

Preference & Perception of Management Styles

Ian Mireri

Winona State University

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Carrie Fried

Introduction

Managers are critical to the success of institutions. They impact the implementation of (new) practices, processes, and structures (Birkinshaw, Hamel, & Mol, 2008). When managers act in a abusive way there is a strong positive correlation with organizational deviance, especially when employees considered the organizations management style to be high authoritarian (Thau, Bennet, Mitchell & Marrs, 2009). It has also been shown that it is important to have a balance in management styles (Brien & Smallman, 2011).

Lawrence, K. A., Lenk, P., & Quinn, R. E. (2009) used the Behavioral Complexity Theory (BCT) of behavior as a model of leadership behavior. The BCT permits a manager to be effective by playing numerous roles, representing an array of different, and even competing, behavioral expectation (Hooijberg & Quinn, 1992) The BCT is derived from the Competing Values Framework (CVF), which includes four different yet related dimensions. (1) Human resources model, (2) Open systems model, (3) Rational Goal model, and (4) Internal process model. Together they create two competing dimensions internal focus vs. external focus, and two competing structure dimensions, flexible vs. stable. Each quadrant has three behaviors performed by managers (Lawrence et. al. 2009). *Figure 1*

The current study is interested in using the BCT to investigate subordinate preferred management styles; and also how subordinates believe they'd perform on the BCT if they were in their direct managers position. When considering managers researchers were interested in investigating how those who are managers perceive their management style, and how managers would perform if they were given the opportunity to be their direct manager.

Methods

The research was conducted as a correlational design. The categories of the BCT: collaborate, create, control and compete were measured on the preference of particular categories in relation to participant's (1) status as a manager, (2) past employment status, (3) current employment status, and (4) specific industry of employment.

Materials

A short questionnaire was presented to participants. This questionnaire asked the participants about their past employment status (e.g. have you ever had a job?), Management status (e.g. Are you, or have you ever had a job where you were a manager or responsible for subordinates?). As well as specific industry (e.g. do you currently have a job?), specific job industry (e.g. Accommodation and Food Service). Participants then answered specific questions that tapped into each of the BCT categories.

There were two forms to the questionnaire. The Preferred Performance (PP) questionnaire asked for those who indicated they weren't managers (subordinates), and those who indicated they were managers to rank what management aspects they would preferred in their direct manager; they were to base all of their answers on their most current job/manager. Those who had never worked were asked to give their best guess as to what they believe they would prefer in a manager. Realistic Behavior (RB) questionnaire asked for individuals to answer the same survey. However, it was written from the first person point of view. Subordinates were asked to rank what behavior they would display if they were to be their direct manager. Managers were to answer based on how they manage subordinates. Those who had never worked were to answer based on how they think they'd behave as a manager.

Competitive Values Framework of BCT

		Focus Dimension	
		Internal (-)	External (+)
Structure Dimension	Flexible (+)	Collaborate (Human Resource Model) <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Facilitator· Encourages participation· Empathizer· Showing concern· Mentor· Developing people	Create (Open systems Model) <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Innovator· Initiating significant change· Visionary· Anticipating customer needs· Motivator· Inspiring, to exceed expectations
	Stable (-)	Control (Internal process Model) <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Monitor· Expecting accurate work· Coordinator· Controlling projects· Regulator· Clarifying policies	Compete (Rational Model) <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Producer· Modeling a hard work ethic· Competitor· Focusing on competition· Driver· Emphasizing speed

Figure 1: The Competing Values Framework of the Behavioral Complexity Theory. Including all four components.

Results

The researchers found that all of the categories of the BCT were significantly positively correlated between quadrants when all the data was combined *Figure 2*.

Independent samples t-tests indicated there was no significant main effect of being a manager on any of the quadrants, there was also no significant difference found between those who are currently working and those who are currently unemployed. For the collaborate quadrant those who worked in accommodation and food service ($M=6.19, SD=.511$) had significantly higher collaborative behaviors than those in the healthcare and social assistance industry ($M=5.69, SD=.686$); $t(41)= 2.68, p=.011$. For the control quadrant those who worked in accommodation and food service ($M=6.3, SD=.485$) had significantly higher scores than those who worked in healthcare and social assistance ($M=5.82, SD=.625$); $t(41)= 2.74, p=.009$. The create quadrant indicated that those who were working in the accommodation and food service industry ($M=5.80, SD=.545$) scored significantly higher then those who worked in healthcare and social assistance ($M=5.16, SD=.66$); $t(41)= 3.33, p=.002$. Within the compete quadrant findings indicated that those who were working in accommodation and food services ($M=5.64, SD=.538$) scored significantly higher then those who worked in healthcare and social assistance ($M=5.12, SD=.606$); $t(41)= 2.85, p=.007$.

Correlations of the BCT

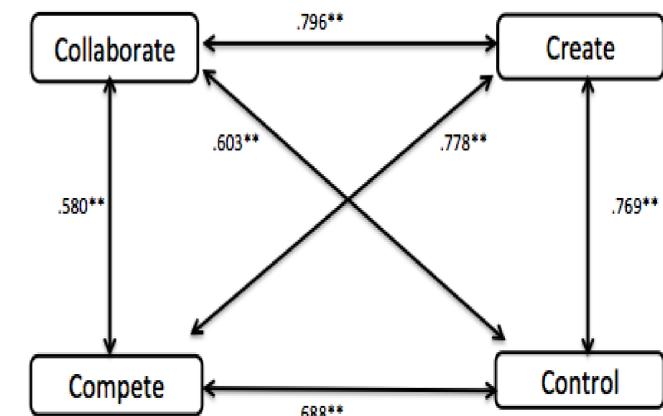


Figure 2: Pearson correlation of all the combinations of the BCT, for all participants. **correlation is significant on the 0.01 level

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that people have an understanding of the leadership behaviors that they prefer, and when given the option they believe that they would put those same behaviors into practice. This was seen even in those that had never had a job before.

There was a range of scores in most of the conditions, this may imply that people do not generally agree on what behaviors managers should present, which could lead to some workers preferring one management style while others don't. Or rather, some workers liking and appreciating the role of managers and maybe wanting to be a manager, while others always find distaste for managers and management

The differences between those who worked in accommodation and food services, and those who worked in healthcare and social assistance really showed how participants perceive the industry that they work within. Further research might look into those who have worked in different industries in order to find differences in a within subjects design.

References

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