmental approaches. Indeed, its use does not require development of the sophisticated integrative, in-

terpersonal, and group process skills necessary for most successfully implementing participative, developmental practices.

Third: Many people rely on “common sense” rather than scientific concepts and principles. Unfortunately, many people’s “common sense” is little more than what they have already learned or have become accustomed to doing. In our view, situationalism *seems* to be commonsensical largely because it does not ask individuals (at various levels in today’s organizations) to behave too much differently than they are already behaving.

Fourth: During many individuals’ childhood and adolescent years, their parents did not behave in a consistent manner toward them. Parents shifted from one style to another. (See the parent, child, and adult life positions and associated ego states in **Figure 11**.) This has carried over into adults’ approaches to dealing with various situations—e.g., behaving differently in different circumstances, rather than behaving more consistently in most if not all circumstances.

Fifth: Situationalism provides some amount of freedom from having to make commitments. It enables managers to keep options open. As a number of line and training managers have confided (complained) to us, it also gives them an opportunity to make excuses. If they cannot make a certain style work, they can say that it was not the “right” or “best” style—instead of admitting that they do not have the knowledge and/or skills necessary to make it work.

The following are a few observations of our own.

Sixth: Because many management and leadership educators and trainers themselves were educated and trained in management or leadership within the last twenty to thirty years, they were weaned on situationalism instead of “high task, high people.” (In fact, we have recently conducted training seminars for management and leadership instructors who have never even heard of Blake and Mouton’s five-style Grid.) Convinced that what they learned was “the gospel,” they now resist changing their minds. In addition, many of today’s management and leadership training instructors have little or no educational background in the organizational behavior concepts, models, and practices that have evolved or been developed over the years. Many have picked up bits and pieces of management/leadership concepts and practices from different business schools, consulting firms, and training companies—most of which do not interrelate their concepts and practices with those of other sources. And, many instructors, regardless of their MBA and Ph.D. degrees, have never researched (let alone written about) all the manage-

ment and leadership areas in order to conceive of and design some all-encompassing overview. Furthermore, we are rather certain that most of them have never been exposed to the two Blake and Mouton articles referenced here (1982a and b). Consequently, they are unaware of the pros and cons of different style models, and are therefore unable to effectively compare and evaluate them. (Unfortunately, this has largely been due to the retirement and eventual passing of Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, who were not only the most credible and persuasive proponents of “one-best-style” concepts and practices, but were also the most knowledgeable, adamant, persistent, and sincere critics of situationalism.)

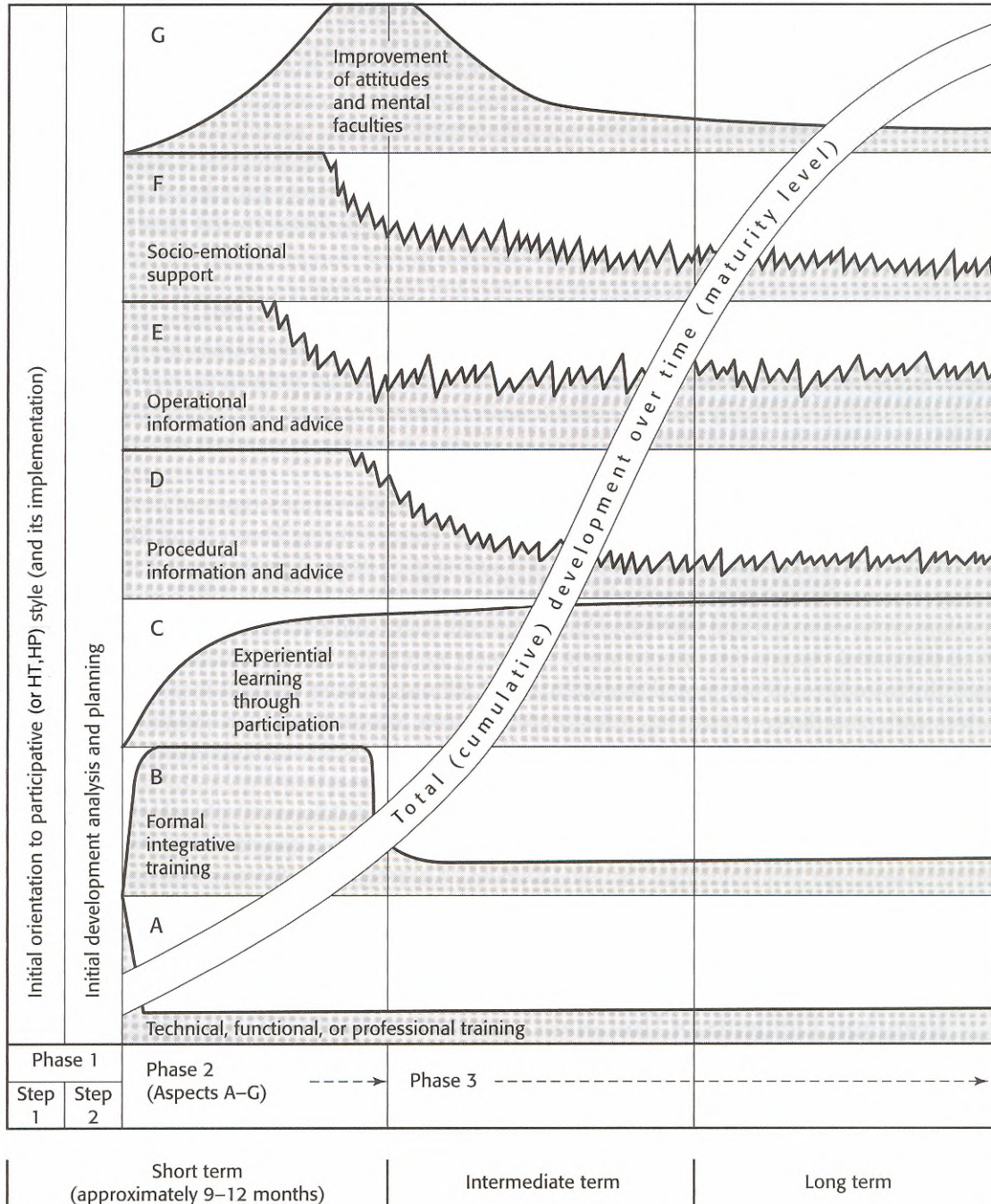
Seventh: Many management education and training personnel adopt management and leadership concepts such as situationalism because they are so well known and widely accepted. Doing so is “safe.” It saves them from having to explain to their superiors why they chose training materials and programs that are less known but are much better in many important respects.

