Leadership Style, Subordinate Personality, and Task Type as Predictors of Performance and Satisfaction with Supervision

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Interactions between leadership style, subordinate personality, and task type, and the effects of different combinations of these variables on group performance and satisfaction with supervision were investigated. Three different types of leaders were selected and trained: (a) high in human relations and high in task orientation, (b) low in human relations and high in task orientation, and (c) high in human relations and low in task orientation. Each leader worked with eight high- and eight low-dogmatism subjects on four tasks that differed in ambiguity and difficulty. As predicted, there were significant interaction effects for Leader X Subordinate X Task combinations ($p < .05$). These effects on group performance were strongest for difficult-ambiguous tasks. Subordinates, regardless of their personality, were significantly more satisfied with leadership behavior that was high in human relations orientation.

The field of leadership has evolved from a simple analysis of traits that characterize effective leaders to a far more complex view in which effective leadership behavior is seen as dependent on a number of situational factors. Stogdill's (1974) recent review of the leadership field suggested, however, that little research has been designed to test the complex interactions between leadership style, subordinate personality, and situational demands.

Coupled with the above problem is the fact that few leadership studies have actually manipulated leadership style (Korman, 1966). Inferences about the causal effects of a leader's behavior are inappropriate under these conditions (Fleishman & Hunt, 1973; Stogdill, 1974). The present investigation attempted to address these issues by experimentally manipulating leadership style, subordinate personality, and task variables, and by observing the effects of these manipulations on group performance and satisfaction.

A number of decisions had to be made about which leadership, personality, and task variables to manipulate. An examination of the early work on leadership style suggested two main classes of leadership behavior: task-oriented behavior and human-relations-oriented behavior. These styles are not necessarily mutually exclusive; leaders may be high or low on one, both, or neither of these behavioral dimensions (Fleishman & Hunt, 1973). Stogdill's (1974) review suggests that the relationship between leadership style and performance depends upon the interactions of leader behavior with task or subordinate characteristics. However, the relationship between leadership styles and satisfaction indicates that "person-oriented patterns of leadership tend to enhance employee satisfaction" (Stogdill, 1974, p. 404). While most current approaches have somewhat more elaborate behavioral classification systems (e.g., House & Mitchell, 1974; Likert, 1967; Yukl, 1971), they still include these two basic classes of behavior. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to investigate these two behavioral categories in the present study.

Our second variable of interest was the type of task on which the groups would work. Numerous researchers have studied the role
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of tasks in determining group interaction (Hackman, 1968; Morris, 1966; Weick, 1965; Shaw, Note 1). Kent and McGrath (1969) went so far as to suggest that the type of task controls "the major portion of the variance which is to be accounted for in small group task performance" (p. 439). Studies ignoring the effects of task types on performance lead to research efforts that are not comparable and results that are not cumulative (Fleishman, 1967, 1972).

Perhaps the most thorough task-classification systems for use in studies of group performance are those generated by Shaw (Note 1) and Hackman (1968). Both authors view task difficulty as an important characteristic of the task, whereas others (Fiedler, 1967; House & Mitchell, 1974) have utilized a task structure/ambiguity measure as a moderator of the leadership style/performance relationship. In the present research, we combined the task structure/ambiguity dimension with the easy/difficult dimension to classify the four task types we included.

The third variable to be manipulated was subordinate personality. Of the hundreds of possible dimensions, the extent to which the subordinate is rigid and dogmatic has been the focus of much research investigating subordinate personality dimensions. Vroom (1959) found that a democratic leadership style was significantly more effective with subordinates who were low in authoritarianism and high in need for independence than with subordinates who were the opposite. However, Tosi's (1970) attempt to replicate these findings failed. Rokeach (1960) and Zagona and Zurcher (1964) pointed out that dogmatism and anxiety are related and, therefore, that more ambiguous or difficult tasks should decrease the performance of dogmatic subordinates. Finally, some unpublished research by Shuler, discussed by House and Mitchell (1974), investigated the relationship between the leader's participation, subordinate authoritarianism, task type, and satisfaction. The findings suggested that task ambiguity and subordinate authoritarianism moderate the relationship between participative leadership and subordinate job satisfaction. Thus, the high/low dogmatism dimension of personality was selected for inclusion in the study.

