A Study of Relationship between Leader Behaviors and Subordinate Job Expectancies: A Path-Goal Approach

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Abstract

This study investigates relationship between leader behavior (directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented) of corporate managers and subordinates' job expectancies using House (1974) Path-goal model of leadership. The results reveal that leader behavior affects subordinates' job expectancies. The situational factors (task structure, role ambiguity, stress, need for autonomy, locus of control, need for achievement and perception about abilities) affect subordinates' job expectancies (I&II). While subordinates' attributes/characteristics (age, gender, qualification, rank, experience and length of service under the current supervisor) do not affect job expectancies (I&II) except for rank/position and expectancy-II.

Path goal theory predicts that directive leader behavior will be more effective for the subordinates with high need for achievement because directive leader through clarifying path guides subordinates. Similarly, participative leader behavior is also effective as he consults with subordinates in setting, clarifying and achieving goals. The results of this study reveal that there is an inverse relationship between subordinates' job expectancy (I&II). According to Yukl (2006), for subordinates with high need for autonomy, participative leader behavior will increase the intrinsic valence of work

Keywords: Leadership, Subordinates' job expectancies, Path-goal theory, Leader behavior.

1. Introduction

Drucker (1993) believed that the quality of product/service and performance of managers are deciding factors of organizational success. Bass (1990) in a study concluded that 45% to 65% of the total factors that cause success or failure of an organization are decided by leaders. Thus it is important to note that the leadership style of a manager has key relationship with success of an organization.

Leadership aims at establishing priorities and marshalling resources to achieve meaningful goals. Managers and supervisors are responsible to determine not only what is important in their organization but also how to get it done by motivating their team members for performing the task. Thus leader must clarify the organizational goals and objectives and to be successful, he must ensure that the team knows both the goals and the strategy.

Middle Managers are viewed as critical actors of corporate performance and change. They are responsible for translating the general goals and plans developed by senior management into more specific objectives and activities (Bateman and Snell, 2007). Dopson (1993) proposed that 'all those below the small group of top strategic managers and above first-level supervision are middle managers'.

Middle managers are key players in achieving organizational objectives by motivating employees, removing obstacles, clarifying paths to goal and rewarding them accordingly. Kanter and Stein (1979) rightly quoted that their central position lies in being caught between those below, whose co-operation they need, and those above, who delegate to them the operational authority to implement the stated policy.

Traditionally, managers and leaders have been defined independently of each other. It is in recent past that the two roles have been defined in conjunction with each other. Campbell (2004) believes that both terms complement each other and balance the changing needs of organizations. Management ensures order and stability, while leadership produces change and movement. Northouse (2004) argues that both processes .i.e. management and Leadership involve influencing a group of individuals towards goal attainment.

2. Leadership

There is a wide range of definitions of Leadership. Stogdill (1974) argued that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who may have attempted to define the concept". Yukl (2006) believes that "numerous definitions of leadership that have been proposed appear to have little less in common" than involving an influence process.

Hemphill and Coons (1957) defined leadership as, "the behavior of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal". Tannenbaum et al. (1964) considered leadership influence of human relations. Fiedler (1967) believed that leadership is a process to apply power and influence to make people work together and accomplish common goals. According to Katz and Kahn (1978) leadership is, "the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization". Rauch and Behling (1984), Robbins (1993) and Hsieh (1993) regarded leadership as the process of influencing a group to the goal achievement.

Jacob and Jaques (1990) defined leadership as "a process of giving purpose or meaningful direction to collective effort and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose". House et al. (1999) believed leadership as an "ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of an organization".

Leadership is not a position, title or privilege rather a process which is observable; understandable that touches on many personal, organizational and social processes. It influences other persons and inspires them to work for the organizational objectives through motivation and not coercion.

2.1 Theories of leadership

As the topic of scholarly debate and, the subject of theoretical and empirical research for the past 100 years, leadership has a long tradition. Although many ideas of the past have fallen from popular favor, the evolution of leadership is both reflected in a critical to the

understanding of the dominant leadership theories of the present day (Barling et al., 2011).

