

CHAPTER NINE

Major Nonpersonal Influences on Managerial Behavior

INTRODUCTION

What This Chapter Is About

Chapter Eight described various ways in which managers can behave toward subordinates. The next two chapters explore reasons why managers are inclined to use particular managerial styles. This chapter describes how various nonpersonal variables can affect not only managers' and leaders' behavior but also their subordinates' motivation, attitudes, and behavior. As Jackson and Peterson (2004) and many others have observed over the years, both organizational and external phenomena exert significant influences on organizational behavior. Managers and leaders must not only be aware of these nonpersonal influences but also must understand them in order to better deal with them.

Several categories of variables in the socio-technical model described in this chapter are nonpersonal (external to a manager or leader):

- *Task-related or technological factors* include the nature of subordinates' jobs (whether they are mechanistic, organic, or somewhere in between); how mechanistic jobs can be made less mechanistic and more inherently motivating (through job enrichment and participative practices); and the natures of different managers' jobs.
- *Organizational variables* or influences include immediate superiors' styles; colleagues' styles; the nature of an organization (mechanistic, organic, or permissive); the type of organization (structures, systems, and pervasive styles); and how an organization changes and deals with growth.
- *Social factors* or phenomena involve social groups, their norms, and the sanctions they use to foster desired attitudes and behaviors.
- *External or outside forces* and factors include the level and stability of technologies involved in personnel's jobs; marketplace and competitive conditions; economic and

business conditions; societal or cultural norms; and subordinates' characteristics and behavior.

The relative importance of these nonpersonal socio-technical factors is also briefly discussed.

What Consultants, Trainers, and Facilitators Can Get Out of This Chapter

Management style can have a major impact on workers' productivity and work satisfaction. But how do various management styles affect workers? And how do various nonpersonal socio-technical factors affect styles and other organizational factors? These are questions that consultants, trainers, and facilitators should ponder as they read this chapter.

After studying this chapter, consultants, trainers, and facilitators should be able to help participants

- Analyze issues that influence management style
- Improve socio-technical influences on managers' styles throughout an organization
- Better align the management styles of individual managers with an organization's culture
- Identify how the nature of an organization is influencing managers' styles and how to change one or both as needed to meet the organization's strategic objectives

What Practicing Managers, Participants, or Students Can Get Out of This Chapter

After studying and discussing this chapter, the student or seminar participant should be able to

- Identify and more effectively deal with nonpersonal socio-technical factors that are exerting dysfunctional influences on his or her own managerial, supervisory, or leadership knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior
- Identify and more effectively participate in dealing with nonpersonal socio-technical factors that are exerting dysfunctional influences on bosses' and colleagues' managerial or leadership knowledge, attitudes, skills, and styles
- Identify and more effectively improve or further develop the managerial knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior of his or her subordinates
- Identify and more effectively participate in dealing with nonpersonal socio-technical factors that are exerting dysfunctional influences on motivation, attitudes, behavior, interactions, and performance throughout the organization
- Better understand nonpersonal influences on subordinates' (and others') motivation, attitudes, interactions, and behavior, and thereby more insightfully and wisely evaluate their performance (or behavior, relationships, and so on)

How Instructors and Participants Can Use the CD-ROM's Supplementary Materials

The accompanying CD-ROM contains the following item for Chapter Nine:

- *Chapter Nine Study Guide*. This class or seminar session preparation guide should be completed by students and seminar participants for all of the reasons outlined in previous chapters.

THE SOCIO-TECHNICAL CONTEXT

Behavior in every organization is influenced by a host of specific factors, variables, or inputs. According to the socio-technical model originated by Eric Trist (1960) of London’s Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, each factor can be placed in one of the five categories shown on the left side of Figure 9.1: (1) task-related factors involving the technical, functional, or professional aspects of personnel’s jobs; (2) personnel’s characteristics; (3) organizational variables; (4) social or interpersonal variables; and (5) forces or factors outside an organization. All these variables, many of which are listed in Table 3.1 (page 52), operate with and act on each other as a system, affecting personnel’s attitudes, activities, and interactions.

The socio-technical model can also be applied to managerial behavior. The arrows in Figure 9.1 indicate that the five categories of factors—and the attitudes, activities, and interactions they elicit in other personnel—are also influences on any particular manager, leader, or supervisor’s characteristics and behavior. Because so many variables influence managerial behavior, no single one can be considered *the* major influence. In fact, the influences of these factors often conflict. Some may push a manager toward the use of one style, while others push him toward the use of one or more entirely different styles. Thus, it should be kept in mind that *an individual’s style reflects the net effect of all nonpersonal and personal factors’ influences*. It should also be kept in mind that a manager’s behavior affects many of the same nonpersonal (and personal) factors that influence his or her behavior, as shown in Figure 9.1.

Although some socio-technical variables are more important or powerful than others, it is absolutely necessary for managers and MD and OD practitioners to understand the influences exerted by all of them. As Tracey, Tannenbaum, and Kavanagh (1995) and, more recently, van Dierendonck, Le Blanc, and van Breukelen (2002) have acknowledged, it is particularly important for managers to consider the possible influences of nonpersonal forces and factors in order to (a) successfully develop their own and their subordinates’ capabilities and attitudes and (b) improve other major socio-technical influences on their personnel’s behavior and performance.