Eighth: The above situation is perpetuated by the fact that the upper-level executives who hire the managers of management/leadership training/development groups have even less background. As a result, they unknowingly tend to perpetuate general acceptance of situationalism by often hiring or selecting “insufficiently-versed” personnel.

Ninth: There are a number of very knowledgeable business school organizational behavior professors who hesitate to espouse pro-HT,HP opinions. In fact, we have been surprised by the high percentage of our professorial acquaintances who say that they disagree with situationalism. We have also been surprised that the majority of them acknowledge not wishing to say so publicly. Rather than take a stand, several have said that they would rather not “take sides” and assert that a “one best style” (such as HT,HP) constitutes a better if not *the best* practice.

Several professors have also said that this discussion has already been had and that people will choose whichever approach they prefer. Here is the problem we have with that statement: If, as we and many others believe, situationalism (a) is not the most well-conceived approach to management and leadership, (b) perpetuates many dysfunctional phenomena in organizations, and (c) should be replaced with a more highly task- and people-oriented, more fully integrated and synergistic, and more effective one-best-style approach, then it is up to someone to take responsibility and do something about it. We nominate well-respected academicians and practitioners, who exert the greatest influence on management and leadership practices and behavior.

Figure 13: Synergistic Inputs and Phased Activities for Developing Subordinates and a Participative Unit Atmosphere



Tenth: Another troubling phenomenon in the business school community is that research and the development of concepts and models is almost always focused on some narrow, limited, finite, and often esoteric bit of knowledge that other academicians have not previously researched and written about. Take, for example, all the different angles or factors on which the gurus in **Figure 7** focused. Thus, it should not be surprising that, upon seeing our Unified Practice of Management model, almost all of our professorial acquaintances have remarked that very few in the academic community will care, because no one is particularly interested in a macro view of the field of management. This may partly be due to management and leadership being so phenomenally complex that it is easier to explore narrow issues or a limited number of variables than to model the meta-system of variables. It may also be partly due to the fact that academicians tend to be rather high in the theoretical (intellectual) value but lower in the economic and practical-mindedness values. Thus, they are much less concerned than real-world practitioners about the practical application of management and leadership concepts, functions, processes, and practices—and interrelated interpersonal concepts, processes, and practices—in a more mutually compatible, consistent, integrated, or synergistic manner (such as in our Unified Practice model).