In summary, the present study included the following variables: leadership style (task-oriented/human-relations-oriented); task type (structured/ambiguous and easy/difficult); and subordinate personality (high dogmatism/low dogmatism). Previous research led to the following hypotheses:

1. Task performance will depend on the style of the leader, the personality of the subordinates, and the type of task. A significant three-way interaction is predicted.

2. The proper "match" between leader and subordinates will affect performance more in difficult-ambiguous tasks than in easy-structured ones. In general, we also expect high-dogmatism subjects to work best with a highly task-oriented leader and worst with a highly human-relations-oriented leader. We expect low-dogmatism subjects to work best with a highly human-relations-oriented leader and worst with a highly task-oriented leader.

3. Although satisfaction with supervision will depend partly on the task and the "match" between the leader and his subordinates, we predict that subordinates will be generally more satisfied with a human-relations style than with a task-oriented style. However, low-dogmatism subjects should be more satisfied with a human-relations style than should high-dogmatism subjects.

Method

Subjects

Members. A total of 48 male subjects (out of 500) were selected from introductory psychology courses to serve as group members on the basis of their scores on the Short-Form (20-item) Dogmatism Scale (see Troldahl & Powell, 1965). The estimated split half reliability for this scale is .79. A written form rather than a verbal administration was employed. Those students who were plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean were placed in the appropriate high- or low-dogmatism category. There were 24 subjects in each of the two dogmatism groups. These 48 subjects were randomly paired and assigned to one of the three leaders, and each leader worked separately with eight pairs (eight high-dogmatism subjects and eight low-dogmatism subjects).

Leaders. The three types of leaders were (a) those high in both task orientation and human-relations orientation, (b) those high in task but low in human-relations orientation, and (c) those low in task but high in human-relations orientation.
Two possibilities were initially considered for the manipulation of these styles: random assignment of confederates followed by training designed to produce the desired leader behavior, or selection of three leaders who each had a natural predilection for one of the styles. The former strategy demands a rigorous training program, and a confederate could be assigned a role incompatible with his natural style. The latter strategy includes the possibility that other variables could correlate with leadership style (e.g., need for achievement) and, therefore, that performance differences attributed to the manipulation could be partially caused by these other variables. However, since our main interest was to insure that the leaders behaved differently and in the prescribed manner, this latter problem does not seem too serious. In order to have confidence in the leaders' representation of the three styles, we employed a strategy with a rigorous selection procedure, behavioral instructions and training, and a manipulation check following the experiment.

First, an initial selection of leaders was made on the basis of the Leadership Grid Questionnaire (Hall & Williams, 1967), which generates a measure of task and human-relations orientation. The 10 out of 40 individuals (randomly chosen from the initial 500) that best represented the three leadership styles were selected for further testing and training. Second, these potential leaders were brought together for a group discussion and given a self-report task in which they were to rank order the 10 characteristics of leadership behavior they felt were most important. These rankings were examined and scored by three judges using the two pertinent dimensions as criteria. Third, the potential leaders were told to discuss their philosophies of leadership with one another and decide as a group what constituted effective leadership. They also had to discuss and solve the problem in a case study about a supervisor who had to deal with an ineffective subordinate. This third phase was designed primarily to provide data for observers who rated the group members from behind a one-way glass. The observers noted comments that were task-oriented and human-relations oriented, and then described the potential leaders on a modified version of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Brown, 1967; Sergiovanni, Motzcsus, & Burden, 1969; Stogdill, 1963), which provides an estimate of the degree to which the leader employs consideration and initiating structure. Those three individuals who were consistently rated as having one and only one of the three desired leadership styles were hired as “assistants” for the research project. They were told that they had been selected on the basis of their leadership ability and that they would be working on research designed to examine problem-solving ability in students.

As a final training procedure, the leaders were instructed on how to behave. These instructions included specific statements (e.g., quotes from the LBDQ) that they should utilize in their leadership position. The leaders were paid at an hourly rate for the time spent in conducting the groups, and they were uninformed as to the personality types of those with whom they would be working.