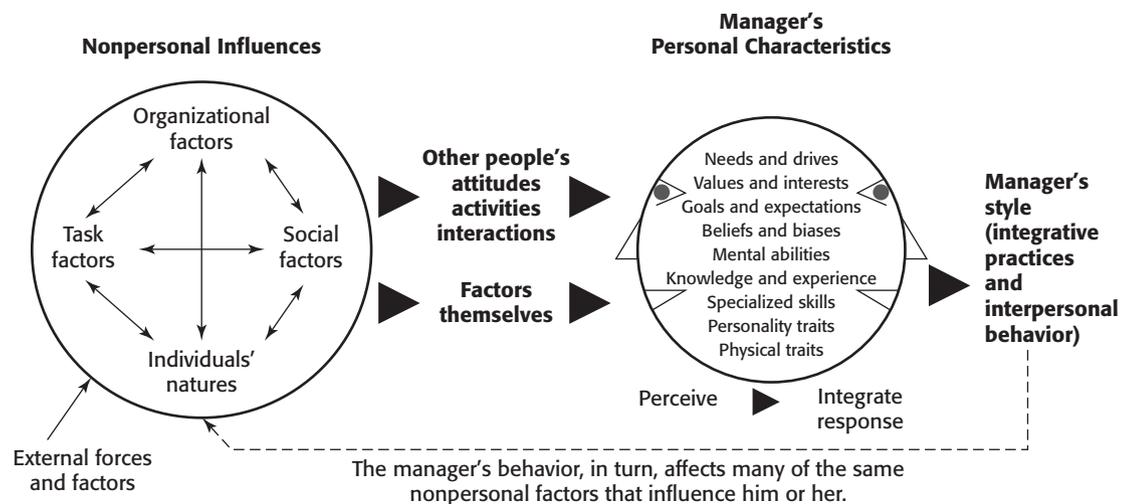


Figure 9.1. The Manager in a Socio-Technical System

In other words, managers must become better able to influence or deal with socio-technical variables, even though they cannot control all of them.

Managerial behavior and organizational structure are very closely related. Each affects the other. More important, both are usually influenced to a great extent by the characteristics of personnel's tasks.

TASK-RELATED OR TECHNOLOGICAL VARIABLES

The Natures of Subordinates' Jobs

Every task, whether general or finite, can be described in terms of levels or degrees of certain basic characteristics. These characteristics are shown in Table 9.1. The nature of a particular task can range from very *mechanistic* to very *organic*, terms coined by Tom Burns and G. M. Stalker (1961). The following are basic definitions of the two types.

Mechanistic tasks. In general, a task is more mechanistic (a) the simpler it is (the fewer and more elementary the skills required); (b) the less the original thought required; (c) the more easily it can be performed habitually or mechanically; and (d) the more definable, routine, unchanging, and certain it is. Examples of mechanistic tasks include drilling a hole in an object or assembling two parts; painting an object; servicing a simple machine; hammering a nail or digging a hole; adding numbers on a calculator; typing a memo; or filing a report.

Organic tasks. In general, a task is more organic (a) the more complex it is (the more mental abilities, thought, and concentration required) and (b) the more ambiguous, changing, and uncertain it is. Essentially, an organic task involves thinking. Examples of organic tasks include analyzing or evaluating something, formulating a goal or plan, arriving at an innovative idea, making a decision, communicating a concept, and solving a problem.

Mechanistic Jobs. As one would expect, the natures of jobs are a function of the natures of the component tasks involved. Jobs composed of very mechanistic tasks are most often found at the worker level. In most organizations, jobs become increasingly less mechanistic (or more

Table 9.1. General Natures of Tasks

CHARACTERISTICS	MECHANISTIC TASKS	ORGANIC TASKS
Complexity	Simple (manual or physical)	Complex (thought-oriented)
Variability	Routine, repetitious	Varying
Specificity of definition	Clearly and easily definable and prescribable in specific terms	Ambiguous
Amount of change	Unchanging	Frequent or unexpected change
Certainty of information used	Certain information	Uncertain information
Time span to outputs or results	Immediate outputs	Delayed results or effects
Tangibility or measurability of outputs or results	Output tangible, easy to measure and evaluate	Results or effects intangible, difficult to measure and evaluate

organic) at each successively higher level in the organization. Highly organic jobs are generally found at the top of an organization and also in highly technical or professional units.

Because mechanistic jobs involve very visible manual or physical activity and yield immediate outputs or results that are tangible and easy to measure and evaluate, they are easy to direct and control. Thus, they are generally directed and controlled—in a Theory X manner—especially when first-line supervisors' worker-level subordinates perform highly mechanistic jobs. Here are several reasons:

First, since they can direct and control subordinates' activities rather easily and self-confidently, supervisors are inclined to *be* directive and controlling.

Second, largely because mechanistic jobs can be directed and controlled rather easily, many supervisors are not required to have much supervisory expertise. To get things done, they can use their technical- or expertise-based influence—if they have it. If they do not, they are inclined to use their position-based authority, which is characteristic of the Theory X style.

Third, mechanistic jobs are usually very dull, monotonous, unchallenging, and unfulfilling. When subordinates derive little satisfaction from the work itself, they are inclined to turn their energies toward more fulfilling but less productive activities, such as socializing and daydreaming. They are also inclined to become rather uncooperative. Add the fact that personnel who perform mechanistic jobs traditionally have a narrow range of skills and low organizational status, and it is easy to understand why supervisors would (a) fail to recognize that unfulfilling work is actually causing uncooperativeness and a seeming lack of motivation, (b) view subordinates in a Theory X manner, (c) regard them as “tools of production,” (d) use positive and negative stimulators as “motivators,” and (e) be inclined to monitor activities closely. In fact, supervisors' inclination to behave in this Theory X manner may be increased if they view subordinates' nonproductive and uncooperative behavior as either a personal insult or an affront to their positional authority.