Eleventh: We see individuals in many organizations—particularly in traditionally mechanistic and authoritarian military and industrial organizations—resist the concept of participative management or leadership. This is largely because accepting, learning, and using participative approaches present tremendous challenges involving people’s egos, willingness to develop the necessary skills, ability to change their attitudes and behavior, and ability to deal with organizational constraints. Although contingency or situational approaches may not have been purposefully designed to do so, we have always had the gnawing feeling that they introduce participative behavior in a way that makes such behavior more palatable to individuals who tend to resist the concept:

- a. those who believe that some of their subordinates must be treated in a more or less Theory X manner (because they seem to be unmotivated, unskilled, irresponsible, and/or untrustworthy);
- b. those who are Theory X by nature (high in task-orientedness but low in people-orientedness) and are not very likely to undergo any significant change in the motive/attitudinal traits that underlie their X attitudes and behavior (at least in the short term);
- c. those who learned authoritarian behavior and practices at lower levels, found that they worked on people, and kept using them as they rose in the organization;
- d. those who have never been exposed to participative practices and are not certain how well they will work;
- e. those who need to acquire the necessary knowledge factors and skills, and also need to develop a secure feeling about their ability to apply them successfully; and/or
- f. those who believe in participative management or leadership, but will not be able to implement it fully until others in their organization (especially their superiors) begin to accept and implement it.

In our view, situationalism allows these managers to adopt participative practices gradually and without feeling threatened by saying the following to them:

“OK, go ahead and behave toward your subordinates pretty much as you have been, but start making more use of modern management and leadership principles and practices. Also, as your subordinates begin to show signs of increasing maturity, try (a) using participative practices with them, and (b) delegating more authority to them. Then, as you develop more trust in your subordinates, begin to feel more secure about your own capabilities, get more accustomed to participation and delegation, and begin to experience the results that can be achieved, keep increasing the amounts of participating and delegating behavior.”

Even so, we are still concerned that situationalism tells people what we mentioned at the bottom of page 15: (a) a combination of telling and selling styles works best for workers’ supervisors; (b) a combination of selling and back-up telling and participating styles works best for lower-level managers; (c) a combination of all styles works best for middle managers; and (d) a combination of participating and delegating styles works best for upper-level managers. But as we discussed on pages 16 and 17, these are the ways that people at those various levels are already behaving toward subordinates because of the different natures of tasks and people being supervised or managed. As a result, we suspect that managers, leaders, or supervisors are likely to think to themselves, “Hey, I must be pretty good.” “I’ve been behaving rather appropriately all along and don’t have to change my behavior very much at all.”

Two Tracks to One: Putting Both Into a Single, Synthesized Perspective

Hersey and Blanchard have done a commendable job of converting the descriptive Ohio State model into a highly de-

veloped prescriptive model. Even so, anyone who is more accustomed to thinking about managerial styles in terms of Blake and Mouton's Grid model will probably have some difficulty accepting Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model. Here are two main reasons: First, and most obvious, the two models have dissimilar descriptions for similar style names. This difference and seeming conflict has caused much confusion. Second, and somewhat less obvious, Hersey and Blanchard's "styles" are not really styles in the same sense as Blake and Mouton's.

Understanding the second reason leads to conceiving *how* "one best style" and "situationalism" can be reconciled.

Consider McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y styles, Blake and Mouton's five styles, Likert's Systems 1 through 6, and Miles' Human Resources and Human Relations Approaches as actually being *overall or all-encompassing approaches to management and leadership*. The most effective is the team, "9,9," participative, human resources, or HT,HP approach.

Then what are Hersey and Blanchard's styles? Rather than calling them "styles," we think it might be more accurate and less confusing to call them "*combinations of developmental task-related and socio-emotional inputs*" (for developing subordinates and achieving organizational objectives *within the context, spirit, and intent of the Theory Y style and Miles' human resources approach*). In other words, think of Hersey and Blanchard's four combinations of developmental inputs as being a *more detailed description of the (previously not-so-well-described) developmental aspects of the team, participative/developmental, or "high task, high people" approach*.

Reconciling the two style concepts this way helps put two tracks onto one track. They can more or less coexist, with Hersey and Blanchard's perhaps being a more well-defined "developmental practices sub-set" of the participative/developmental or HT, HP approach.

The Developmental (and Participative) Aspects of a "High Task, High People" Approach

Although there is some basis for reconciliation between "one best style" and situationalism, we still disagree with Hersey and Blanchard's approach for developing subordinates. Therefore, we feel obligated to offer the HT,HP alternative that we have developed.

