Leadership for India INC Practical Concepts and Constructs
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Week - 02
Leadership Theories
Lecture - 09
Path- Goal Theory

Hi Friends, Welcome to the NPTEL course, Leadership for India Inc Practical Concepts and Constructs. We are in week 2 discussing various leadership theories. In this lecture number 9, we are discussing Path-Goal Theory.

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What is path-goal theory? It is a theory which discusses how leaders can motivate their followers to accomplish the desired goals. The theory is majorly based on prior research on human motivational theories. It was first developed in 1971 by Robert House and revised in 1996. As I said, the path-goal theory is based on expectancy theory of motivation.

The premise is that an employee's perception of expectancies between his effort and performance is greatly influenced by leaders' behaviour. The leaders can help group members in attaining rewards by clarifying their paths to the goals and removing any obstacles to their performance.

The leaders do so by providing the information, support and other resources which are required by employees to carry on with their tasks. Path-goal theory seeks to enhance the follower performance and follower satisfaction by focusing on follower motivation and the nature of work tasks.

The path-goal theory when it was propounded was innovative in that, it shifted attention away from leadership styles or follower classifications and instead focused on the motivational needs of the followers as the basis for goal accomplishment.

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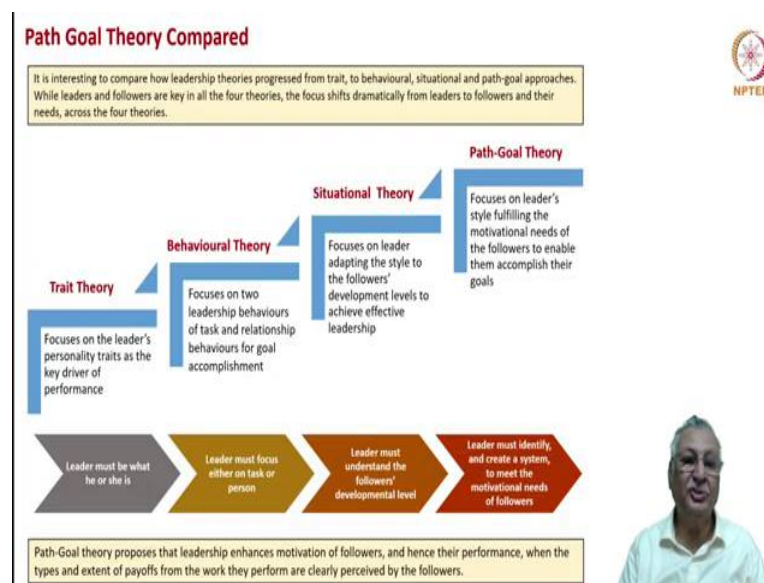
Having considered three theories so far, let us consider and compare path-goal theory with these three theories. The Trait theory, which we considered first focused on the leader's personality traits as the key driver of performance, in that the expectation is that the leader must be what he or she is, the traits define the leadership.

In the second theory which is the Behavioural theory, the theory focused on two leadership behaviours which were considered very important. One, task behaviour and two, the relationship behaviour, they were considered essential for goal accomplishment. The basis here is that the leader must focus on either the task or the person, so that the goals could be achieved by the team.

The Situational theory which we considered in the last lecture, focuses on leader adapting the style to the followers' development levels in terms of competence as well as

commitment. This theory is based on the perception that leader must understand the follower's development level before developing an appropriate leadership style for the followers. Today's path-goal theory focuses on leader's style, fulfilling the motivational needs of the followers to enable them accomplish their goals.

The basis here is that the leader must identify and create a system by which the leader could meet the motivational needs of followers. The logic of path-goal theory is that the smoother the followers journey towards the achievement of goals by the removal of obstacles by the leader.

And the more clear, the expectations being met by the system be it the leader system or the organizational system, the greater would be the motivation of the followers to achieve their goals that is the basic logic of the path-goal theory.

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There are two aspects of the path-goal theory, one is the passive version which assumes that if a leader is able to provide to the followers clarity in plans and support in execution removing the bottlenecks, roadblocks and hurdles on the way. The work will be felt more personally satisfying by the followers and they would feel motivated.

So, in this system, we will have organization comprising a whole number of followers, we will have processes having hurdles and enablers, and results which was derived from the goals through the efforts of the leader as well as the followers, this is the passive

version. We say it is the passive version because apart from removal of goals and hurdles we are not doing much to motivate the employees.

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The active aspect of the path-goal theory is that the follower performance is appraised to provide very explicit reward mechanisms for the followers once they achieve their goals.

So, we have a four step process of followers having certain characteristics, tasks having certain characteristics and motivational systems trying to link the follower characteristics and the task characteristics. Through certain leader behaviours, which will ensure the high level of leadership leading to high level of follower accomplishment.