Several combinations of mechanistic characteristics can also influence supervisory behavior more indirectly, by influencing managers to establish directive and controlling, mechanistic structures for supervisors and their subordinates. First, because certain efficiencies can be achieved by giving each worker a simple task to perform repetitiously, managers are inclined to develop mechanistic job descriptions for worker-level personnel. Second, because jobs are often engineered into a systematized work flow such as an assembly line, no one but the supervisor is in a position to have an overview of the entire system and to keep it operating like a well-oiled machine. As a result, supervisors must be on top of the situation at all times, continually scheduling, directing, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating activities in short-term, recurring cycles that closely correspond to workers' short-spanned, repetitious activity cycles. (This situation is often made worse when managers assume that supervisors can handle as many as fifty immediate subordinates.) Third, because managers may view workers' jobs as simple and view the workers themselves in a Theory X manner, they often formulate output objectives, work schedules, performance standards, and policies and procedures for workers to follow. They then make supervisors responsible for ensuring that all those requirements are met. In short, supervisors are made the agents of direction and control.

Mechanistic jobs can be made less mechanistic through (a) job enrichment practices such as redesigning or re-aligning the tasks involved, and (b) participative practices that incorporate integrative responsibilities into job descriptions (for example, responsibilities for being self-directing and self-controlling and for participating in planning, problem-solving, and decision-making processes).

Table 9.2. Unit or Departmental Characteristics and Structures in Relation to Tasks and People

FACTORS OR CHARACTERISTICS	Production Workers	Clerical and Bookkeeping	Sales Personnel	Research Personnel	Marketing, Finance, and Production Management Personnel
Task Characteristics					
Complexity	Simple	Rather simple	Medium complexity	Complex	Complex
Variability	Routine	Rather routine	Routine to varying	Varying	Varying
Specificity of job description	Clearly definable	Clearly definable	Definable	Ambiguous	Ambiguous
Time span to outputs or results	Immediate output	Immediate results	Short to medium term	Long-term results	Delayed results
Tangibility of outputs or results	High tangibility	Medium tangibility	Medium tangibility	Low tangibility	Low tangibility
Measurability of outputs or results	High measurability	Medium measurability	Medium measurability	Low measurability	Low measurability
Ease of evaluating outputs or results	Easily evaluated	Medium ease	Medium ease	Difficult	Difficult
Interaction with other units	Low interaction	Medium interaction	Medium interaction	Medium interaction	High interaction
Environmental orientation	Plant	Office	Markets	Science	Market and other
Interaction with people outside organization	Low interaction	Low interaction	High interaction	High interaction	High interaction
Amount of change in job	Low change	Low change	Medium change	High change	High change
Certainty of information used	Certain information	Certain information	Uncertain information	Uncertain information	Uncertain information
Skill orientation of job	Manual, physical	Clerical	Social, persuasive	Mental	Mental
Education required	Average or below	Average	Average	Advanced	Above average to advanced
General nature of tasks	Mechanistic	Mostly mechanistic	Between mechanistic and organic	Organic	Organic
Personnel Orientations					
Formality in unit structure	High formality	Medium formality	Medium formality	Low formality	Low to medium formality
Orientation toward coworkers	Fairly directive	Permissive to directive	Permissive	Permissive	Permissive
Source of authority	Position	Position	Position	Expertise	Expertise and position
Status in organization	Low status	Medium to low status	Medium status	High status	High status
Organizational structure likely	Mechanistic	Fairly mechanistic	Between mechanistic and organic	Organic	Organic
Managerial style likely	Directive and controlling	More directive than participative or permissive	Between directive and permissive	Participative or permissive	Participative

Organic Jobs. Especially because organic jobs involve analyzing, goal setting, planning, decision making, and problem solving, all of which involve invisible thought processes, they cannot easily be “run” by supervisors and are much more difficult to manage. Thought processes deal with (a) intangible concepts, (b) methodologies, (c) many variables and their relationships, and (d) large amounts of information associated with items a, b, and c. Thus, as explained in the next section, those who manage such jobs must, out of necessity, behave in a more consultative or participative manner. As mentioned several times before, it is difficult to run what cannot be seen—that is, what is going on in subordinates’ heads and hearts. This is particularly true of high-level managers whose managerial subordinates perform thought-oriented organic jobs.

Table 9.2 indicates the typical natures of jobs and organizational structures in several functional units or departments.

The Natures of Managers’ and Supervisors’ Jobs

The nature of a supervisor’s or manager’s job is largely influenced by the natures of his or her subordinates’ jobs. In general, it tends to be a few degrees less mechanistic and more organic than subordinates’ jobs, mostly because of the supervisor’s responsibilities for integrating subordinates’ activities.

When an individual’s integrative job is somewhat mechanistic (as in the case of a typical first-line supervisor), the individual is influenced by the nature of that job to behave in a rather directive and controlling, Theory X manner, for the reasons outlined earlier. On the other hand, when an individual’s integrative job is highly organic (as in the case of a high-level manager), the individual is influenced by the nature of the job to behave in a more consultative or participative manner, for the following reasons:

Managers’ jobs consist of numerous and varied thought-oriented activities: analyzing, goal setting, planning, problem solving, innovating, decision making, and communicating. These activities are performed with respect to several basic aspects of managers’ jobs: (a) effectively integrating activities in the specialized areas under their supervision, (b) coping with frequent and often unpredictable change, and (c) dealing with uncertainty when making planning and problem-solving decisions. These activities require analyzing and otherwise processing considerable amounts of information about task-related factors, people’s characteristics, organizational variables, social pressures, and forces outside an organization. However, as extensive as some managers’ knowledge and experience may be, they cannot possibly have all that is necessary in order to personally formulate the most effective and fully integrated goals, plans, solutions, and decisions concerning the activities of subordinate managers and their units. They can, however, supplement their own limited knowledge and experience with the collective knowledge and experience of subordinates.