Earlier we very briefly described an integrated, "macro" MD/OD project involving an in-house, top-down, nine-to-

twelve-month project with management/leadership training at its core. Each of the training modules in its turn is followed by superior-subordinate team-building and OD sessions that are aimed at (1) identifying socio-technical factors (covered in the training) that either need correction or could stand some improvement, and then (2) planning how to modify or improve the influences of those factors on the individuals' and unit's performance.

Aspects of an MD/OD Program for Subordinates in a Single Unit

Compared to the organization-wide "macro MD/OD program" mentioned above, **Figure 13** illustrates a "*micro*" program for developing immediate subordinates in one's own unit both individually and as a group. It could be made available to one or more units when an organization is either unwilling or unable to conduct an organization-wide program.

Figure 13 differs somewhat from Hersey and Blanchard's model, but still takes account of several of their concepts and emphasis on the development of subordinates. It extends others' earlier descriptions of HT,HP by describing in more specific terms what it takes to develop subordinates and increase their maturity with respect to greater self-direction and self-control and to greater and more effective participation in management/leadership or integrative functions.

The horizontal axis is a time line. Up the vertical axis are various types of developmental inputs—from A at the bottom up to G at the top. Over time, these are provided in varying degrees from Phase 2 through Phase 3.

Phase 1 in **Figure 13** first involves orienting personnel regarding the project to be conducted. During that orientation, participative/developmental concepts and "high task, high people" attitudes and behavior are briefly explained to all personnel. This orientation is extremely important, because managers cannot successfully introduce, develop, and maintain an HT,HP atmosphere without increasing subordinates' understanding, receptivity, acceptance, support, cooperation, participation, and team spirit—all of which are necessary for alleviating their suspicions, apprehensions, and possible resistance.

Step 2 of Phase 1 involves doing unit and individual development planning. This step accentuates a manager's roles as leader and change agent by making him or her more directly responsible for (a) subordinates' further education and development, and (b) their participation in identifying, planning, and implementing unit and organizational changes.

Common Elements of Both Unit and Organization-Wide MD/OD Programs

Next, Phase 2 primarily involves training and education, but also involves providing subordinates with other inputs that will help develop their attitudes, knowledge, and skills. It is implemented over a period of about one year (during the implementation of other organizational and unit plans), but perhaps longer if necessary. Phase 2 involves Aspects A through G.

Aspect A: Training in Specialized Technical, Functional, or Professional Knowledge and Skills. This type of training may be key to organizational success. If management and personnel believe that it is necessary in the short term, it should be provided intensely over, say, several months. Such training is shown tapering off to a “sustaining level” into the intermediate and long term as new technologies, methods, and equipment are introduced into personnel’s jobs.

Aspect B: Formal Integrative (Managerial/Supervisory) Education and Development Program. Next, an intense management/leadership training program is conducted for unit members over the next nine to twelve months (or possibly longer). It covers these areas: (a) managerial/leadership (integrative) functions and processes; (b) methods, tools, and procedures for performing those functions; (c) concepts involving individual, organizational, and managerial behavior; and (d) interpersonal skills (for example, interpersonal awareness, sensitivity, understanding, conflict resolution skills, and communication skills). Such a program is aimed at developing more functional integrative and interpersonal attitudes and higher levels of integrative and interpersonal skills. This program also tapers off to a “sustaining or reinforcing level” into the intermediate and long terms. However, it never drops to a zero level, because occasional supplementary education or training usually becomes necessary as new integrative technologies, methods and tools are instituted and as turnover in personnel occurs. Also, follow-up sessions can be utilized to keep concepts alive in people’s heads, reinforce what they have learned, and further develop the associated skills.

Aspect C: Experiential Learning Through Participation. During the management/leadership training program, personnel participate in “superior-subordinates discussion and OD sessions” about how to use what they have been learning to improve themselves, their job performance, their interpersonal interactions, and their own and the unit’s performance. As they participate in analytic, goal-setting, planning, problem-solving, and decision-making activities, they further de-

velop knowledge and skills as they learn from the examples of superiors and from their own application of the concepts, principles, and practices to which they have been introduced. As they are encouraged and enabled to be more self-directing and self-controlling, they further develop the related knowledge and skills. Note that the intense education and skill development they are receiving helps accelerate their experiential learning. The more they were taught initially, the more they are able to learn subsequently. Although their accumulated experience (or maturity) grows rapidly in the short term, it eventually approaches a “saturation level.” Even so, it never hits 100%, because there is always more knowledge to acquire and more experience to gain through the application of what has been learned.

