

Group Dynamics
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Group Leadership: Part - III

Hello friends welcome back in our previous discussion we talked about group leadership and what is group leadership features of group leadership? Most importantly we focused on the discussion about the contingency models of leadership and we discussed in continuation with Fiedler's model of leadership. Today I will continue with another contingency models of leadership that is Path Goal Theory.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:05)

Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

The *path-goal theory*, also known as the *path-goal theory of leader effectiveness* or the *path-goal model*, is a leadership theory developed by Robert House in 1971 and revised in 1996

The term path-goal is derived from the belief that effective leaders clarify the path to help their followers get from where they are to the achievement of their work goals and make the journey easier by reducing the roadblocks and pitfalls

The essence of the path-goal theory is that it is the leader's job is to assist the followers in attaining their goals and to provide direction or support, or both needed to ensure that their goals are compatible with the overall objectives of the group or organization

According to the path-goal theory;

- ✓ a leader's behavior is *acceptable* to subordinates to the degree that it is viewed by them as an immediate source of satisfaction or as means of future satisfaction
- ✓ a leader's behavior is *motivational* to the degree that it (1) makes subordinate need satisfaction contingent on effective performance and (2) provides the coaching, guidance, support, and rewards that are necessary for effective performance

It is also known as path goal theory of leader, effectiveness or path goal model of leadership and it is a leadership developed by Robert House in 1971 and it was again revised by house itself in 1996. So some modifications were there that has taken place after revision so we will discuss this theory accordingly. So if I talk about this model of leadership it is about that how an effective leader identifies the path to help their followers reach, their goal from where they start and where they can reach.

And at the same time tries to reduce all the pitfalls and roadblocks while achieving the goal or reaching the target. So the path goal term which has been given particularly or used particularly in this theory is that it is derived from the belief, that effective leaders clarify or carve the path to help the followers to get there from where, they are and the achievement of their work goals

and make the journey easier by removing all the roadblocks and pitfalls that is the idea behind path goal theory of leadership.

So in a sense it is it has been derived from this theory that the leader's job is to assist the followers in attaining their goals, provide direction and support to the follower's. And wherever needed the goal should be, accomplished while maintaining the compatibility with the overall objectives of the group or the organization. It is not that the effectiveness is measured at to what extent the leader is actually helping or assisting employees or followers to achieve their goals.

Rather the leadership is effectiveness in this model when the leader tries to maintain the compatibility between the individual goals of, the followers and the group goal or organizational goals. So according to Path Goal theory there are two perspectives that has been considered the first is the acceptability and the other is the motivational perspective of leader.

So if we talk about the acceptable perspective of this theory is that a leader's behavior is acceptable if the subordinates agree that the leader is the immediate source of, satisfaction or as a means of future satisfaction. That means the leader is providing all the support and resources to the followers to achieve their goal and it is leading consequently it is leading to the satisfaction of the followers.

It is not completely based on the productive aspect of the leadership that means the leader behavior is also focusing on the satisfaction of the employees. And, the other is the leader's behavior is motivational to the degree that it makes subordinate need satisfactory contingent on effective performance. That means providing all the support and resources and allocation of resources in a way that the employees are also satisfied.

And at the same time they their performance is effective the followers inform performance is affect active it is both the ways. That means the task is also achieved and at the same time the followers needs are also considered at the same time. And the other is that the leader provides the coaching guidance support and rewards that are necessary for effective performance. That means even after allocation of resources utilization of resources along with the consideration of the followers needs the performance of the follower, is also being recognized or rewarded.

So along with support comes the coaching that means craving path for the employees to achieve their goals or maintain compatibility between the follower's goals and the organizational goals. And also recognizing the performance; effective performances of the followers. So this is the

idea behind the contingency models of leadership based on path goal theory that, motivational aspect and at the same time the x stability of the behavior of the leader is also plays a very important role when it comes to achieving organizational goals.

Since we are talking about the acceptable aspect and motivational aspect of leadership House has also identified four leadership behaviours that; under what condition or these behaviors which are contingent upon the, conditions. So that the leader's behaviour is also acceptable and their motivational aspect also is maintained at the same time. So the 4 leadership behaviors that has been identified by house are the directive leader, the achievement oriented leader behavior, the participative leader behaviour and the supportive leader behavior.