Thus, if managers are to manage most effectively what they can see, what they cannot see, and the complexities of modern organizations and business environments, their use of a more organic, participative, or team approach is absolutely necessary. The reasons should be obvious. First, it takes participative, developmental practices to maximize subordinates’ development, performance, and satisfaction in both the short and the long term. Second, two or more heads are generally better than one, especially when the attitudes, knowledge, and information-processing capabilities of a manager’s team have been adequately developed. Third, although group processes consume time, taking time to analyze situations in depth and to anticipate problems and plan how to prevent them actually saves time in the long run. Fourth, an organic (team) structure enables more efficient and effective adaptation to sudden, confusing, problematic changes, which can emanate from either

inside or outside the organization. Fifth, as subordinates consult freely with each other and with personnel in interdependent units, they learn more about the jobs involved, gain insights into each others' problems, and develop greater intra- and interunit cooperation. Sixth, subordinates' participation in integrative processes enables the manager to monitor their thoughts and feelings, to assess the levels of their integrative and interpersonal capabilities, and to determine their developmental needs. The manager can then provide any needed training and development, thereby improving subordinates' abilities to perform well both individually and as a team. Seventh, when subordinates participate in the formulation of important goals, plans, solutions, innovations, and decisions, they are inclined to accept them more readily, be more committed to them, and implement them more efficiently and effectively. One can conclude, therefore, that the benefits of using participative, organic practices within a management team far surpass what can be achieved using directive and controlling, mechanistic, Theory X practices.

The following generalization can be made based on the preceding discussion: Because their jobs can be so complex, ambiguous, varying, and uncertain, managers tend to be influenced to behave in a less directive and controlling, more consultive or participative manner. (Of course, other variables may be influencing them to behave in other ways.)

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

Superiors' Styles

Like all managers, managers' immediate superiors are influenced in some way and to some degree by each factor discussed in this chapter and the next. Not only do these factors influence their views concerning which style they should use, but they also influence their views concerning the practices and interpersonal behavior patterns that their subordinate managers should use. These two sets of views generally correspond, since it is quite human for superiors to feel that their particular style should be good enough for their subordinates to use as well.

Superiors affect their subordinate managers' or supervisors' behavior in at least three major ways. First, their views about the style subordinates should use, whether appropriate or not, become their *expectations*. Their expectations, in turn, are usually reflected in the job descriptions, performance objectives, practices, policies, and procedures that they outline for subordinate managers to follow. Naturally, by telling subordinates how they are expected to behave, superiors influence subordinates' managerial styles to a significant degree. Second, superiors' *day-to-day behavior* also influences subordinates' styles by setting an example for subordinates to follow (whether or not it is the best example to imitate and learn from). Third, if superiors' behavior is consistent with the expectations they express, their actions reinforce the desired behavior. If, on the other hand, their behavior is inconsistent with their expectations, their actions will speak more loudly than their words, thereby (a) contradicting and not reinforcing stated expectations and (b) actually reinforcing the behavior indicated by their actions.

Thus, immediate superiors' expectations and behavior are subfactors related to their styles. Regardless of whether these factors sometimes conflict, their net effect strongly influences subordinates to use their superior's style.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the preceding discussion. First, an authoritarian superior exerts "high task, low people" and directive and controlling influences on subordinate managers' or supervisors' attitudes and behavior. On the other hand, a Theory Y, HT,HP superior exerts team or participative influences on subordinates' attitudes and behavior. Second, if

managers are trying to be participative or HT,HP managers and to develop a team environment in their unit, they will be able to do so more easily and effectively if their immediate and higher-level superiors' styles are all HT,HP.

Colleagues' Styles

A manager's attitudes and behavior are also influenced by her colleagues' or peers' styles (which have also been influenced by all the factors discussed in this chapter). This is particularly true when colleagues' styles are all the same and there is a high level of interdependence between the manager's unit and his or her colleagues' units. (Again, interdependence exists when the informational, material, or service outputs of one job or unit are necessary inputs to another.)

Colleagues exert influences on other managers' attitudes and behavior by prescribing how their subordinates should interact with each other and with personnel in other units. Colleagues' behavior can exert Theory X, permissive, middle-of-the-road, nonmanagerial, or Theory Y influences. For example, in keeping with directive and controlling behavior toward subordinates, Theory X managers are also inclined to do the following: (a) personally coordinate their units' activities with other units' activities; (b) require their subordinates to channel all interunit communication of information, ideas, questions, and requests through them; (c) handle interunit conflicts and problems themselves; and (d) discourage conflict-resolving interaction between their subordinates and personnel in other units. On the other hand, team or HT,HP managers, who employ participative practices within their own units, are inclined to encourage subordinates to do the following (within the context of prearranged guidelines): (a) exchange information and ideas freely with members of other units; (b) plan and coordinate interrelated activities with personnel in other units; (c) formulate joint solutions to certain interunit problems; (d) resolve interpersonal conflicts with members of other units; and (e) cooperate with members of other units in similar ways.

The following are several concluding observations: First, authoritarian or HT,LP managers exert mechanistic, directive and controlling influences on their colleagues, while team or participative managers exert HT,HP influences on their colleagues. Second, managers can more easily and effectively behave in a participative, developmental manner and develop a team atmosphere within their unit if their colleagues' styles are all HT,HP.