Tasks

The tasks were selected from Shaw's (Note 1) collection of tasks based on the two dimensions of interest: ambiguity and difficulty. The resulting task types were difficult-structured, difficult-ambiguous, easy-structured, and easy-ambiguous.

The criterion for difficult tasks was a rated difficulty score of 5.00 or higher for the high end of that dimension and 3.00 or lower for the low end of that dimension (see Shaw, Note 1). The criteria for ambiguous (low structure) tasks were (a) high solution multiplicity, (b) low decision verifiability, (c) low goal clarity, and (d) high goal- path multiplicity. The structured tasks were in the opposite direction on these four criteria.

Multiple problems were used for each of the four task types. The difficult-structured task consisted of unscrambling a variety of sentences and words to form a sentence. The difficult-ambiguous task demanded that the subjects (a) list pro and con arguments about difficult moral problems and (b) define a given construct and then propose a prescription for the attainment of that construct as it was defined. The easy-structured task consisted of fairly simple math problems, and the easy-ambiguous task required the subject to generate sentences or words from other words (e.g., “form as many words as possible from the word secondary” or “write as many sentences as you can containing the words to, too, and two”).

A time limit of 15 minutes was set for each of the four tasks so that each subject would work on all four tasks an equal amount of time and so that none of the subjects would be able to complete all of the problems. This was done to eliminate a possible ceiling effect and also to ensure that satisfaction ratings would be derived from the leader-subordinate interaction rather than from completion of the task. The tasks were crossed and balanced in a Latin square design to eliminate the possibility of order effects across task types.

Finally, while the four task types varied on the two dimensions of ambiguity/structure and ease/difficulty, the particular task selections were also based on constant ratings on Shaw's (Note 1) other dimensions. The selected tasks had to meet the requirement of a low rating on his cooperation-requirement dimension, because it was necessary that subjects work independently on the tasks in order to minimize the interaction between group members and thus allow maximum interaction with the leader. Another requirement was that the specific tasks had to have similar scores on Shaw's intellectual-manipulative dimension so that they would be more comparable.

Procedure

Each leader was given a list of 16 subjects, 8 high in dogmatism and 8 low in dogmatism. The leader
was not informed of their personality differences and was instructed to arrange for two subjects at a time to participate in the research project. Participation was restricted to two subjects at a time to maximize the impact between the subjects and the leader. Also, the two subjects were given separate cubicles in the experimental situation to minimize their interaction.

When the subjects arrived, the leader greeted them in the foyer and introduced himself. He then interacted with them according to his style and instructions. After 5 to 7 minutes of this interchange, the leader escorted them to their cubicles and began the experiment.

Subjects were instructed to work on the task for 15 minutes, that is, until they were notified to begin the next set of problems. The leaders interacted with the subjects during and between tasks, and care was exercised so that the amount of interaction was constant for all three leaders.

**Measures**

*Performance* was measured according to the objective criteria provided by Shaw (Note 1) for each task. This measure was usually a count of the number of correct responses (e.g., words, sentences, problems solved). The subjects also completed a four-item satisfaction questionnaire at the end of the experimental session. They were asked to rate, on a 5-point scale (5 = very much; 1 = not at all), the degree to which they felt the leader was excellent, their enjoyment of working with the leader, their estimate of the leader’s potential as a leader, and how much the leader motivated them. Subjects were also asked to describe the leader’s behavior on the consideration and initiating structure dimensions of the modified LBDQ Form XII (Stogdill, 1963) as a manipulation check.

The consideration ratings were subjected to a one-way analysis of variance with the three leadership styles as the different factor levels. As expected, the ratings of the leaders were significantly different, \(F(2, 36) = 8.52, p < .001\). The mean consideration scores for the high task/high human-relations oriented leader and the low task/high human-relations oriented leader were substantially higher than those for the high task/low human-relations oriented leader. Another one-way analysis of variance was conducted for the initiating structure ratings and again the results were significant, \(F(2, 36) = 10.00, p < .001\). As expected, the high task/high human-relations oriented leader and high task/low human-relations oriented leaders had substantially higher ratings on initiating structure than the low task/high human-relations oriented leader. These results strongly suggest that the manipulation of leadership style was successful. Thus, while it is possible that these leaders differed on other dimensions as well, it is clear that their behavior was seen as significantly different, and the content of these behaviors fits into our classification of leadership styles. Performance differences can therefore be attributed to behavioral style differences with some confidence.