So, the leader is very keenly observant of the follower's issues in terms of hurdles as well as the bottlenecks is also observant of the motivational needs of the followers and the reward mechanisms they are expecting.
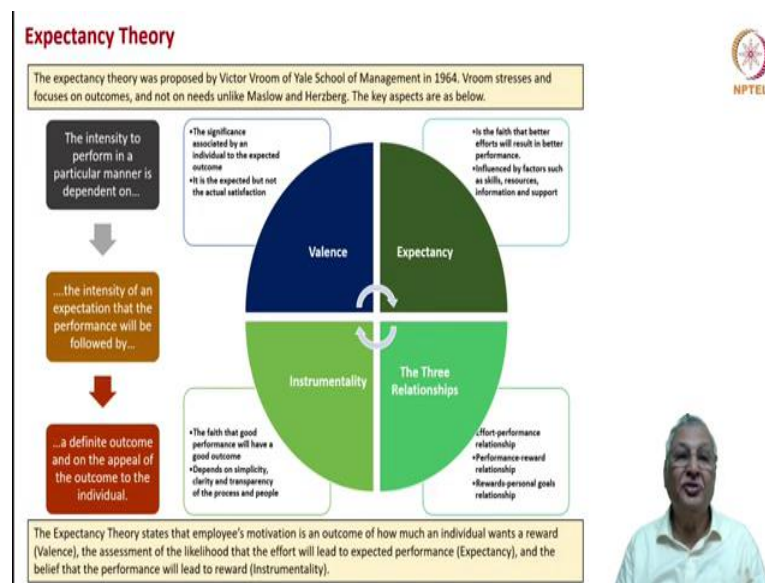
The expectancy theory has got four aspects, one; the valence, two; the expectancy, three; the instrumentality and these lead to three important relationships which govern the theory. This expectancy theory was first formulated by Victor Vroom of Yale School of Management in 1964. He stressed and focused on outcomes and not on needs like Maslow and Herzberg.

The key aspects of the expectancy theory are as below. Valence is the significance associated by an individual to the expected outcome; it is the expected but not the actual satisfaction. So, the individual says that if I am able to do a particular act in this particular manner an expected outcome would outcome that is the valence. Then the expectancy, expectancy is the faith that better efforts will result in better performance.

So, typically the follower seeks factors such as skills, resources, information and support. So, that he could perform better on the task and the absence of these things would demotivate the employee or the individual. Instrumentality is the faith that good performance will have a good outcome and it depends on the simplicity, clarity and transparency in the appraisal processes relating to the process and people.

As a result of this, there are three relationships which can be formulated, one: the relationship between effort and performance, two: the relationship between performance and reward and three: the rewards and personal goals being linked together.

So, you can see the linkages, if an individual puts in good effort the expectation is that there would be good performance. If there is good performance the expectation is that there would be a good reward and if there is a good reward the expectation is that the personal goals of the individual would be met.

So, how much of the reward is desired by the individual which is the valence, the assessment of the likelihood that the effort will lead to performance that is the expectancy and the belief that the performance will lead to reward instrumentality. These are the three combinatorial factors of the expectancy theory and each is important.

If the individual believes that regardless of the effort I would not be able to gain the necessary performance, then this theory would collapse. Similarly, if despite the performance the outcome does not come because of various other bottlenecks and hurdles, then again this theory would collapse. So, all these three relationships could work in random and in a seamless manner.

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So, let us look at the Effort-Performance Relationship, the questions that would be asked by the individual and of course the leader is that, what is the likelihood that my effort would be recognized in my performance appraisal. And it could promote psychological extravagance in terms of expectations and perceived outcomes and results as well as rewards. If an individual understands and knows that the performance is putting in is

likely to lead to reward depending on the individual's mental makeup, there could be high expectation, medium expectation or low expectation that is one part.

The other one is the performance-reward relationship, that is the extent to which the employee believes that getting a good performance appraisal leads to organizational rewards. There would be organizations wherein the individuals believe that whatever be the level of performance that is put in by the individuals the organization would not reward that much because it is a conservative organization.

On the other hand, there could be other organizations which could be very generous and very open about productivity linked or performance linked reward systems. So, depending upon the organizational culture the individuals may formulate their own opinions, it also depends on the again the optimistic or realistic or the pessimistic approach of the individual with reference to how he perceives performance and the reward mechanism of the organization.

However, by its emphasis on performance payoffs it induces an employee to perform. The third relationship is the rewards-personal goals relationship. It is all about the attractiveness or appeal of the potential reward to the individual. We all understand that thing like role title or the compensation package elevate the status within the family or within the society and that is seen to be leading to some personal goals satisfaction.

So, the individual would naturally like to maximize satisfaction and minimize dissatisfaction. So, the rewards and personal goals should be reasonably linked. Vroom was of the view that employees consciously decide whether to perform or not perform at the job, solely depending on the motivation level which again in turn depends on the three factors of expectancy, valence and instrumentality.

The expectancy theory as you can appreciate continues to be valid even today because the leaders try to raise the expectations of employees based on not merely their competence, but also the performance linkage. And that is stride to be institutionalized through the performance appraisal mechanisms which tie up performance with rewards.

And the way the individual responds to that is also dependent on how the individual goals are being satisfied by the reward systems that are offered by the leader and the organization.

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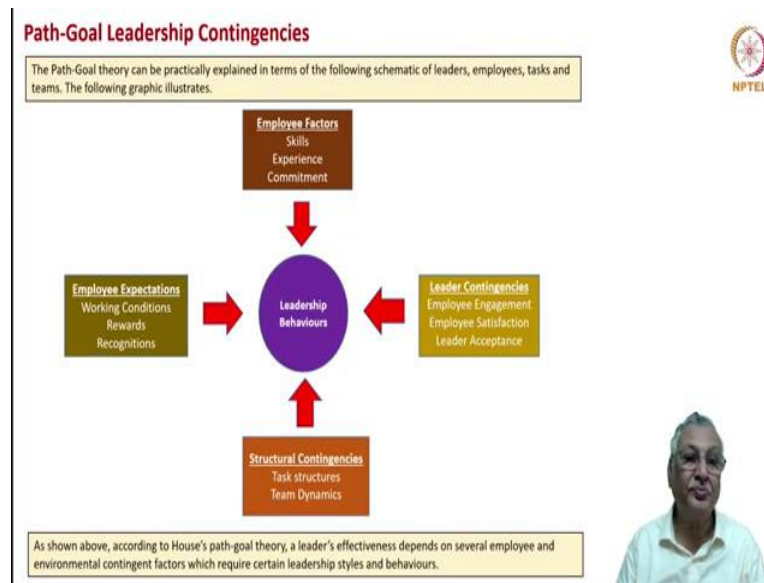
What are the contingencies involved in the Path-goal Leadership? One, the Employee factors such as skills, experience and commitment, two, leader contingencies such as employee engagement, employee satisfaction and leader acceptance.