Organizational Nature

The nature and structure of an organization are generally geared to integrating tasks at the lowest level, where the work that is most basic to the organization's success is usually being done. The nature of an organization can be described using several parameters: (a) the nature of most tasks, especially at the lowest levels; (b) where power or authority lies; (c) the number of levels of authority; (d) the degree of centralization in decision making; (e) the number of formal policies, rules, and procedures; and (f) the natures and directions of communications.

Mechanistic, bureaucratic, authoritarian organizations and *autocratic, dictatorial* organizations have the characteristics listed on the right side of Table 9.3. As one would expect, they exert "high task, low people," Theory X, or authoritarian influences on managers' or leaders' attitudes and behavior.

Participative, democratic, organic organizations have the characteristics listed in the middle of Table 9.3. As a result, they exert Y-oriented, team, or participative influences on managers' or leaders' attitudes and behavior.

Table 9.3. General Relationships Between Organizational Characteristics and Pervasive Managerial or Leadership Style

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	PERMISSIVE, ASSOCIATIVE		PARTICIPATIVE, DEMOCRATIC		DIRECTIVE AND CONTROLLING (AUTHORITARIAN)			DICTATORIAL
	VOLUNTEER	OTHER	ORGANIC	OTHER	BUREAUCRATIC	MECHANISTIC	OTHER	AUTOCRATIC
PERVASIVE MANAGERIAL OR LEADERSHIP STYLE	1,9 or LT,HP Permissive	1,9 or LT,HP Permissive	9,9, Y, or HT,HP Participative	9,9, Y, or HT,HP Participative	9,1, X, or HT,LP Authoritarian	9,1, X, or HT,LP Authoritarian	9,1, X, or HT,LP Authoritarian	9,1, X, or HT,LP Autocratic
STRUCTURAL CHARACTER	Informal	Informal	Organic	Organic	Mechanistic	Mechanistic	Mechanistic	Mechanistic
LOCUS OF POWER, AUTHORITY, AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION AND CONTROL	Ultimate power lies in a cause or idea (often expressed in an organizational charter).	Ultimate power generally lies in a charter. Managers or leaders exercise little positional authority.	Ultimate power generally lies in an organizational charter. Authority and control responsibilities exist in the organizational structure, but power, influence, and responsibilities are shared by managers or leaders with their personnel.		Ultimate power generally lies in an organizational charter. Power, authority, and responsibilities for organizational integration and control are diffused throughout a formal structure and are exercised solely by a hierarchy of managers, leaders, or administrators.			Ultimate power lies with the person at the top. Positional authority is exercised by lower-level leaders or managers.
Nature of most personnel's jobs	Essentially mechanistic	Essentially organic	Essentially organic	Can be mechanistic or organic	Essentially mechanistic	Essentially mechanistic	Can be mechanistic or organic	Essentially mechanistic
Levels of authority	Few	Few	Few	Few	Many	Many	Many	Generally many
Ratio of administrative or leadership personnel to workers or followers	Rather low	Relatively high	High	Can vary from high to low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Source of managerial or leadership authority or influence	Importance or rightness of the cause or idea	More expertise or personality than position	Expertise	Expertise	Position	Position	Position	Position
Degree of centralization in decision making	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	Very high
Quantity of formal rules, policies, and procedures	Few	Few	Relatively few	Relatively few	Many	Many	Many	Many
Contents of managerial or leadership communications	Advocacy, information, advice	Advice, information	Advice, information	Advice, information	Instructions, decisions	Instructions, decisions	Instructions, decisions	Orders
TYPES OF ORGANIZATION	Volunteer, fundraising, public service, and community action groups or organizations	Scientific and medical research organizations	Business organizations dealing with unstable markets or technologies	Other types of organizations in which all personnel share influence and responsibilities	Traditional military organizations; traditional governmental agencies and bureaus	Traditional industrial organizations dealing with rather stable markets or technologies	Other types of organizations that have become highly structured	Traditional political and military dictatorships
POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF GROWTH FROM SMALL TO LARGE OR VERY LARGE SIZE (when traditional methods of structuring a growing organization are used)	(X)		(X)	(X) (X)	X ←	→ X → X → X		(X)

Note: The circled X's and arrows show possible stages in styles as organizations grow increasingly larger.

Permissive, associative organizations have the characteristics listed on the left side of Table 9.3. Thus, they exert permissive influences on managers' attitudes and behavior.

Middle-of-the-road influences tend to be exerted in organizations having these characteristics: (a) somewhat less mechanistic (more organic) jobs at the lower levels; (b) power or authority dispersed within the various levels of the structure; (c) relatively few levels of authority; (d) a medium degree of centralization in decision making, plus consultation with subordinates; (e) some formal policies, rules, and procedures; and (f) instructions and decisions that are communicated downward based on information communicated upward.

Managers and supervisors can behave in a highly task- and people-oriented, participative manner, and can more easily and effectively develop a participative atmosphere within their unit if the nature of their organization reinforces participative, developmental practices and behavior.

Types of Organizations

In addition to sometimes being a causal factor, organizational type is often more indicative of other factors, as shown near the bottom of Table 9.3. Military and heavy industrial organizations tend to be mechanistic, have a "masculine" orientation, and are generally pervaded by the Theory X (or possibly soft X) style. Thus, they tend to exert HT,LP or authoritarian influences on managers, leaders, and supervisors. Research organizations, which are involved in highly organic activities and employ highly educated professionals, tend to be permissive. If they are, they exert permissive influences on managerial and supervisory attitudes and behavior. In addition to fostering authoritarian or HT,LP attitudes and behavior, bureaucracies such as governmental agencies and bureaus may also foster nonmanagerial behavior. Highly technology- or market-oriented organizations are generally composed of rather organic jobs and tend to exert organic, participative, or HT,HP influences on managerial and supervisory behavior.