The leadership theories can be classified as;

(1) Trait Theories: These theories tried to identify the physical or psychological traits that differentiated leaders from non-leaders and good leaders from bad leaders (House and Aditya, 1997).

(2) Behavior Theories: These theories attempted to uncover and verify leadership behaviors that were universally effective. These studies through experiments proved that different leadership styles produce different and complex reactions from same group. Stogdill (1963), Likert (1967), and Kotter (1988) also offered behavioral theories of leadership.

(3) Situational Contingency Theories: These theories are build on behavioral theories and believe that effectiveness of leader traits or behavior is dependent upon situation that include organization type, the workplace and the followers (Barling et al., 2011).Fiedler's (1967) contingency model, House (1971) path-goal theory and Kerr and Jermier (1978) substitute for leadership have received significant theoretical and empirical attention.

(4) Modern Approaches to Leadership: Burns (1978) introduced the concept of 'transforming leadership' stating "transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher level of motivation and morality". Weber (1947) and House (1977) introduced concept of charismatic leadership which became popular in 1980s and 90s.

There is no agreement between practitioners and academics as which theory or model is most effective since a single theory cannot explain all situations/circumstances having both strengths and weaknesses.

2.2 Path-Goal Theory

Companies employ large number of persons having different ability and motivation. Therefore, it is important for managers to use an appropriate leadership style for subordinate's readiness to accomplish tasks and achieve organizational goals. Considering the purpose and context of research, House (1974) Path-Goal leadership theory is appropriate model for this study. Hunt (1996) argues that path-goal leadership theory (House, 1974) has existed for almost four decades and it is currently one of the major approaches to leadership that is covered by virtually all basic textbooks on management and organizational behavior Additionally, number of doctoral thesis, over 120 scholarly articles and several in depth reviews have been written exploring the theory's scientific merits (e.g., Wofford and Liska, 1993; Yukl, 1998).

House (1996) in "Path-Goal Theory of Leadership: Lessons, legacy, and reformulated theory" says that path-goal theory is primarily a theory of task and person oriented supervisory behavior which does not concerns the leadership of entire organization, rather only the specified work unit. It specifies leader behaviors that enhance subordinate satisfaction and effectiveness of both work unit and subordinate by addressing the effects of leaders' behaviors on the motivation and abilities of immediate subordinate and work unit performance.

Barling et al. (2011) believe that path-goal theory had two objectives: (a) identify roles and behaviors of effective leaders (b) explore situational contingencies that modify those

behaviors. House and Mitchell (1974) said that leader behavior is acceptable and satisfying to the extent that the subordinates see such behavior either an immediate source of satisfaction or instrumental to future satisfaction. Kreitner and Kinicki (2007) believe that leader behavior is predicted to be motivational if: (1) reduces roadblocks that interfere with goal accomplishment (2) provides guidance and support needed by subordinates (3) ties meaningful rewards to goal accomplishment. Thus leader role is to align individual goals with organizational goals and facilitate the achievement of such goals by encouraging them to achieve these goals, clarifying the path towards goal attainment and ensuring that goals are valuable to followers.

House and Mitchell (1974) identified four categories of leadership behavior. *Directive* leader gives subordinates clear and specific instructions to perform their tasks, the timeline for task, and the standards of performance measurement. *Supportive* leader shows concern for the well being and needs of the subordinates and treat them as equals. *Participative* leader involves subordinates in decision making by asking for ideas, opinions and takes their suggestions into account. The final leader behavior identified is *Achievement-Oriented* which involves creating challenging and high standard performance goals for subordinates and seeks for continuous improvement by showing great confidence in subordinates.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) believe that leadership behaviors are, by definition, behaviors that fall within a range of typical behaviors but are not always identical or exhibited. Leadership behaviors are not fixed behaviors rather depending on the situation; leaders will vary their behaviors as required by the situation at hand.

Path-goal leadership proposes that the effectiveness of leader is influenced by the interaction of leader behaviors (directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented) with two types of contingency factors: subordinate characteristics and environment. Contingency factors are the situational variables that cause one leadership style to be more effective than another (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2007). .