The third structural contingencies such as tasks structures, team dynamics, and fourth, employees own expectations of working conditions rewards and recognitions. In the path-goal theory, a leader's effectiveness depends on several employee and environmental contingent factors which requires certain leadership styles and behaviours.

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Path-Goal Leadership Styles

Four leadership styles are associated with the path-goal theory. These are broadly similar to those related to behavioural and situational theories except for the heavier emphasis on human relations and human motivation factors.

Directive Leadership

Supportive Leadership

Participative Leadership

Achievement-Oriented Leadership

These four leadership behaviours are foundational to the path-goal theory, and continue to be relevant in leadership research even in current times. Each of these is discussed further.

So, what are the leadership styles that are implicit in the path-goal theory, one, Directive leadership similar to the one which we have discussed earlier, two, the Supportive leadership, third, Participative Leadership and four Achievement Oriented Leadership.

It is kind of instructive as to how the leadership styles are similar to the situational leadership theory styles that have been discussed earlier. But these are foundational to the path-goal theory because, the way these leadership styles are expressed in actual practice to motivate the followers is the crux of path-goal leadership theory.

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Directive Leadership

Directive leadership is similar to the "Initiating Structure" leadership style of the Ohio State Studies, "Telling" style and "Directing" style of Situational Leadership theories. The characteristics of path-goal directive leadership are:

Gives clear instructions to followers about the task, including the action steps and timelines

Provides explicit instructions to avoid ambiguity and provide clarity to the followers

Sets up clear standards of performance, including metrics of evaluation

Makes the rules and regulations clear to followers

Makes all rewards and penalties for followers performance linked

The Directive Leadership is task and goal oriented. Probably, there is nothing that is newly said about this style of path-goal theory.

So, what does Directive Leadership do, although we have considered it in the context of the previous leadership theories; let us review it once. It is similar to the initiating structure in the Ohio state studies or the telling style and the directing style of situational leadership theories. The characteristics are give clear instructions to followers about the task including the action steps to be taken and timelines, provide also very explicit instructions to avoid ambiguity and provide clarity to the followers.

So, very standard operating procedures based work, sets up clear standards of performance including metrics by which the performance will be evaluated, makes the rules and regulations clear to followers, makes all rewards and penalties for followers performance linked. It is very much task and goal oriented as we have seen it over and over again during the last three lectures. Probably there is nothing that is newly said about the directive leadership style of the path-goal theory.

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In respect of Supportive Leadership the semantics vary, but it is similar to the consideration behaviour construct of Ohio state studies. It, supportive leadership looks at being friendly and approachable as a leader to the followers, will attend to the wellbeing and needs of the followers, will make work and working conditions pleasant to the followers, will help the followers become and be confident will treat followers as equals and respect them as organizational members.

It is similar to the supportive leadership style of the situation leadership theory. The supportive leadership style is people oriented, there tends to be little emphasis on tasks and goals as primary points of conversation with the followers.

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Then we have the third leadership style in the path-goal theory which is the Participative Leadership style. It is also similar to the supportive leadership, but with greater concern for followers. Key aspects: The leader will consult with the followers and take their ideas into consideration, will integrate their suggestions into the decision on the task organization and the group organization.

Will try to secure the ownership of the employees or the followers in work rather than mere compliance, will share information with followers as a routine rather than based on the need, believes in group decision making and group review of goals plans paths and the results. The participative leadership will certainly result in increased group performance, because of member participation and also dedication to shared group goals.

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And finally the Achievement Oriented Leadership, this is somewhat distinct to path-goal theory you will notice that in the previous leadership theories achievement oriented leadership was not explicitly mentioned, nomenclature is different and also the behavioural tendencies are different.

The key aspects of this leadership style is that the leader will challenge his or her followers to work to the highest level possible. Will establish high standards of performance excellence for the followers, will seek continuous improvements in performance standards.

The leader will not only set high standards, but also demonstrate high confidence in the followers that they will be able to achieve. Will encourage followers to achieve peak performances and obviously the leader will also try to debottleneck the processes, provide the necessary resources remove the hurdles etcetera.

The achievement leadership corresponds roughly to the team management 9, 9 style of Blake and Mouton Leadership Grid.
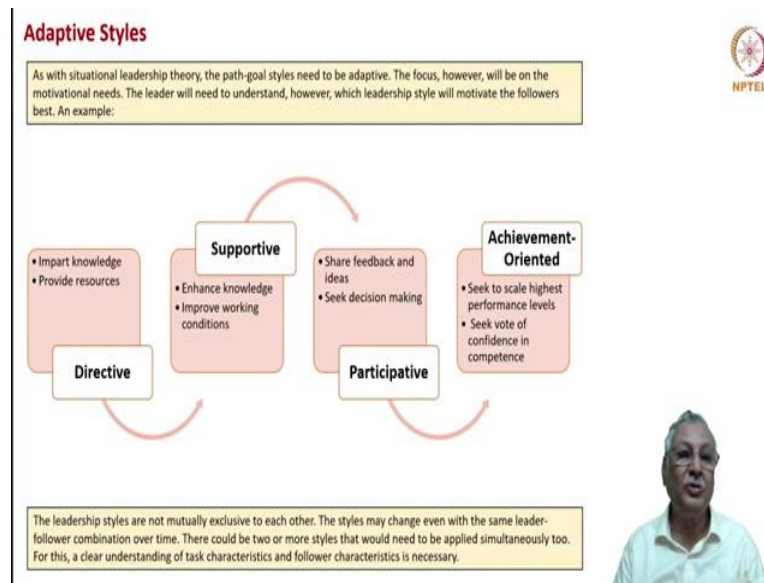
So, what are the adaptive styles as we see the path-goal styles. The directive style looks at imparting knowledge and providing resources. The supportive style looks at enhancing knowledge and improving working conditions. The participative style looks at sharing feedback with the followers and seek decision making along with the followers.