Thus, managers and supervisors can more easily and effectively behave in a participative manner and develop a team atmosphere within their unit if their organizational type exerts participative, developmental influences.

Growth of an Organization

Growth is normally accompanied by (a) an increase in the number of personnel or followers and (b) an increase in the differentiation (specialization) of jobs. Continual growth of an organization does not necessarily result in its eventually becoming a highly structured, directive and controlling, or authoritarian organization, but this result is not unusual when traditional means are used to cope with problems that accompany growth. The following phenomena are illustrated in Table 9.3.

Traditional adjustment to growth. As the number of personnel grows and activities become increasingly difficult to coordinate, organizations have traditionally responded by (a) giving integrative responsibilities and authority to newly formed lower echelons of management or supervision and (b) organizing technically or functionally similar jobs into separate specialized units, each headed by a person responsible for coordinating and controlling activities within the unit. As a result, additional reporting relationships are established, the number of levels of authority and integrative responsibility are increased, and the organization becomes more structured (hierarchical and bureaucratic). It also tends to become conventionally directive and controlling (Theory X).

Of course, it is not inappropriate to grow, to build an organization, or to organize jobs and people. On the contrary, growth is healthy, and organization is a key to success. The issue is

how to cope with growth. An organization need not become overly structured and conventionally directive and controlling, because there are alternative, nontraditional means for coping with growing pains.

Nontraditional adjustment to growth. Participative, developmental, “high task, high people” practices constitute nontraditional means of coping with growth. For example, problems arising from an inability to integrate and control increasing numbers of personnel can be reduced by creating a participative atmosphere in which personnel can become more self-directing, self-coordinating, and self-controlling. Likewise, problems arising from an inability to coordinate increasingly specialized jobs can be reduced by using participative practices that enable personnel to coordinate their activities among themselves. Granted, some structuring is necessary even when participative practices are used. But the point is that team-oriented, participative, developmental practices keep an organization from becoming overly structured and at the same time reinforce continued use of participative practices and high task, high people behavior.

SOCIAL FACTORS

Managers and supervisors either associate with or come into contact with many socially oriented groups in their organization. Some are composed of superiors, some of colleagues, some of subordinates, and some of people from various organizational units and levels. Each group exerts influences on individuals’ attitudes and behavior by using various social sanctions to foster adherence to its group norms. These phenomena are much more powerful than many managers realize, which is a major reason they are so often overlooked in planning and problem-solving situations.

Norms include group values, attitudes, and goals; expected patterns of behavior; customs; social group procedures; and both formal and informal rules. Norms deal with many matters: membership qualifications, who plays what roles, how status is conferred, how members should interact and behave toward each other, how work is to be done, how conflicts are to be resolved, how norms themselves are to be enforced, how outsiders should treat group members, and how outsiders should be treated.

Sanctions used to foster adherence to group norms can be either positive or negative. Positive sanctions, used to reward and reinforce desired behavior, include praise, approval, expressions of friendship, increased status in the group, and increased cooperation. Negative sanctions, used to punish undesirable attitudes and behavior, include sarcasm, ridicule, blame, avoidance, lowered status, reduced cooperation, exclusion from group activities, and rejection.

Generally speaking, the groups with which managers either associate or have contact do not all have the same norms. Especially in mechanistic organizations, workers’ expectations regarding supervisory and managerial behavior may be quite different from the behavior expected by supervisors’ and low-level managers’ bosses and colleagues. For example, when subordinates’ jobs are highly mechanistic (routine, repetitious, and inherently unsatisfying), job satisfaction and morale may suffer. Especially if subordinates are under Theory X supervisors, they probably resent having their efforts taken for granted and having the whip cracked on them. In such circumstances, the following group norms generally develop: “To heck with the organization and our bosses. Do just enough to get by. And don’t rock the boat by outperforming the rest of the group and getting performance standards raised for everyone.” As a result of enforcement of such norms within worker-level groups, personnel may behave in an unmotivated,

uncooperative, inefficient manner. Such behavior may influence supervisors to form or reinforce Theory X views about their subordinates and to behave in an authoritarian manner toward them.

In turn, groups composed of first-line supervisors who perceive workers in this manner can easily develop *Theory X-related norms* such as these: “Getting high productivity or performance from people is all that really counts. That’s what they’re getting paid for. Their needs and feelings are incidental. If they’re concerned that they’re not being treated well enough here, then they can go get a job somewhere else.” “If you’ve got power or authority, use it.” “Show that you have guts when handling subordinates. Control them firmly, and don’t let them get away with anything.” “Keep some distance between yourself and your subordinates, and don’t be too sensitive to them. If you get too close to them, you won’t be able to discipline them when they need it.” If these and other Theory X-oriented norms are the predominant norms of any group to which a supervisor or manager belongs, that group will tend to encourage, enforce, and reinforce (through positive and negative sanctions) the individual’s adoption of X attitudes and use of a directive and controlling style.

On the other hand, *Theory Y-related norms*, which are more common in organic organizations and at higher managerial levels, include the following: “Although people’s performance or productivity is very important, so are their needs and feelings.” “If you’ve got power or authority, don’t wield and flaunt it. Instead, apply personal influence, which can be earned by developing and demonstrating your technical expertise, managerial competence, and concern for other people.” “Behave in a participative, informal manner toward your subordinates, showing your respect for and trust in them.” “Be sensitive to the needs and feelings of your subordinates, and don’t be embarrassed to show your concern for them.” If these and other Theory Y-oriented norms are the predominant norms of a group with which a manager has contact, that group will tend to encourage, enforce, and reinforce (by applying more positive sanctions than negative sanctions) the manager’s adoption of Y attitudes and use of the HT,HP style.