Subordinate characteristics include: *Need for Autonomy*: refers subordinate desire to be independent and in self control; Need for Achievement: refers to subordinates' instinct of striving for and attaining a level of excellence(Feldman, 1999); *Locus of Control*: is belief of subordinates that they are "master of their own fates" or whatever happens to them in life is a result of "luck, chance, or outside people and events" (Daft, 2008); *Perceived* Ability: is the extent of the subordinates' ability to perform tasks and achieve goals.

The environmental characteristics include: *Task Structure* is the extent to which the nature and the requirements of task are specified. It is the degree to which a task , job, work assignment is simple, repetitive and unambiguous (House and Dessler, 1974); *Role Ambiguity* is experiencing lack of clarity about what is expected of one, how one will be evaluated, and criteria for evaluation (House, 1996). It refers to the degree of uncertainty an employee has about the work role such as duties, authority, allocation of time, relationship with coworkers, directives, policies etc.(Nissa, 2003); Stress refers to body's biological response to an intense physical, emotional or mental demand/threatening situation placed on it by oneself or others (Ellison, 1998).

House (1996) says that path-Goal theory was stimulated by Evan's (1970) paper, "The effects of Supervisory Behavior on the Path-Goal Relationship" and expectancy theory of motivation. House and Mitchell (1974) define the strategic functions of a leader as:

1. Understanding and stimulating subordinates' needs for outcomes

2. Enhancing followers' incentives in order to motivate them for attainment of goals

3. Helping the followers to step forward in order to achieve those incentives

4. Making the followers understand what is expected of them

5. Finally, the leader should reduce those barriers which create frustrations and enhance chances that effective performance results in personal satisfaction.

House, (1970) says that based on expectancy theory, leaders should increase the personal rewards, subordinates receive upon achieving goals along with making the path to these goals easier to follow, by clarifying it and reducing roadblocks and pitfalls. White and Bendar (1986) noted that in order to predict specific behavior in a particular situation, individual's expectancies in that situation should be considered.

Expectancy Theory assumes that people are motivated to work when they believe that they can achieve things they want from their jobs. There is a relationship between expectancy, effort, productivity and reward. Werner (2002) states that a person will exert a high effort if he/she believes there is reasonable probability that the effort will lead to the attainment of an organizational goal, and the attainment of the organizational goal will become an instrument through which that person will attain his/her personal goals.

According to expectancy theory, motivation depends on a person's belief that efforts lead to performance (expectancy 1) and performance leads to rewards (expectancy II). House and Dessler (1974) believe that expectancy II refers to the degree to which high quality, quantity and timely performance lead to extrinsic rewards such as increased pay, promotion, recognition or security.

According to Coetsee (2003), performance is the realization of goals and meeting of expectations. While Kew *et al.* (2007) define performance management as a continuous cycle of improving job performance with goal-setting, feedback, coaching, rewards and positive reinforcement. Managers play central role in sustaining employees' commitment to perform their jobs, boost their morale and ensure job satisfaction.

Charlton (2000) believes that extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have reciprocal motivational effects. Similarly, Shah and Shah (2008) summed up that the need for recognition and a sense of belonging affect employees' perform beyond expectation.

Expectancy	X	*Instrumentality*	X	*Valence*
Effort	→	**Performance**	→	**Rewards**
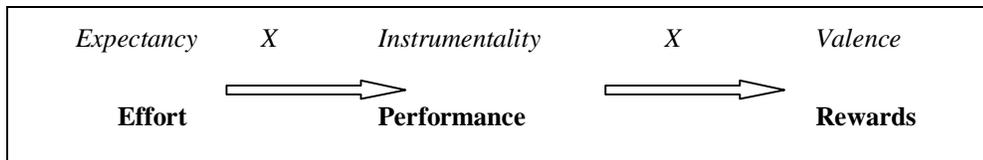
Indvik (1989) believe that subordinate expectancies (I&II) are the "cornerstones of Path-goal explanation, their absence indicates a dearth of complete tests of path-goal hypotheses". This study addresses this issue by studying relationship between leader behaviour and subordinate job expectancies.

3. Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leader behavior and subordinates job expectancies. This study was dealing with variables whose manifestation had occurred already. Thus Correlational design was used to investigate the effect of leader behavior on subordinates' job expectancies.

3.1 Participants

Participants included 200 employees working in a variety of jobs in cellular industry. Stratified random sampling technique was used and to ensure equal representation from the four selected cellular companies, 15 middle managers and 35 supervisors were randomly selected from the list.

3.2 Procedure

Participants were asked their opinion about leader behavior and their own job expectancies through survey questionnaire. The survey included a cover letter informing participants about the purpose of study and requested to complete survey on the basis of their work experience and attitudes.

3.3 Measures

Leadership Behavior: Four leader behaviors were measured through a set of 20 questions; five each measuring directive and participative leadership behavior; seven measuring supportive; and three measuring achievement-oriented leader behavior. Items were used to measure the perception of participants about their leader behavior. A sample item for supportive leader behavior is, "He is friendly and approachable" and for participative leader behavior, "Before making decisions, he gives serious consideration to what his subordinates have to say". Participants indicated their responses on a five-point Likert-type scale (1) always to (5) never.

Job Expectancies: Tow six-item scales were used to measure job expectancy-I and job expectancy-II. A sample item for job expectancy-I is, "Putting forth as much energy as possible, leads to my producing high quality output" and for job expectancy-II, "The Company gives me recognition for producing high quality output". Participants indicated the extent to which they believe the outcome using five-point Likert-type scale (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree.

4. Results

The results of study revealed that gender, age, educational qualification and experience did not affect job expectancies of participants except the position/hierarchy i.e. supervisors and middle managers had different perceptions of job expectancies (I&II).While, Leader behavior is significantly related with subordinates' job expectancies(I&II).

H$_{01}$. Subordinates' attributes (age, gender, qualification, rank, experience and length of service under the current supervisor) strongly affect their job expectancies (I&II).

Predictors	B	t –value	p	R	F-Ratio	Sig	R^2
Age	.957	.063	.512	.019			
Gender	1.509	.116	.193	.138			
Qualification	.205	.049	.576	.043	1.057	0.395	0.54
Rank	2.098	.161	.076	.144			
Experience	-.295	-.045	.667	-.002			
Service	-1.137	-.123	.172	-.097			

The R-square of .54 implies that the attributes of subordinates accounted for 54 percent of the variation in subordinates' job expectancy I and value of F (1.057) was not significant. Similarly, beta and t-values of age , gender, qualification, rank, experience and length of service were all insignificant and had moderate correlation except for experience and service under current supervisor (having -ve correlation) with the subordinates job expectancy I.

Predictors	B	t – value	p	R	F-Ratio	Sig	R^2
Age	-1.034	-.696	.488	-.063			
Gender	.015	.013	.990	.030			
Qualification	-.309	-.826	.410	-.064			
Rank	3.367	2.865	.005	.246	1.453	0.190	0.73
Salary	.246	.634	.527	.035			
Experience	-.252	-.361	.719	.000			
Service	-.293	-.348	.728	.004			

The analysis of data resulted in R-square of .73 while value of F (1.453), p (.190) was not significant that means the attributes of subordinates cannot be used as predictors of job expectancy II.

H$_{02}$. Leadership behavior significantly affects subordinates' job expectancies (I and II).

	Count	Correlation	p value	R-Square	% VOC
Directive	156	.062	.439	.003	0.38
Supportive	158	.159	.046	.025	2.50
Participative	158	.036	.652	.001	0.12
Achievement Oriented	158	.129	.105	.016	1.66

The correlation coefficient of leader behavior and job expectancy I is (.062); (.159); (.036) and; (.129) for directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented respectively. The three correlation coefficients (directive, participative and achievement oriented leader behavior) with expectancy I are not significant. Somehow, there is a weaker relationship between the supportive leadership behavior and job expectancy I, as only 2.5% variance in job expectancy I is due to supportive leadership behavior.