Achievement oriented leadership style looks to scale ever higher performance peaks and seeks vote of confidence in competence of the followers. These leadership styles, the leadership styles may change even within the same leader-follower combination over time that would depend on the development nature of the followers as they undertake their projects and also the nature of the projects themselves.

There could be two or more styles that could be adapted simultaneously too, for this a clear understanding of the task characteristics as well as the Follower Characteristics is necessary.

So, just as we have leader characteristics, we also have follower characteristics. The follower characteristics in the path-goal theory could be explained in terms of these four classifications, one: need for affiliation, two: preferences for structure, three: desires for Control and four: self-perceived level of task ability. Each of these characteristics can be related to the leadership style let us see how it is.

The followers who have got the characteristics or preferences relating to structure tend to be dogmatic, they would like to stay in their zone of comfort, they would like to do the same thing over and over again.

These followers could also be authoritarian by themselves and could welcome authoritarian and dominant leadership. Directive leadership provides clear structure and execution paths to followers who belong to this class, who believe in fate and chance as well as outside forces of control. The followers who like to be controlled feel motivated by the external locus of control that directive leadership provides. That is about the followers who have strong preferences for structures.

Directive leadership works best when tasks are new, followers are uninitiated and leader is well-versed. It ensures high standards of performance from followers who are constantly learning, in the absence of directive leadership under such circumstances of newness of the project or newness of the process, the followers could be directionless. Directive leaders provide the much needed external focus of control to followers, who find it difficult to exercise self control

The path-goal theory does not say that directive leadership is something that is to be avoided. It in fact says that directive leadership has its own relevance under certain conditions.

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Then we have got the follower characteristic of the Need for Affiliation. This is corresponding with leadership that is friendly and concerned, because that triggers satisfaction. Such followers have a strong need for group belonging, they feel that the leaders responsibility is to provide a helpful and comfortable working environment.

Reciprocation of the feeling of affiliation by the leader acts as a big motivator for affiliation seeking followers. Supportive leadership for followers who seek affiliation aims to nurture strong and cohesive group ethos with and amongst the followers.

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Then we have the Desire for Internal Control. Followers who are having this desire for internal control want to be in charge of their destiny, they want to be in charge of their work, they like to be an integral part of decision making. They want their work to be done by themselves, their plans to be done by themselves and they do not want to leaves anything to the outsiders or the outside forces as they think.

These followers are motivated by participative leaders who place decision making and execution in the followers' hands. Path-goal theory places considerable emphasis on understanding whether followers prefer external locus of control or internal locus of control. The latter group benefits from participative leadership.

Now, let us look at the perceived level of task ability. People who understand their own ability for executing tasks they prefer to aim higher and higher and they want to achieve more and more. Some aspects of such followers are willingness to challenge themselves with higher grades of work and work challenge. They will be motivated by higher levels of achievement that accrue because of such challenges; they will be pragmatic and creative, seeking to develop new ways of execution always.

They want to step out of their comfort zone and perform new things. They do not see tasks as a burden, rather they welcome tasks as an opportunity to prove themselves. These people are motivated by achievement oriented leaders who continuously propel them to higher performance trajectories.

So, achievement oriented followers have high level of tasks the ability understood by them within themselves. Therefore, they prefer equally achievement oriented leaders who push them to their limits. Achievement oriented leaders also tend to be participative leaders, because they place decision making and execution in the hands of the followers.

But the difference is that while the participative leaders may have a kind of shared goals, the achievement oriented leaders tend to place higher level of goals and higher levels of work standards before the followers and motivate them to achieve those higher goals and higher work standards.

So, they are well aware of the ability of the followers to self-direct and self-propel themselves to higher performance and they leverage that capability of the followers.

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So, we talked about the desire for Control earlier, every individual has a specific personality control which makes the person seek or respond to control. Therefore, we can classify all followers in terms of locus of control. In fact, we can classify all individuals there are two types of control. One, internal locus of control and two, external locus of control.

Those followers who believe in the internal locus of control think that they are in charge of the events in their life, for them participative leadership is motivating and satisfying for them as they feel part of decision making and in charge of their work.

And by definition such people also welcome achievement oriented leadership, because they believe that they have things under their control, because they have the ability to overcome the challenges posed by higher levels of work standards and higher levels of goals. So, internal locus of control is relevant both for participative leadership as well as for the achievement oriented leadership.

External locus of control is for those individuals who believe that the events in their lives are governed by chance fate and an external event. They kind of believe that the leader determines everything or the organization determines, there is pretty little that the

individuals can do. So, directive leadership is motivating and satisfying for them because it mirrors their feeling that outside forces control their life, they are the kind of people who would like to be controlled by others.

The spontaneity with which followers provide ideas and the conviction with which they go about planning and executing constitute a fair measure of the followers' internal locus of control. That is, if the followers are able to give their decision spontaneously they feel optimistic about achieving higher levels of goal, we can conclude that such followers have got internal locus of control as a dominant feature of their personality.