Of course, if a particular group’s norms correspond to the permissive style, the middle-of-the-road style, or the nonmanagerial style, then that group will tend to exert corresponding influences on those with whom they interact.

In the real world, managers and supervisors are influenced to some degree by the norms of all groups with which they have contact—even social groups outside the organization where they work. Very often, these groups’ norms conflict and create extremely complex social situations and very frustrating dilemmas. When confronted with opposing influences, different individuals respond differently. Some adhere to one group’s norms. Some adhere to another group’s norms. Some attempt to compromise. Some try to behave in the presence of each group the way they believe they are expected to behave. Some behave differently in different situations. Some even try to influence a group’s norms and make them compatible with other groups’ norms. How someone behaves is generally the net effect of these and other dynamics: (a) whether the norms of the various groups are similar enough to exert reinforcing influences toward a particular style; (b) the individual’s status and role in each group; (c) which group’s acceptance, approval, and support the individual wants most; (d) which group he or she most wants to emulate; (e) which group’s (or groups’) norms are most in keeping with his or her own perceptions of subordinates; (f) which group’s sanctions the individual fears most; (g) the person’s position and status in the organization; (h) his or her self-image; (i) influences on the person’s attitudes and behavior exerted by social groups outside the organization; and (j) influences of other nonpersonal and personal factors.

It should be apparent that managers and supervisors can more easily and effectively behave in a high task, high people manner and develop a team atmosphere within their unit if the norms of most social groups with which they associate or have contact are more Y-oriented and mutually reinforcing.

EXTERNAL FORCES AND FACTORS

Technologies

The level and stability of the technologies involved in personnel's work tend to influence managerial behavior indirectly, generally by first affecting the natures of personnel's jobs. The *stability* of a technology depends on the frequency and amount of change it undergoes. The *level* of technology depends on the amount of change or advancement that it has already undergone. In general, the more unstable and advanced a technology is, the more complexity and uncertainty it creates for those who work with it.

Some of those who work with relatively simple, *stable* technologies and who use relatively simple tools or equipment are carpenters, machinists, mechanics, material handlers and processors, and other mechanical equipment operators. Such jobs tend to (a) be simple, routine, repetitious, unchanging, and certain; (b) require the use of only a few basic skills; and (c) be monotonous, uninteresting, unchallenging, and inherently unmotivating. Because their subordinates need few skills and display rather low motivation as a result, managers may form Theory X views about them and behave in a Theory X manner toward them. They may also impose mechanistic structures on their units and make supervisors agents for direction and control. In such cases, individual managers may be influenced by the mechanistic structure, their superiors' styles, and their colleagues' styles to behave in a directive and controlling manner.

Some of those who work with advanced, *unstable* technologies are physicists, biochemists, designers and operators of complex electronic systems, designers and users of sophisticated information processing equipment, and business systems analysts and designers. When subordinates' jobs involve one or more relatively advanced and unstable technologies, their jobs tend to be complex, changing, and uncertain. A wide range of more advanced mental skills is generally required, and the work itself tends to be more interesting, challenging, and inherently motivating. Because their subordinates display more advanced skills and greater motivation as a result, managers are more likely to form Theory Y views about them. Also, when jobs in most units of an organization involve rather advanced and unstable technologies, the entire structure tends to be pervaded by a less directive and controlling, more organic style. All these organic characteristics may influence managers to establish more organic structures within their unit and to behave in a more participative, developmental manner. Again, however, it should be noted that in some organizations in which the work involves very complex and unstable technologies and in which personnel possess high-level degrees (such as in research organizations), the influences on managerial and supervisory attitudes and behavior may be permissive rather than participative.

Marketplace Conditions

The nature of the marketplace influences behavior in many of the same ways that technological conditions do—that is, by first affecting the natures of personnel's jobs.

In general, a market is more unstable (a) the more advanced and unstable the technology involved in the products or services being marketed; (b) the more competitors there are in the marketplace; (c) the more differentiable competitors' products or services are; (d) the more sensitive purchasers are to price, quality, and cost of product usage; (e) the greater the demand that has been established for something new, different, or better is; (f) the more frequently customers make their purchase decisions; (g) the more often customers' needs, attitudes, and buying habits change; and (h) the more quickly customers' reactions, attitudes, and behavior can be determined.

According to Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), some of the markets that tend to be *unstable* are the markets for information systems hardware and software, medical supplies and equipment, research and testing equipment, and most consumer products (for example, packaged foods, automobiles, appliances, and fashion clothing). These markets require personnel to react and adapt to frequent and often unpredictable change. When managers' subordinates (or their organization) deal with relatively unstable markets, the natures of subordinates' jobs and organizational structures are likely to be rather organic. In turn, organic jobs and structures tend to influence managers to behave in a rather participative and HT,HP manner.

On the other hand, some of the markets that tend to be relatively stable are the markets for industrial machinery, heavy equipment, manufacturing materials (such as plastics and steel), packaging materials (especially cardboard containers), and consumer commodities (such as salt, sugar, and dairy products). Stable markets, which undergo little and infrequent change, are partly responsible for mechanistic jobs and organizational structures. The characteristics of mechanistic jobs and structures exert Theory X influences on managerial and supervisory attitudes and behavior.

Economic and Business Conditions

When business conditions turn unfavorable (for example, during an economic downturn), sales and the use of productive capacity generally decline, internal resources become strained, external capital markets become depressed, and units compete more aggressively for scarce financial resources. Faced with these circumstances, managers and their organizations are inclined to emphasize productivity and cost cutting at the expense of personnel's development, satisfaction, and morale. This inclination is manifested in directive and controlling behavior.