	Count	Correlation	p value	R-Square	% VOC
Directive	156	.091	.257	.008	0.82
Supportive	158	.078	.330	.006	0.60
Participative	158	.034	.672	.001	0.11
Achievement Oriented	158	.110	.169	.012	1.12

The correlation coefficient of expectancy II & leader behavior is (.091); (.078); (.110) for directive, supportive and; for achievement –oriented leader respectively which are not significant while, correlation coefficient for participative leadership behavior and expectancy II is (.034) which is significant and only 0.11% variance in job expectancy II is due to participative leadership behavior.

The linear regression analysis for linear combination of four leader behaviors and job expectancies is as follows

t value	P	B	F-Ratio	R	R^2
7.919	.000	18.122	2.618	.128	.017

Based on the values of job expectancy-I (.128), t (158) =7.919, and p =.000, It was concluded that leadership behavior affects subordinates perception of subordinates that effort leads to performance (job expectancy-I).

t value	P	B	F-Ratio	R	R^2
7.488	.000	17.620	1.419	.095	.009

While, the correlation between leadership behavior (directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented) and job expectancy II was .095. The R-square of .009 implies that .9 percent of the variation in job expectancy II.

H$_{03}$. Situational factors (task structure, role ambiguity, stress, need for autonomy, locus of control, need for achievement and perception about abilities) affect subordinates' job expectancies (I & II).

Predictors	B	t – value	p	r	F-Ratio	Sig	R^2
Locus of Control	-.022	-.133	.894	.238			
Ability	.419	2.380	.019	.434			
Task Structure	-.169	-1.554	.123	-.037			
Role Ambiguity	.247	3.104	.002	.387	7.825	.000	.317
Stress	.014	.138	.890	-.002			
Achievement Need	-.035	-.244	.808	.222			
Autonomy Need	.546	2.669	.009	.437			

The value of square (.317) implies that the situational factors accounted for 31 percent of the variation in job expectancy- I. The value of F (7.825) was greater than critical value. Further, based on t values it was concluded that situational factor: role ambiguity; autonomy need and; ability could be used as predictor of job expectancy I.

Predictors	B	t – value	p	r	F- Ratio	Sig	R²
Locus of Control	.210	1.159	.249	.276			
Ability	-.161	-.851	.396	.160			
Task Structure	-.049	-.421	.674	.088			
Role Ambiguity	.295	3.454	.001	.356	5.463	.000	.245
Stress	-.107	-.944	.347	-.074			
Achievement Need	-.231	-1.505	.135	.082			
Autonomy Need	.664	3.016	.003	.391			

The R-square of .245 implies that the situational factors accounted for 24 percent of the variation in expectancy II. Based on value of F (5.463) which was greater than the critical value it was further concluded that individual variables: role ambiguity t (126) = 3.454, p = .001 and; autonomy need t (126) = 3.016, p = .003 can be used as predictor of subordinates' job expectancy II.

5. Findings

The Null Hypothesis of the study that there is no significant relationship between leader behavior and subordinates' job expectancies was accepted. While the Null Hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between linear combination of four leader behaviors(directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented) and subordinates' job expectancies (I&II) of subordinates was rejected. Thus it may be deduced that leader behavior affects subordinates' job expectancies and can be used as predictor of subordinates' job expectancies.

Further, Null Hypotheses that there is no significant relationship between subordinates attributes (age, gender, qualification, rank, experience and length of service under the current supervisor.) and job expectancies (I&II) was accepted except rank/position and expectancy-II, which was rejected.

The Null Hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between situational factors (task structure, role ambiguity, stress, need for autonomy, locus of control, need for

achievement, and perception about abilities) and subordinates' job expectancies (I&II) was rejected. The regression analysis for situational factors (locus of control, ability, task structure, role ambiguity, stress, achievement need and autonomy need) and job expectancy I had strong R –square (.317) which implies that the situational factors accounted for 31 percent of the variation in expectancy I while F value (126) 7.825 was greater than critical value(.05).

Similarly, the Null Hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of Supervisor/lower manager and middle manager regarding job expectancy (I&II) was rejected.