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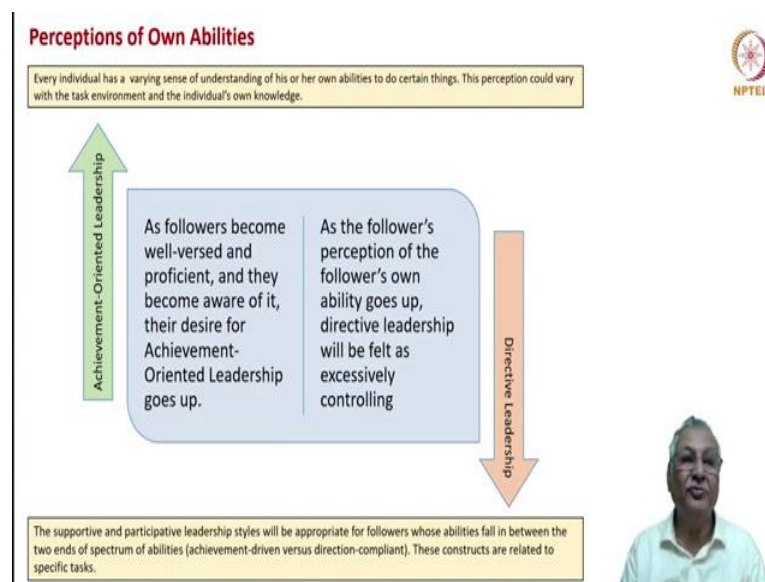
So, how do followers perceive their own abilities vis-a-vis the 2 leadership styles which we discussed, achievement oriented leadership and directive leadership. Here we assume that followers are aware of their capabilities and they have the ability to improve upon their capabilities. So, in achievement oriented leadership, followers become well versed and well trained and proficient in the job they are doing.

And, as they become aware of their capabilities, their desire for achievement oriented leadership goes up. On the other hand, if the followers' perception of the followers own capability is going up and they are faced with directive leadership they feel that the directive leadership is excessively controlling.

So, if the follower has got a positive perception of his or her ability to accomplish improved things, the follower would welcome achievement oriented leadership and would move against directive leadership.

The supportive and participative leadership styles will be appropriate for the follower whose characteristics fall in between these two types of follower perceptions and the leadership styles they would welcome.

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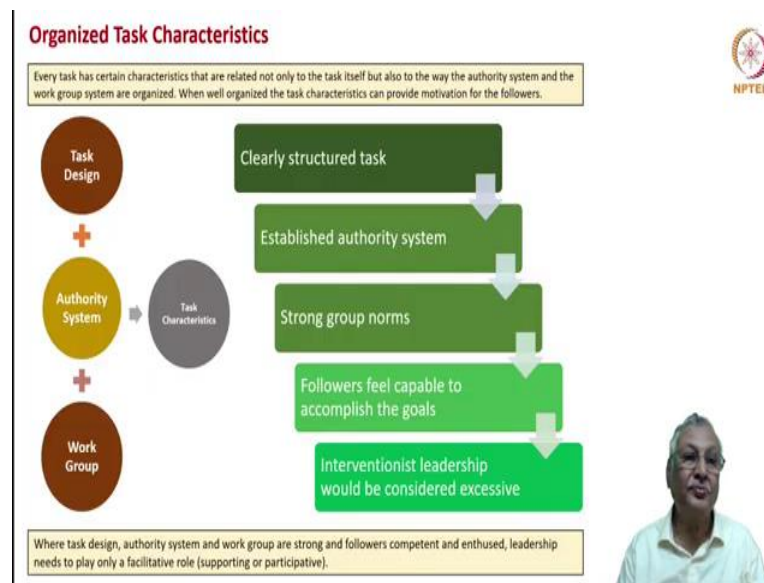
We also talked earlier about the Task characteristics and the Organization characteristics. So, in an organization, you have a particular way of designing the tasks, there is also an authority system, you may call it hierarchy, you would also have a work group, these three together constitute the work group.

That is the manner in which the project is designed, the authority available for various managers and executives to implement the project and the monitoring mechanisms and the work group that is constituted to implement the project. These characterize the task. Now, if you have a very clearly structured task with an established authority system and very strong group norms, followers feel capable to accomplish the goals. Interventionist leadership would be considered excessive, in these things are properly defined, we got a project probably well defined by a pert chart, you have your own budgeting system, you got resources allocated. You know who has to spend what, you also know which vendor has to be tapped through which buyer all those things are very clearly specified.

And the work group which accordingly works together has got the ability to network itself and deliver on the project. In such a situation, followers feel that they are fully capable of doing their bit, because the organization structure and the task structure is well defined.

In such a case, if somebody tries to micromanage the whole delivery there would be kind of perceptions of excessiveness. So, when these things are strong and followers are competent and enthused, leadership only needs to play facilitative role, either supporting or participative.

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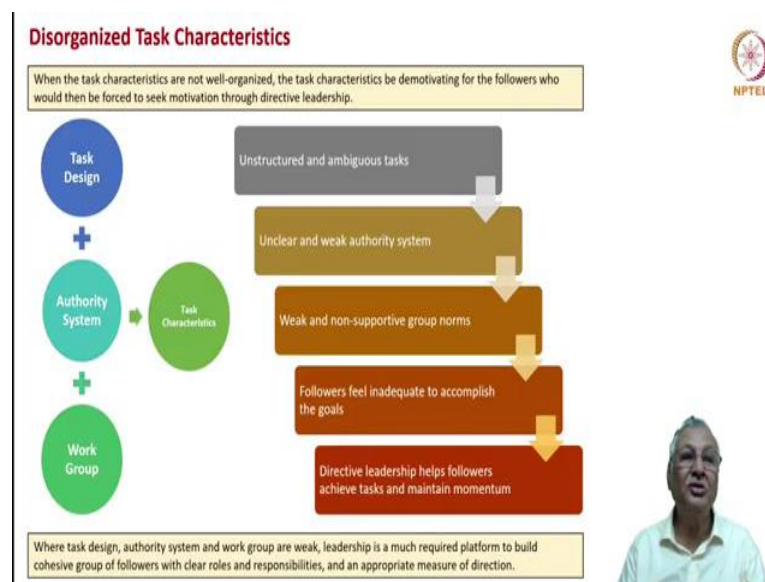
Suppose the task characteristics are completely disorganized, that is the task is improperly and randomly designed, there is no pert chart to govern, it is only a goal which is required, no milestones things like that.