**Experimental Design and Statistical Procedure**

The combination of three independent variables resulted in a three-way design, \(3 \times 2 \times 4\), with the first factor representing the three styles of leadership, the second factor made up of the two classes of the personality variable, and the four task types representing the third factor in the design. All subjects completed all four task types, which resulted in a repeated measure on the third factor.

The data were first examined for homogeneity of variance, and as expected, the tasks showed a wide divergence in variance due to the different scoring procedures for performance. The Log, scores were found for each raw score, and the midrange score was plotted against the Log, cell mean as outlined by Tukey (1970). The slope was found to be greater than .75 so a logarithmic transformation was performed to reduce score variability and render the scores more amenable to comparison and more suitable for three-way analysis of variance procedures.

**Results**

The first purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that effective leadership is situationally determined, given leadership style, subordinate personality, and task characteristics as independent variables and performance as a dependent variable. This hypothesis was tested using a three-way analysis of variance with one repeated measure, and the data are summarized in Table 1.

The main effect for tasks reached significance at the .001 level, and the three-way interaction effect reached significance at the .05 level. The other main effects and interaction

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Style (L)</td>
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<td>.36</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Personality (P)</td>
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<td>.84</td>
<td>.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>(L \times P)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.24*</td>
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<td>.92</td>
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<td>Task (T)</td>
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<td>96.38</td>
<td>121.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L \times T)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P \times T)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>(L \times P \times T)</td>
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<td>1.73</td>
<td>2.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>.80</td>
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</table>

* \(p < .10\).
** \(p < .05\).
*** \(p < .001\).
effects were not significant, although the Leadership Style \times Subordinate Personality interaction evidenced a strong tendency in that direction ($p < .10$). These results thus confirm our first hypothesis. Leadership styles do not differ significantly when examined across the range of given situational variables, but significant interaction effects do occur and indicate that effectiveness of style is situationally determined.

It should be noted that even though the main effect for tasks was significant at the .001 level, one should interpret this result with caution due to the variability of the task scores. Even when reduced by a log transformation the variance was still large and probably accounted for much of the main effect found for type of tasks. Thus, while we would expect performance to vary as a function of task type, it was still difficult to determine how much of the difference in performance was attributable to the different scoring procedures and how much was attributable to task characteristics alone.

In light of the significant interaction effects found, further analyses were carried out for each task in order to identify the source of these interaction effects. The three-way model

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\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Cell comparison} & \text{Leader task orientation} & \text{Leader human-relations orientation} & \text{Subordinate dogmatism} & \text{Ranking} & F \\
\hline
\text{Difficult-structured task} & & & & & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & 1.69 \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 6 & \\
\hline
\text{Difficult-ambiguous task} & & & & & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & 5.80^{**} \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{high} & 6 & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & 4.45^{**} \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{low} & 5 & \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{high} & 2 & 4.14^{*} \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{high} & 6 & \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 3 & 3.68^{*} \\
\text{low} & \text{low} & \text{high} & 6 & \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{high} & 2 & 2.90^{*} \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{low} & 5 & \\
\text{low} & \text{low} & \text{low} & 3 & 2.51^{*} \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{low} & 5 & \\
\hline
\text{Easy-structured task} & & & & & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & .71 \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{low} & 6 & \\
\hline
\text{Easy-ambiguous task} & & & & & \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{high} & 1 & 1.56 \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{high} & 6 & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

* $p < .05$.  
** $p < .01$. 

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\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Cell comparison} & \text{Leader task orientation} & \text{Leader human-relations orientation} & \text{Subordinate dogmatism} & \text{Ranking} & F \\
\hline
\text{Difficult-structured task} & & & & & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & 1.69 \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 6 & \\
\hline
\text{Difficult-ambiguous task} & & & & & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & 5.80^{**} \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{high} & 6 & \\
\text{high} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 1 & 4.45^{**} \\
\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{low} & 5 & \\
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\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{high} & 6 & \\
\text{low} & \text{high} & \text{low} & 3 & 3.68^{*} \\
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\text{high} & \text{low} & \text{high} & 2 & 2.90^{*} \\
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\hline
\end{array}
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* $p < .05$.  
** $p < .01$.
was reduced to a $3 \times 2$ design with leader style and subordinate personality representing the factors. This model was then studied for each of the four task types, and four separate analyses of variance using performance as the dependent variable were conducted.