On the other hand, during an economic boom, when sales are good, productive capacity is utilized more fully, capital markets become more expansive, the organization is no longer strapped for funds, and unit managers need no longer fight or jockey for resources, there is a tendency for managers and their organizations to become somewhat more complacent about costs and productivity. As a result, they are inclined to become less directive and controlling and begin paying more attention to the needs, feelings, and development of personnel.

Societal or Sociocultural Norms

Outside groups having essentially materialistic, power-oriented, macho, and work-oriented norms tend to exert Theory X influences on managerial and supervisory attitudes and behavior.

Groups having permissive, associative, and highly people-oriented, less task-oriented norms tend to exert permissive influences on managerial and supervisory attitudes and behavior.

Groups having norms that are highly people-oriented and reflect a high work ethic tend to exert more Theory Y-related, participative influences. Furthermore, the efforts of individuals to develop Theory Y attitudes and behavior patterns are reinforced when outside groups' normative attitudes and behavior are Theory Y-related.

SUBORDINATES' INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOR

Given all the complex socio-technical influences discussed earlier in this chapter, it may be too simplistic to say that individuals' views about their subordinates' natures greatly influence their behavior toward subordinates, yet it is a fact of life that personnel's characteristics and behavior do influence managers' views to some degree. For example, it cannot be denied that many who work in highly mechanistic low-level jobs, though good, decent, and competent people, can still be described in these general terms: they (a) possess average levels of academic intelligence, (b) are more capable of thinking in concrete terms than thinking in conceptual or abstract terms, (c) have only a basic education, (d) possess more developed manual or physical skills than mental skills, (e) do not make as much income as people higher in the organization, (f) came from a lower socioeconomic background, and (g) have a job with relatively low organizational status. On the other hand, it is common for those who are higher in organizations to be smarter, better educated, more socioeconomically advanced, and have greater organizational status. Therefore, given human beings' inclination to compare themselves with others in order to determine how "OK" they are, it is also not surprising that higher-level individuals compare themselves with worker-level personnel and find themselves to be "more OK" in various ways. That is reality.

This inclination is especially pronounced in those who, in order to feel that they are OK, need to see others as "less OK" than themselves. Such people are not very mature and are probably stuck at the ego needs level of Maslow's hierarchy. Indeed, they are inclined to be *high self, low people*, which is the orientation that largely underlies Theory X views about worker-level personnel and the resulting X style that pervades many organizations. (This will be discussed further in Chapter Ten.)

In effect, we just said that managers' views about subordinates can be as much (or more) a function of their own natures as a function of subordinates' natures. The following examples are more fully discussed in the next chapter:

- Individuals who are high in task-orientedness but low in people-orientedness and are therefore authoritarian by nature will find more human weaknesses than strengths or potentials in subordinates. They will not recognize that the mechanistic characteristics of subordinates' jobs are adversely affecting their motivation, job satisfaction, morale, and, therefore, their performance. They will also fail to recognize that their own practices and behavior are creating conditions that stimulate and exacerbate subordinates' human weaknesses and adversely affect their motivation and performance. Thus, they are inclined to see their subordinates in an unflattering, X-related manner—and will behave accordingly.
- Individuals who are low in task-orientedness but high in people-orientedness and are therefore permissive by nature are inclined to see their subordinates in a more people-oriented, affiliative manner—and will behave accordingly.
- Those who are medium or average in both task- and people-related characteristics and are therefore middle-of-the-road by nature, are inclined to see their subordinates in a more balanced manner—and will behave accordingly.
- Individuals who are relatively high in both task- and people-orientedness will find strengths and potentials in subordinates. They will recognize the adverse influences of mechanistic tasks and other dysfunctional factors. They will realize that their own practices and interpersonal behavior

can unlock inner motivation, develop potentials, and otherwise positively influence subordinates' performance and satisfaction. As a result, they will behave in a participative, developmental manner toward subordinates.

Our experiences in conducting management training and organization development programs have convinced us that *managers' characteristics, attitudes, and behavior affect subordinates' attitudes and behavior to a greater extent than the other way around*. Managers' natures are largely responsible for their views about subordinates and their creation or perpetuation of conditions that significantly—and often adversely—affect subordinates' attitudes and behavior.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The important point of this chapter is that, in some way and to some degree, all socio-technical factors influence managers', supervisors', and leaders' attitudes and behavior (just as they all influence workers' attitudes and behavior, but often in different ways). Sometimes the various influences reinforce each other. Sometimes they conflict with each other. Sometimes the influences of one or two factors will override the combined influences of the others. Whatever the case may be, it is the net result of all factors' influences that surfaces as any particular individual's style.

Nevertheless, it should be apparent from the preceding discussion that the natures of subordinates' tasks affect the skills required, one's views about subordinates, the nature and structure of one's organization, one's superiors' and colleagues' styles, and even social interactions. It takes smart, mature, highly task- and people-oriented managers to recognize and then deal with the complex cause-and-effect relationships among all these variables.

Consider this final point: if managers, supervisors, and workforce personnel are to successfully collaborate in analyzing themselves and their organization, in identifying developmental needs, in planning how to bring about more permanent and significant improvements, and in effectively implementing plans, they must be properly educated, trained, and developed within an overall organization development context that is highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented.

Chapter Ten discusses the influences of managers' and leaders' own personal characteristics on their attitudes and behavior and how they are affected by and deal with the nonpersonal influences discussed in this chapter.