Then the authority system: who has to provide the budget, who delivers what is not very clear and the work group itself is both formal and informal. Such task characteristics can be considered unstructured and ambiguous tasks is characterized by very unclear and very weak authority system.

As a result, the group norms themselves will be very weak and non supportive. In such a situation followers feel inadequate to complete the tasks, they feel that they require directive leadership because the whole environment is fuzzy and does not have clarity, so

they welcome directive leadership. So, that a leader tells everybody as to what to do at what point of time and how to do.

So, the weaknesses which are there in the task design authority system and work group are expected to be mitigated corrected and improved by the directive leader.

So, leadership again is a much needed platform to build cohesive group of followers when roles and responsibilities are not clear and the measure of direction measure of resource allocation is also not clear. So, leader has got a responsibility to assume the directive leadership posture in such a situation.

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So, many times in the path-goal theory, we discussed the topic of obstacles, let us understand what these obstacles are and what do they create. Obstacles are those that come in the way of proper execution by the followers of the task at hand and therefore they cause delay to or dropping off tasks.

What do the obstacles create in the overall system, one, they create excessive uncertainties frustration or even threats for followers'. Because the followers are not able to overcome the hurdles or they find that their task accomplishment is delayed by the hurdles they feel more uncertain about the entire task characteristic and the task organization.

And because consistently hurdles are being faced and the team members are not able to overcome them, it reflects poorly on the work group itself at a primary level and finally left and, finally left unattended obstacles reflect poorly on the leader as well. By helping the followers overcome their obstacles, leader does a great deal of benefit for the followers.

And that is one of the primary ways in which the followers and leader bond together. When the leaders remove the obstacles, leaders also improve the expectations of the followers on their ability to achieve those tasks and therefore they feel more motivated and the job satisfaction accordingly is increased.

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So, given all these background materials the path-goal theory we started with four leadership behaviours has been expanded to add additional leadership behaviours which explicitly recognize the nature of the work environment and the nature of the task system. So, the other four additional leadership behaviours are: work Facilitation, Group oriented Decision Process, Work Group Representation and Networking, and Value Based Leadership Behaviour.

These are being seen as necessary along with the four initial leadership behaviours of directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented. So, that the basic leadership behaviours are significantly reinforced in terms of the accomplishment of goals.

Path-goal theory has got its own advantages and disadvantages and the applicability, because most task characteristics tend to have ambiguity in common, certain types of organizations and certain types of followers tend to overcome the ambiguity through their autonomous and aspirational behaviour; whereas, others need directive push. So, in this table I have compared the leadership behaviour, the follower characteristics and task characteristics based on the types of companies we commonly encounter.

The directive leadership provides guidance and psychological structure, and the followers are dogmatic and authoritarian, and the task characteristics tend to be ambiguous, unclear rules and complex.

The supportive leadership behaviour corresponds with follower characteristics which are unsatisfied need for affiliation and need for human touch. The task characteristics are repetitive, unchallenging and mundane.

The participative leadership behaviour which provides involvement is related to autonomy of the followers, their own need for control, their own need for clarity and they are wanting to retain the destiny of their own lives. Task characteristics correspondingly are ambiguous, unclear and unstructured; however, it is their ability to make their own decisions make their own plans, make the followers take those kinds of actions and activities seriously and make them worthwhile for their achievement. You

can see that even the directive leadership behaviour has these task characteristics to handle that is ambiguous, unclear and unstructured.

However, the followers are differing in terms of their characteristics, under the directive leadership for the same type of task characteristics, you had dogmatic and authoritarian followers who welcome directive leadership behaviour. Whereas, in participative leadership behaviour which handles the task characteristics of ambiguity, lack of clarity and lack of structure. The followers are different they have an autonomous behaviour, they need control, they need clarity to be done by themselves that is the big difference.

The achievement oriented leadership provides challenges, high expectations are there in followers, they want to excel all the time, they also face tasks characteristics which are ambiguous. But their task characteristics are also challenging and complex.

So, effective leaders provide to followers what is missing in the environment, in terms of enabling structures and processes and help them acquire additional capabilities to overcome their deficiencies. One of the important aspects of the leadership theories is that these are not merely to develop a cross section of leaders and followers.

The objective of the leadership theories is also to ensure how the leaders can move the followers to better levels of performance through either competency and commitment of the earlier theory or through better motivational needs of the path-goal theory and also introspect and modify their own behaviours. So, that they put in an appropriate leadership style for the task characteristics that are at hand.

Behavioural Analysis

Given the overriding emphasis on understanding follower behaviours and motivations, leaders must be quite adept at behavioural analysis of followers. The following is a rough guide.