The results of these four analyses showed only one significant effect for Leadership $\times$ Personality interactions; this was for the ambiguous-difficult task, $F(2, 42) = 3.245$, $p < .05$. These findings clearly support the first part of our second hypothesis. The match between a leader's style and his subordinate's personality is more important when the task is difficult and ambiguous than when it is easy and structured.

The next step in our analysis was to determine the areas in which “best fits” occurred. First, the performance cell means for each of the six leadership style–subordinate personality combinations were rank ordered according to their subordinates' performance on each of the four original task types. Post hoc comparisons were performed on a selected set of means guided by our earlier theoretical hypotheses. A post hoc comparison procedure explained by Winer (1962, p. 209) was used, and the results are presented in Table 2.

For the difficult-structured task, the high task/high human-relations oriented leader with low-dogmatism subordinates ranked highest, and the low task/high human-relations oriented leader with low-dogmatism subordinates ranked lowest. The difference, however, did not reach significance. For the difficult-ambiguous task, several differences were significant: The high task/high human-relations oriented leader with low-dogmatism subordinates again ranked the highest and performed significantly better than both the high task/low human-relations oriented leader with low-dogmatism subordinates and the low task/high human-relations oriented leader with high-dogmatism subordinates. The high task/high human-relations oriented leader was more effective on the difficult-ambiguous task with low-dogmatism subordinates than was the high task/low human-relations oriented leader with similar subordinates. Figure 1 presents the data for this task.

The low task/high human-relations oriented leader with high-dogmatism subordinates working on the difficult-ambiguous task appears to be an example of a “poor fit” relationship. This combination was ranked last, and the difference between the low task/high human-relations oriented leader with high-dogmatism subordinates and the high task/high human-relations oriented leader with low-dogmatism subordinates was significant ($p < .01$). The high task/low human-relations oriented leader with low-dogmatism subordinates is another incongruent combination. It ranked next to last, and the subordinates in this combination did significantly poorer on performance measures than the low-dogmatism subordinates with a high task/high human-relations oriented leader ($p < .01$).

Another interesting comparison can be seen with the two personality types under the same leader. For the low task/high human-relations oriented leader, the low-dogmatism subordinates did significantly better than the high-dogmatism subordinates on the difficult-ambiguous task ($p < .05$). Also, by comparing high-dogmatism subordinates under two leadership types, it can be seen that the high-dogmatism subordinates did considerably better under the high task/low human-relations oriented leader than under the low task/high human-relations oriented leader.

The last comparison for the difficult-ambiguous task is between the high task/low
human-relations oriented and low task/high human-relations oriented leaders with low-dogmatism subordinates. The low-dogmatism subordinates performed significantly ($p < .05$) better under the low task/high human-relations oriented leader than under the high task/low human-relations oriented leader. The findings for this task are generally in line with the predictions made in our second hypothesis.

For the easy-structured task, the low-dogmatism subordinates with the high task/high human-relations leader scored highest, and those with the high task/low human-relations oriented leader scored lowest, but the difference was not significant. For the easy-ambiguous task, the high-dogmatism subordinates with the low task/high human-relations oriented leader ranked first, but did not perform significantly better than the last-ranked high-dogmatism subordinates with the high task/low human-relations oriented leader.

In summarizing these findings we can make the following conclusions: First, interaction effects between leadership style and subordinate personality are most important for performance in a difficult-ambiguous task. Second, certain good and bad fits between the leader and subordinates are apparent. In general, across tasks, the leader high on both task orientation and human-relations orientation does well with low-dogmatism subordinates. This combination produced the best performance on three of the four tasks. These same low-dogmatism subordinates seem to do better with a high human-relations oriented leader regardless of the leader’s task orientation. High-dogmatism subordinates tend to do better with a high task-oriented leader regardless of the leader’s human-relations orientation. These findings are generally supportive of our first two hypotheses.