That means under which circumstances which kind of leadership is, contingent upon to achieve the group goals. So the first is the directive leader the directive leader let us subordinate knows what is expected from them schedules work to be done and give specific guidance on how to accomplish the task. That means all the detailed directives that what task and how the task has to be performed is being given by the leader.

That means the leader takes the hold at the, same time along with the support and guidance the leader also maintains his behavior and at the same time so that the acceptability is high and at the same time the motivation aspect is also maintained. The other is the achievement-oriented leader behavior sets challenging goals and expects subordinates to perform at the highest level in stage in the in a, state of emergency or some emergent requirement.

The leader can set challenging goals to accomplish from the followers and how the leader takes charge that how the goal has to be achieved. That means the road map is being provided by the leader and at the same time motivation level is also high of the followers. So in this kind of situation the achievement oriented leader behavior is very, dominant in a particular situation.

Ultimately when leadership is contingent upon the situation but in this theory acceptability of the behavior of leader and motivational aspect of the leader behavior has to be maintained which is the crust of this theory.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:54)

To test these assumptions, House identified four leadership behaviors as:

i) **The directive leader:** The directive leader lets subordinates know what is expected from them, schedules work to be done, and gives specific guidance on how to accomplish the task

ii) **The achievement-oriented leader behavior:** The achievement-oriented leader sets challenging goals and expects subordinates to perform at their highest level

iii) **The participative leader behavior:** The participative leader consults with subordinates and uses their suggestions before making a decision

iv) **The supportive leader:** The supportive leader is friendly and shows concern for the needs of subordinates

The other is participative leader behavior the participative leader consults; with subordinates and use their suggestions before making a, decision. That means the leader takes the decision makes the decision that what step has to be initiated to accomplish the goal. But the members or the followers are also participating in decision making process but the idea is that when the members are being allowed to voice their opinions or voice their suggestions and alternatives to the solutions to the problem in the workplace.

Then at that, kind of in that kind of situation the employees or the followers are also motivated. So when they are motivated definitely they accept the behavior of the leader so this is the situation when participative leader behavior is very dominant in a particular situation. And the last is the supportive leader is friendly and shows concern for the needs of subordinates.

Motivation, definitely will be high when the needs are being concerned are of major concern for the leader and the compatibility that a leader creates between leader and the follower that calls for maintaining the 2 perspectives of acceptability of the leader behavior and motivation of the followers. So this is how their 4 leadership style has been identified contingent upon the situation by house and, how various perspectives can be maintained. So that the organizational goals are also maintained and at the same time the followers goals are also maintained.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:35)

The theory further proposes two situational or contingency variables that moderate the leader behavior-outcome relationship

(a) **Environment:** This variable is outside the control of the leader, such as task structure, formal authority system, and workgroup. Environmental factors determine the type of leader behavior required if the follower outcomes are to be maximized

(b) **Followers' personal characteristics:** These include locus of control (the extent to which you feel in control of the events that influence your life), experience, and perceived ability. Personal characteristics of subordinates determine how the environment and leader are interpreted.

Thus, effective leaders clarify the path to help their followers achieve goals and make the journey easier by reducing roadblocks and pitfalls. Research demonstrates that employee performance and satisfaction are positively influenced when the leader compensates for the shortcomings in either the employee or the work setting

This is the one aspect that we have discussed right now that how motivation and acceptability has been considered while identifying the 4 types of leadership as per the situation. Extending the same theory house has also identified 2, contingent variables that moderates the leader behavior outcome relationship acceptability and motivation can only be maintained when 2 moderation moderating variables are also existing at the same time.

That means the environment and the follower's personal characteristics now these 2 contingent variables are the variables which do exist in any kind of environment in any kind of situation. And, these 2 variables are contingent variables are the variables which we cannot control at all we cannot control the environment whatever the environment we have maybe it is a subtle environment maybe it is a it is an emergency situation.