Analysis of followers	Answer	What can be done by the leader
Are my followers feeling secure to do the work?	Insecure	Provide supportive leadership
Are my followers motivated to do the tasks?	Marginally	Provide supportive leadership
Do they believe in their ability to do the tasks?	Marginally	Provide directive leadership
Are they interested in planning and doing?	Yes	Provide participative leadership
Are my followers capable of 'stretch'?	Yes	Provide achievement leadership
Can my workers be motivated to believe in their abilities?	Yes	Supplement directive leadership with supportive leadership
Can my workers take on new tasks confidently?	Yes	Provide supportive leadership
Do they believe that if they do their work they will be rewarded?	No	Provide participative leadership
Will more achievements improve the payoffs for followers from the work?	Yes	Provide achievement leadership

The authenticity of leader communication is a critical part of leadership success in path-goal theory as the performance of followers is based on expected rewards, and the leader should be authentic, and demonstrate the ability to deliver on promises.

Leaders need to analyse their followers in terms of the following questions, which serve as a rough guide. This is not the end of story for the questionnaire which the leader could do of themselves as well as the followers and many more questions can be asked of the followers.

But this provide guidelines, one of the questions could be, are my followers feeling secure to do the work. If the answer is insecure then you provide supportive leadership, are my followers motivated to do the tasks then the answer is marginally, from the leader is to provide supportive leadership.

On the other hand, if the followers are considered to be motivated to do to the task by themselves, then you should provide participative leadership. Do they believe in their ability to do the tasks, only marginally, then directive leadership, substantially then supportive leadership or participative leadership. Are they interested in planning and doing, yes, then certainly provide participative leadership, are my followers capable of stretch, certainly then achievement leadership, if the answer is yes.

Can my workers be motivated to believe in their abilities, yes, then provide directive leadership as well as supportive leadership. Can my workers take on new tasks confidently then provide supportive leadership, do they believe that if they do their work they will be rewarded, no, then provide participative leadership.

Because they need to provide their own decision making capability, will more achievements improve the payoffs for followers from the work, yes, then provide achievement oriented leadership because the followers can see the clear nexus between the effort, performance and reward and their personal satisfaction.

The authenticity of leader communication is a critical part of leadership success in path-goal theory; because the performance of followers is based on expected rewards, expected efforts to get the proper outcomes. And therefore the leader should be authentic and demonstrate the ability to deliver on promises of both the work challenge as well as the reward accrual.

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The strengths of path-goal theory are many. First, it provides a theoretical framework of how leadership behaviours affect follower's satisfaction and work performance.

Secondly, it prescribes four conceptually distinct types of leadership behaviour based on follower and task conditions. It is one of the earliest situational contingency theories of leadership; it takes the situational theory a shade higher and a step forward by bringing in the contingency theory, the expectancy theory into the leadership model. It integrates the motivation principles of expectancy theory into the leadership theory as we discussed.

It also considers what motivates the followers instead of just analysing followers in terms of their competency and commitment as done in the earlier theory. It also tries to

understand what is the motivational lever for the followers and it shifts focus from leader's expectations of workers to workers' expectations of leaders and it reminds leaders of their fundamental duty to guide and coach their followers.

The path-goal theory is both practical and people oriented, it offers a framework of important ways by which leaders can help followers. It nudges leaders to think of the motivational needs of their followers.

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What are the Criticisms? The criticisms are that, the framework is complex, it tries to straightjacket many aspects of followers and leaders into just 4 typologies. Because we have extended analysis to cover the efforts, outcomes, rewards, the motivational needs and personal goals.

What was the simple leader-follower matrix has been extended into a multi dimensional matrix, there is a lot of complexity that has come in to the framework because of that. However, at the same time, we are keeping all of these things simple and straightforward in terms of four leadership styles and four follower characteristics. While making a new advance in terms of lagging the motivational needs of followers, it ignores the important aspects of follower abilities.

Design of task characteristics has many components, leading to many possible combinations, not all are considered in this model. This model considers only four

combinations which are too limited to justify the breadth. The theory has a very low level of empirical validation, while research focused on directive and supportive leaderships. Participative and achievement leaderships do not have many studies.

While the research focused on directive and supportive leaderships, there is not much research which supports participative and achievement leaderships. Like the other leadership theories, no focus has been laid on gender and demographic factors to the extent they are required. And also as with other theories leaders are expected to understand all types of follower behaviour.

Switch between styles, understand the follower developments as the projects move on and try to communicate effectively and also change their own styles to meet the varied follower characteristics. The theory does not address the motivation competence link, the earlier theory address the competence and performance link, this theory address the motivation and reward link. But the link between motivation and competence is not addressed.

It also does not address, the after effects of the linkage between motivation relate to perceived results and actual results coupled with actual rewards.

That is, the linkage of motivation with reference to the perceived results versus motivation linked to the actual results and finally the actual rewards provided to the actual performance vis-a-vis the imagined rewards related to the expected outcomes. This complexity is not addressed in this theory.

Therefore, the leadership practitioner may be at a loss to understand, if the chosen style is appropriate or is being appropriately delivered. Therefore, as with all other theories high emphasis is placed on the leader to be an ace analyser and also a communicator in all the four leadership behaviours.

Application of Path-Goal Theory

The way Path-goal theory can be deployed is illustrated with the help of four business solutions. Note that the task characteristics or follower characteristics do not necessarily conform to the classic descriptions.

Nature of the Company	Task Characteristics	Follower Characteristics	Leadership Behaviour	How Does It Help?
Start-up	Clear goals Ambiguous paths Open experimentation Complex environment	Passionate Creative Learning	**Achievement** Provides challenges	Empowers and drives the followers to scale greater heights
Established - Automotive	Competitive Structured Productivity	Efficiency Output Regular improvement	**Supportive** Provides nurturance	Provides comfortable working conditions Provides recognition
Established - Pharma	Regulated Repetitive Quality	Compliant Careful Service	**Directive** Makes tasks and execution clear	Provides execution satisfaction Patient service
Established - Diversification	Ambiguous Challenging Complex	Autonomous Need for Recognition Ownership	**Participative** Provides involvement	Empowers followers to move into uncertain future

In contemporary times, technology and competitive trends impact task and follower characteristics in multiple and differentiated ways compared to the classic theoretical model.