5.1 Discussion

The major objective this study was to test path-goal theory with reference to expectancy theory. The reward management system of the cellular companies gives enough powers to its managers to reward the high performing individuals but this study revealed a weaker relationship between leader behavior and subordinates' job expectancy (I) except for supportive leader behavior. This is in non conformity with path-goal assumption that superior behavior may increase effort when it makes satisfaction of a subordinates' needs contingent upon effective performance and/or when it complements work environment through coaching, guidance, support and rewards necessary for effective performance. According to House(1971, p.234), "the motivational function of the leader consists of increasing payoffs to subordinates for work-goal attainment and making the path to these pay offs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing roadblocks and pit falls, and increasing the opportunities of personal satisfaction en route". While linear combination of leader behavior affected the subordinates job expectancies. This result points out a potential flaw in the management practices in the judicious use of reward system. When an individual is convinced that organizational justice does not prevail and there is no difference between high performer and poor performer rather both are being treated equally, then individuals stop putting extra efforts and giving high productivity. Thus it has important implications for the HR managers. This is further supported by expectancy theory which describes work motivation in terms of a rational choice process in which a person decides how much effort to devote to do the job at a given point of time. In choosing between maximal/minimal efforts, a person considers the likelihood that task completion will result in desirable outcomes (Vroom, 1964).

Subordinates' attributes/characteristics (age, gender, qualification, rank, experience and length of service under the current supervisor) don't affect job expectancies (I&II) except rank/position and expectancy-II, which means that every individual is very well aware of the existing reward system which educates organizational members as if what is expected from them and as result what they can expect from the system.

The situational factors (task structure, role ambiguity, stress, need for autonomy, locus of control, need for achievement and perception about abilities) affect subordinates' job expectancies (I&II).Path goal theory predicted that directive leader behavior will be more effective for the subordinates with high need for achievement because directive leader through clarifying path guides subordinates. Similarly, participative leader behavior is also effective as he consults with subordinates in setting, clarifying and achieving goals. The results of this study reveal that there is an inverse relationship between subordinates'

job expectancy (I&II). According to Yukl (2006), for subordinates with high need for autonomy, participative leader behavior will increase the intrinsic valence of work.

The management is believed to influence individual behavior. Thus, management is the scale on which followers perceive environment responding to their behaviors. The results of study illustrate that management has negative relation with job expectancy (I) which means they had external management and externals had greater acceptance for instructive leader behavior.

5.2 Implications for Corporate Leaders

Middle managers have been viewed as critical actors of corporate performance and change. Mintzberg (1999) believes that middle managers get direct qualitative information which is priceless for strategic decision-making. Further, they have 'tacit knowledge' which is essential for strategy formation. Thus their middleness lies in being caught between those below, whose co-operation they need, and those above, who desire from them to implement stated policy/achieve given targets as per deadlines.

Leadership cannot be thought in vacuum rather it is a product of situation and experiences. The situation in which job is done and the people, who will do it, can't be seen separately. The managers who have achieved excellence in one organization may be total failure in other organization because of different situation. According to situational leadership theory, a leader behavior depends on the situation, so for leaders to be successful everywhere and in every situation, he/she must be flexible to adopt the appropriate behavior as situation demands. Path-goal theory holds that the leadership behavior of an individual varies from situation to situation. In other words, depending upon situation i.e. nature of problem or circumstances in the organization, an effective leader adjusts his or her leadership behavior accordingly. The path-goal theory relates different types of leadership behavior to differing attitudes and behavioral responses of subordinates. For example, if subordinates lack confidence in their ability to do the job, they may need more consideration and support, but if subordinates' perception about ability is high, a leader should delegate responsibilities to the subordinates, set challenging goals for them to achieve and show confidence in subordinates

In its most succinct terms, the function of a leader as explicated in path-goal theory is "To increase personal pay-offs to subordinates for work-goal attainment and make the path to these pay-offs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing road blocks and pitfalls, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction en route"(House, 1971). Thus, the effective leader is one who assists subordinates through paths, which ultimately leads to organizationally-desired and individually-valued outcomes. The need for such leadership is moderated by characteristics of the environment as well as by characteristics of the subordinates. As Bass (2008) notes: "The leader 'needs to complement only what is missing in a situation to enhance the subordinate's motivation, satisfaction, and performance".

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