We cannot control that situation and we have to function in the same environment while adapting to it and the other is follower's personal characteristics. Personality we can never change we can only understand so when these 2 factors exist in any environment then it moderates the relationship between the leader and the follower. That means acceptability and motivation can only be maintained when these 2 factors also exist at the same time.

So if we talk about the environment as a contingent variable by the house then this variable is, outside the control of the leader. It is also outside the control of the followers as well such as star structure formal authority system and work group whatever; is the system that has been established to function in the organization that cannot be altered. Every time the situation only can change be it is a cutthroat competition be it any financial crisis or be it any other competitive edge at, which the organization is standing.

So these type of situations cannot be controlled any task has to be performed in a on a basis of a set of rules only. That how a procedure has to be followed to; perform the task so we cannot control these factors even the work groups. How the work groups has been formulated to achieve a common goal it can be in form of team it can be in form of groups or it can be, a group of people where specific people are holding specific expertise to perform the task.

So when all these factors come together then actually the environment becomes very rigid because we need those factors to perform the task and at the same time we have to adapt those factors so that the task can be accomplished. So environment is the main factor which is uncontrollable based on task, structure formal authority system or work group. And at the same time a type of leader behavior is required where the outcome can be maximized.

That means based on the typical task structure formal authority system only we have to get maximum outcome this is one contingent variable that is uncontrollable by the leader and the follower. The other is follower's personal characteristics that what is the personality of each and every group member or team member that also we cannot control. We cannot think of hiring or including members in a group or team where all the members have the similar personality characteristics that is next to impossible.

But yes when so much of diversity exists then also it becomes uncontrollable how to maintain that diversity and getting maximum, output out of that diverse personal characteristics of the members. That highlights the competency of a leader to identify a particular leadership style as per the situation and personal characteristics of the members. So this includes personal characteristics such as locus of control that is a strong belief of an individual that he or she controls the events.

People have this assessment of their own, behavior that I can control the environment that is internal locus of control. Sometimes people have this belief about themselves that their life or evens is controlled by the external factors he or she is not responsible for whatever is happening in his or her life that is external locus of control. So if any follower who has the locus of control that is high internal locus of control, or they have so much of influence on other person or they have different kind of experiences are based on their ability.

Then these kinds of factors cannot be controlled but these can only be determined and controlled by adopting a specific leadership style. So this contingent variable is again uncontrollable. So

we can say that internal locus of control or influence or experience and perceived ability. These factors actually determine how the environment and leader are interpreted. When these; 2 factors are being considered as controllable and at the same time ubiquitous.

That means these factors will be continuously present in the environment in every organization then the leader member relationship can be established while identifying a particular kind of leadership style. So this is how, these 2 environment of factors can be moderated to determine the leader follower relationship. So we can say that the effective leader can clarify the path to help the followers achieve goals and make the journey easier by reducing roadblocks and pitfalls.

And at the same time employee performance and satisfaction are positively influenced when leader compensates for the shortcomings in either the, employee or the working setting. That means environment or follower the any dominant factor can be determined and then the leader behavior can be interpreted so that the leader member behavior can be established. So based on these 4 leadership styles that is the directive the achievement oriented participative and supportive leader behavior then these 4 leadership styles can be determined by, environment and followers personal characteristics.

Now if I again go back to the discussion, I will also consider that if that moderation has been performed between environment and personal characteristics of the follower. Then defining a particular leadership style will actually help to satisfy 2 perspectives again. The leader behavior is acceptable or not and at the same time the leader behavior, is motivational or not. So ultimately these 2 factors the acceptability perspectives basically.

The acceptability of the leader behavior and motivational aspect of leader behavior can only be maintained when environment and personal characteristics of the follower are being moderated based on the interpretation of leadership style.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:11)



So this can be understood based on this diagram that environmental, consistency factors which includes task structure formal authority system and work group and subordinate contingency factors such as such as locus of control a and perceived ability. These 2 factors when are being considered or moderated this actually establish or determine the relationship between leader behavior and the performance outcome of the followers.

So we will move on to the next theory, that is leader participation model but at the same time if I continue my discussion based on this diagram.