Let us see where the path-goal theory could find an application in different ways. Let us say the company is a start-up company the task characteristics are very clear goals, very ambiguous paths, open experimentation and complex environment. The follower characteristics are passionate, creative, learning. The leadership behaviour is achievement, it provides challenges and how does it help, it empowers and drives the followers to scale greater heights.

So, the task characteristics are those which are more appropriate for followers who are having the creative ability, the learning ability and an achievement orientation. And start ups are typically founded by such founders and also, team members also share such a passion and ability to control their own destiny and the scale greater heights. Therefore, accomplishment oriented leadership style or achievement oriented leadership style is appropriate for the start up company.

Let us say, we have an automotive company which is an established company, the task characteristics are it is a competitive organization, lot of structured task characteristics exist and productivity is at a premium. The follower characteristics are that they are tuned to efficiency, they understand the importance of output. In fact, daily output of automobiles is an extremely good indicator of the efficiency and regular improvement is expected because the market is highly competitive.

The leadership which is required is supportive, because both directive type of effort is required on the part of the leader and also nurturance is required. So, how does that help, it provides comfortable working conditions and provides recognition for the employees.

Let us look at a pharmaceutical company which is also established. The task characteristics are that, it is a highly regulated environment, the work flow is repetitive because you cannot vary from the drug master file or the new drug application which you have made. You have to comply with what has been declared as the product and process characteristics and quality is paramount. When that is the situation, the followers tend to be compliant, very careful and service oriented. And the leadership behaviour that is appropriate for this type of form is directive, because it makes tasks and execution clear and the help it renders is through execution satisfaction and patient service.

Nature of the company let us say is a diversified company within the established group, the task characteristics are ambiguous challenging and complex. The follower characteristics tend to be autonomous, because they have seen different types of industrial environments and they would like to perform adequately in those industrial environments. They have the need for recognition and they have ownership in diversifying their company. The leadership behaviour that is required is participative, so that they are involved in the diversification decisions and take the challenge along.

How does this help, it empowers followers to move into an uncertain future by having control over their own planning and execution. In contemporary times, technology and competitive trends impact task and follower characteristics in multiple and differentiated ways.

Compared to the classic theoretical model, so if one were to apply path-goal theory, we would need to do a significant detailed analysis of the task characteristics, the follower characteristics and develop a leadership behaviour, which will help the followers accomplish the task characteristics that is very important.
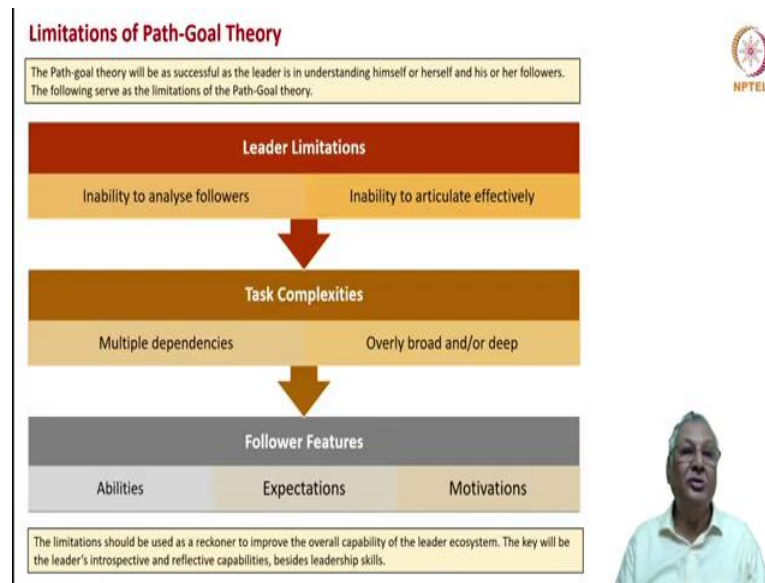
So, what are the limitations or the path-goal theory, there are few, one, it is not fully equipped to analyse followers in their complete spectrums. It also has the inability to articulate effectively because the combinations are so many, it is very difficult for a leader to address all the follower expectations with reference to the goals, explain the connectivity between the results, rewards and the expectations.

Second limitation is the Task tends to be complex, if you are looking at a project such as establishing a green field facility the tasks involved are so complex. That the path-goal theory cannot be applied as a whole to the entire spectrum of activities, probably it can be applied only at a macro level to certain individuals. So, multiple dependencies that exist in tasks and the overly broad and or deep nature of the tasks limit the applicability of the path-goal theory to the full spectrum of the organizational activity.

Then the follower features themselves are very qualitative and could differ from follower to follower and also differ from a leader to leader based on the appreciation prisms the leaders have. So, the abilities could be very varied, expectations could be very varied and motivational characteristics could be very varied.

And the same follower could be seen in different light by different leaders with reference to these 3 features. These limitations should be used as a reckoner to improve the overall capability of the leader ecosystem.

Path-goal theory is certainly is a great improvement over the previous three theories which we discussed and if the expectation, effort, outcome and reward linkage is properly defined, it would be possible to implement path-goal theory at least in small group setting in the beginning and then extend on a wider front in the organizations.

It is possible to cascade down path-goal theory starting let us say from the CEO, CXO level, that is the senior leadership team level and take it down as much as possible depending upon greater understanding of the leader limitations, leader characteristics as well as the for follower limitations as well as the follower characteristics.

So, with this, we come to the end of the path-goal theory and we cover the fourth theory in the five theories which we have chosen to discuss in this week. We will again meet in the next lecture.

Thank you.