Aspect D: Procedural or Methodological Information and Advice. So that subordinates will actually be able to apply their developing integrative knowledge and skills by participating in think-work processes (such as the “superior-subordinates discussion and OD sessions”), and thereby gain experience “by doing,” managers, consultants, and/or group process facilitators must provide them with whatever supplemental procedural or methodological information and advice they might need (such as how to structure, perform, and participate in group think-work processes). Call it “on-the-job input” for effective self-management and team management. Guiding subordinates in this way contributes to their knowledge, enables them to participate more effectively, and helps assure that they will experience greater success and job satisfaction. Notice that the flow of such information never fades to zero. There is always some amount of additional information—a sustaining level—that can help subordinates manage themselves and participate in both unit and organizational integration more effectively.

Aspect E: Operational Information and Advice. For the same reasons cited in the paragraph above, managers, consultants, and/or group process facilitators must also provide subordinates with operating information and advice such as the following: (a) guideline goals, plans, and budgets established for the unit and for specific jobs; (b) information regarding organizational and unit systems; (c) data necessary to perform think-work tasks on their own; (d) feedback concerning their performance or results; and (e) advice on how to perform specific tasks even better. Many of these inputs are contained in an organization’s central database. Often, however, a manager must make sure that these types of information are getting directly to subordinates in a proper format and timely manner. Such inputs can be used by subordinates to plan individual activities, coordinate group activities, monitor and evaluate their individual and group performance, and

work together to solve problems of mutual concern. Again, notice that the flow of this information never drops to zero. There is always a “sustaining level” of information that subordinates need in order to manage themselves and their job-related interactions with others effectively.

Aspect F: Socio-Emotional Support. During that intense first year or so, personnel are expanding their skills in order to deal with increased responsibilities for self-management and mutual cooperation. Because they are experiencing great change, they need considerable socio-emotional support—or what Hersey and Blanchard called “relationship behavior.” They need encouragement to take on greater team think-work responsibilities. They need constructive feedback when they make mistakes, so that they will not make the same mistakes again. They need positive feedback and reinforcement when they have put forth maximum effort, used their capabilities to the fullest, and performed their responsibilities in a praiseworthy manner. They need support when non-personal forces thwart their efforts. They may need emotional support as personnel changes concerning superiors, colleagues, and subordinates occur. They may need consoling when events in their personal lives are “getting them down.” Note that after the initial, intense period during Phase 2, the level of this type of input also tends to taper off to a “sustaining level.” However, it never goes to zero. People need occasional emotional support, because change is inevitable and problems always seem to keep cropping up.

Aspect G: Improvement of Attitudes and Mental Faculties. The top category is essentially the development of more functional attitudes and improved abilities for learning and thinking (for example, mental capabilities involved in perception, memory, class logic, and propositional logic). The rise between Phase 2 and Phase 3 indicates a surge in training in such areas. Since these areas are rather complex, we will not discuss them here. However, as people apply integrative and interpersonal concepts, methods, and tools, they are, in fact, developing more functional integrative and interpersonal attitudes and are further developing the brain’s circuitry for better learning and thinking.

All of these inputs are important to personnel’s overall development. Note that, as inputs are being provided and attitudes and capabilities are being further developed, the “Total or Cumulative Development Over Time” is constantly increasing. In other words, not only is maturity with respect to the technical aspects of tasks increasing, but, equally if not more important, maturity with respect to integrative and interpersonal attitudes, knowledge, and skills is also growing rapidly and accumulating over time.

Concluding Remarks

This paper represents an attempt to integrate various modern management and leadership concepts and behavioral principles into a unified approach that is more in keeping with the spirit, intent, and scope of Theory Y and the advantages of the “high task, high people” style.

We have elaborated on our initial description of the HT, HP style by describing approaches for developing subordinates, managers, and entire organizations. These approaches involve Theory Y-oriented, participative, developmental tactics for (a) dealing with and improving socio-technical influences on people’s attitudes and behavior, (b) establishing a participative, “high task, high people” environment, and (c) maximizing people’s performance, development, and satisfaction. We have attempted to show the efficacy of these approaches by comparing HT,HP with situationalism. In our view, HT,HP (or synergism) represents an effective integration of participative, “high task, high people” concepts with several situational (developmental) concepts.

We end with this final thought: If it is possible to behave in a highly task-oriented *and* highly people-oriented manner at the same time (as Miles showed), then why not always try to do so? Since it is largely a matter of practicing the Golden and Platinum Rules in organizations, then what could be more human and modern—and effective. After all, isn’t that what modern management and leadership are mostly about: treating people in a caring and respectful manner—and being both task- and people-oriented for the sake of people as well as for the sake productivity?

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