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Based on the above discussion, the path-goal theory has evolved the following assumptions as:

- ✓ Directive leadership leads to greater satisfaction when tasks are ambiguous or stressful than when they are highly structured and well laid out
- ✓ Supportive leadership results in high employee performance and satisfaction when subordinates are performing structured tasks
- ✓ Directive leadership is likely to be redundant among subordinates with high ability or with considerable experience
- ✓ The clearer and more bureaucratic the formal authority relationships, the more leaders should exhibit supportive behavior and deemphasize directive behavior
- ✓ Directive leadership will lead to higher employee satisfaction when there is substantive conflict within a work group
- ✓ Subordinates with an internal locus of control (those who believe they control their own destiny) will be most satisfied with a participative style
- ✓ Subordinates with an external locus of control will be most satisfied with a directive style
- ✓ Achievement-oriented leadership will increase subordinates' expectations that effort will lead to high performance when tasks are ambiguously structured

According to Northouse, the theory is useful because it reminds leaders that their central purpose as a leader is to help subordinates define and reach their goals in an efficient manner

Then every leadership style also has its own significance based on the situation which leadership style will lead to what kind of outcome and situation has also been identified by the House. The first is the directive leadership which leads to greater satisfaction when tasks are ambiguous or, stressful than when they are highly structured and well laid out. That means directive leadership

is extremely useful when and very satisfying for the followers when the task are ambiguous and as soon as the follower receive a very defined directive by the early leader.

Then automatically it leads to satisfaction and high performance if supported leadership has been implemented in a particular, situation then automatically it leads to high performance and satisfaction and they are perform and they used to perform a structured task. Even when the task is very difficult to perform if supportive leadership has been adopted by the leader, then the performance is high and satisfying.

Again directive leadership is likely to be redundant among subordinates with high ability or with considerable, experience. That means if the locus of control is very high under such circumstances deductive leadership fails to function rather it will enhance or calls for participative leadership style where members are free to participate in decision making and perform on their own.

The other impact is that the more the formal authority is clear and bureaucratic that means when the formal authority system is very much clear. Then the leader should exhibit supportive behavior and de-emphasize directive behavior. That means if the environment is very controlling the formal authorities are very imposing under such circumstances the leader should adopt a supportive behavior and de-emphasize.

Rather directing or redirecting the focus from directive behavior to supportive behavior again directory leadership, will lead to high employee satisfaction when there is substantive conflict within our group. Definitely when members are all together to work towards the common goal but if there is conflict of interest among all the members and members fail to cooperate or coordinate the task structure or task of the of the employees under such circumstances directive leadership plays very important role.

Because, detailed directives are provided to the followers which leads to performance of task performance and at the same time high level of satisfaction. Because the there is more role clarity the other is subordinates with an internal locus of control will be more satisfied with the participative style. When they are more confident about their own abilities and experience then they prefer to perform better, in under participative leadership style.

And the other is that achievement oriented leadership will increase subordinates expectations that effort will lead to high performance when tasks are ambiguously structured. That means

whenever any challenge has been encountered by the organization and the role clarity is very much diminished that means people do not understand that how they have to face, that emergent situation.

Under such circumstances all the challenging situations are being controlled by achievement oriented leadership. That means detailed directives are also there challenge is also there and motivation is also there. So that the task which is very much not clear or ambiguous because offers more clarity to perform. So we can say that this path goal theory is useful because it reminds leaders that their central purpose as a leader is to help subordinates define and reach their goals in an efficient manner.

No doubt every theory of leadership aims to achieve effectiveness of the performance satisfaction and achievement. But the idea about this discussion is that whenever we are talking about any new leadership style or model there are always consideration about the environment or, some or the other factors which can enhance the leadership style and performance.

If we talk about Fiedler's model of leadership then definitely the aim is similar even if we talk about path goal theory of leadership the aim is common. But the difference is that in both in every third theoretical background the focus is very different of the propounders. In Fiedler's model it is through the development, of least preferred co-worker questionnaire and again in path goal leadership there is again the focus is on leader's behaviour on the environment and leadership style as well.

That means situational factors are a constant factor in leadership behavior when we are talking about organizational goals. So this is one more theory that we have covered as the contingency model of leadership. Next comes, another theory that is leader participation model which we will discuss in the next class thank you so much.