To test our last hypothesis, the ratings of satisfaction with the leader from the postexperimental questionnaire were analyzed. Because the satisfaction estimate was an overall rating, it was not possible to analyze differences according to task type. An analysis of variance was performed with satisfaction as the dependent variable and leadership style and subordinate personality as the independent variables. There was a main effect for leadership style, $F(2, 42) = 7.408$, $p < .01$, but the other effects were not significant. Post hoc comparisons between the three leader styles were made, and when the means for the three leadership styles were compared, it was found that the high task/high human-relations oriented style differed significantly from the high task/low human-relations oriented style, $F(5, 42) = 8.47$, $p < .01$, and that the low task/high human-relations oriented style differed significantly from the high task/low human-relations oriented style, $F(5, 42) = 6.35$, $p < .01$. The high task/high human-relations oriented style was liked best; the low task/high human-relations oriented style was next; and the high task/low human-relations oriented style was liked least, regardless of the personality of the subordinates. (These data are presented in Figure 2.) Thus, the first part of the third hypothesis was supported.

To examine the last part of the third hypothesis, the scores on satisfaction with supervision for high-dogmatism/low-dogmatism subjects were compared for each of the three leadership styles. There were no significant differences found in these analyses. The proper “match” between leadership style and subordinate personality seems less important for satisfaction with supervision ratings than for performance measures.

**Discussion**

The importance of situational variables in determining effective leadership styles was
verified in this experiment by using task characteristics and the subordinate personality trait of dogmatism as the situational variables. These findings support the interactionist position in leadership theory. The results become meaningful, however, only when one can specify the relationship between a given situational variable, or variables, and a particular style of leadership.

The leadership style and subordinate personality interaction was marginally significant and accounted for more of the variance than did the other two-way interactions. It appears that the relationship between subordinate personality and leadership style is an important one, and clarification of that relationship is aided by the analyses of the Leader X Subordinate Personality interactions on the individual task types.

The only task on which reliable differences were found was the ambiguous-difficult one. Greater difficulty and ambiguity probably cause greater stress in the leadership situation, and we would thus expect the Leader X Subordinate Personality match to be relatively more important. As we expected, for this task, a leader who uses human-relations behavior makes a good match with low-dogmatism subordinates and a poor match with high-dogmatism subordinates. Leaders who emphasize structuring behavior get better performance from high-dogmatism subordinates than from low-dogmatism subordinates. Thus, this type of match seems more important than the Leader X Task or Subordinate Personality X Task combinations.

The results on satisfaction with supervision seem to fit into the current body of leadership findings (see e.g., Fleishman & Hunt, 1973), but with some modifications. The leader high in both human relations and task orientation is liked best. The leader high in human relations but low in task orientation is liked next best, and the leader high in task orientation but low in human relations orientation is liked least. These findings held true across task type and again point out that the supervisor who is considerate of people may be liked best but may not necessarily be the most effective unless leadership style, subordinate personality, and task type are well matched.

Some limitations of this study should be noted. First, the experimental situation lasted for a little less than an hour and a half. Generalizing to the ongoing work situations of industrial, business, and educational organizations would involve some hazards. Second, a limited number of situational factors were examined, and no doubt many other variables exist that might prove to be significant. Third, the task on which we found most of our significant results (difficult-ambiguous) presents some problems of generalization. This particular task emphasized (a) writing pro and con arguments to difficult ethical/moral problems and (b) defining success and describing the attributes, characteristics, resources, etc., necessary for reaching it as defined. This task, of course, was quite different from the others that required mathematical and analytical skills. The significant findings on this task may be partially attributable, then, to the types of skills required to deal with these problems. These findings would be more generalizable if other difficult, ambiguous tasks requiring different kinds of skills were used. Finally, while no significant interactions were found for the other three task types, this does not imply that the Leader X Subordinate interaction may not be important in other similar tasks. Longer, better controlled, more realistic tasks might produce such results.

In conclusion, this study is presented only as a beginning in identifying and relating situational variables to leadership styles. Further research could easily incorporate other situational factors and tasks into a similar design. After basic relationships have been established, it would be desirable to study these situational variables in a field setting over extended periods of time.

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