

THE LIFE CYCLE THEORY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERIAL THINKING PROCESS

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1. *Introduction—Integration of Several Theories on Leader Behaviors.*

Of late, several theories on business administration have successively been published, but it has become increasingly difficult to integrally grasp the true ideas of such theories, because they are considered from different viewpoints among them. The idea of integrating such theories was announced⁽¹⁷⁾ in the past from the managerial thinking administration, and efforts have been made in the establishment of a unified theory. In 1972, P. Hersey and K. H. Blanchard made public an idea which was almost similar to that of the present author in reference to the leadership theory⁽¹⁸⁾. This is the life cycle theory of leadership, which substantiate the fact that it is a mistaken way to follow the leaders' ideal behaviors as shown in conventional leadership theories, i.e., the System 4⁽¹⁴⁾,⁽²⁾ or the Managerial Grid⁽¹³⁾,⁽³⁾. This also stresses to convert the type of leaders dependent on the demand of environment, by quoting the thought of F. E. Fiedler⁽¹⁵⁾,⁽⁴⁾ or of W. J. Reddin⁽¹⁶⁾,⁽⁵⁾, and by taking a hint from the ideas of A. H. Maslow⁽¹¹⁾,⁽⁶⁾ and C. Argyris⁽¹²⁾,⁽⁷⁾, further developing a new thought which the behavior of a leader should be converted following a certain rule dependent on the maturity of followers. However, without no mention about the idea on its conversion afterward, this thought also reaches one type, which result in only one variation of the conventional types to follow after one ideal behavior. This thought, however, may explain various contradictions of conventional leadership theories, each of which may be applied to the frame of the life cycle theory of leadership. However, it is not clear on what theoretical basis the leader should take such a behavior in each stage of the progress of the cycle. Thus, for further developing the life cycle

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the new life cycle theory of leadership and the old theory.

(1) Cyclic Process.

When one cycle is finished, the same cycle may be repeated coming back to the first process.

(2) The number of stages are fifteen.

While Hersey and Blanchard divided the process roughly into four stages, the new theory divides it in more detail.

(3) Reverse progressing Direction.

While the stage is progressed from a severe attitude to a mild attitude according to Hersey and Blanchard, the stage in the new theory is inversely progressed.

(4) While the progress in the old theory is based on a matured degree, in the new theory, it is based on the progress of system formation.

Since the leadership theory is made in consideration of a certain angle of the management, a number of similar thoughts on management can be integrally considered with respect to this theory, by which such a new development can be obtained. The similar thoughts mentioned above mean the methods of management comprising multi-staged thoughts, which are roughly divided into (1) the technique of creative thinking^{10),11)}, (2) the method of statistical test (proof)^{a),d)} and (3) the means of a concrete practice. Each of these methods indicates mental attitudes to be applied to each stage in the case of its application.

For example, in the case of brain storming, it is indicated not to criticize any person at all, but to be completely free. It is suggested to make combinations of idea after its progress to some degree¹⁰⁾.

The KJ method particularly makes a great account of the combination¹¹⁾. On the contrary, the statistical method requires a very scientific thought. In comparison of these two groups, in the creative thinking, it is recommended that a thought of each person will be diverse, and in the statistical method, it is desirable that a thought of each person will have to be accorded. In the concrete practice, a further faithful accordance toward the rule, the standard or the guidance is required. On the other hand, a more multi-staged method has been produced including not only partial stages but also all processes including them. This is a so-called group process managerial method¹²⁾, such as the QC circle, the ZD Program, or VA, which was created as a proposal for more complicated improvement which may gradually be required. For

such a method, it is necessary to collect as many ideas as possible, and then to verify whether or not a proposal for improvement will be certainly effective, and to carry out, without fail, several series of behaviors into execution. While the QC circle or the like seems that an apparent and loose managerial attitude of the group participation type is desirable, it requires, on the way, such a life cyclic conversion in attitude as the scientific mind of utilizing statistics, or severeness and strictness in practice, which may enable to support the life cycle theory of leadership,

3. *Reasons why the new theory differs from the old life cycle theory of leadership.*

While the points of difference have previously been mentioned, the reason of each point may be described hereunder.

(1) Cyclic Process.

The old theory seems to be premised on an assumption that there is a considerable difference in ability between a leader and his follower; that is, the old theory is considered to start from the state of conditions that the managing staff is well aware of how his followers should be and the followers are not conversant with it. Consequently, when the followers reach the level desired by their superiors, no guidance may be required, whereby one cycle is regarded to have accomplished. However, as a result of a highly advanced specialization in enterprises of today, it is the workers in the first line directly connected with the jobs should have a thorough knowledge within their limited sections, resulting in that all workers concerned with the jobs are required to participate in their improvement. In this case, it doesn't matter who takes the lead, but all workers should progress in cooperation with one another, whereby they will have a thorough understanding after all, although none of the workers might not have a thorough knowledge of the jobs at first. When this process is accomplished in one item, the same cycle will have been started for another item.

(2) The reasons why the stages are fifteen.

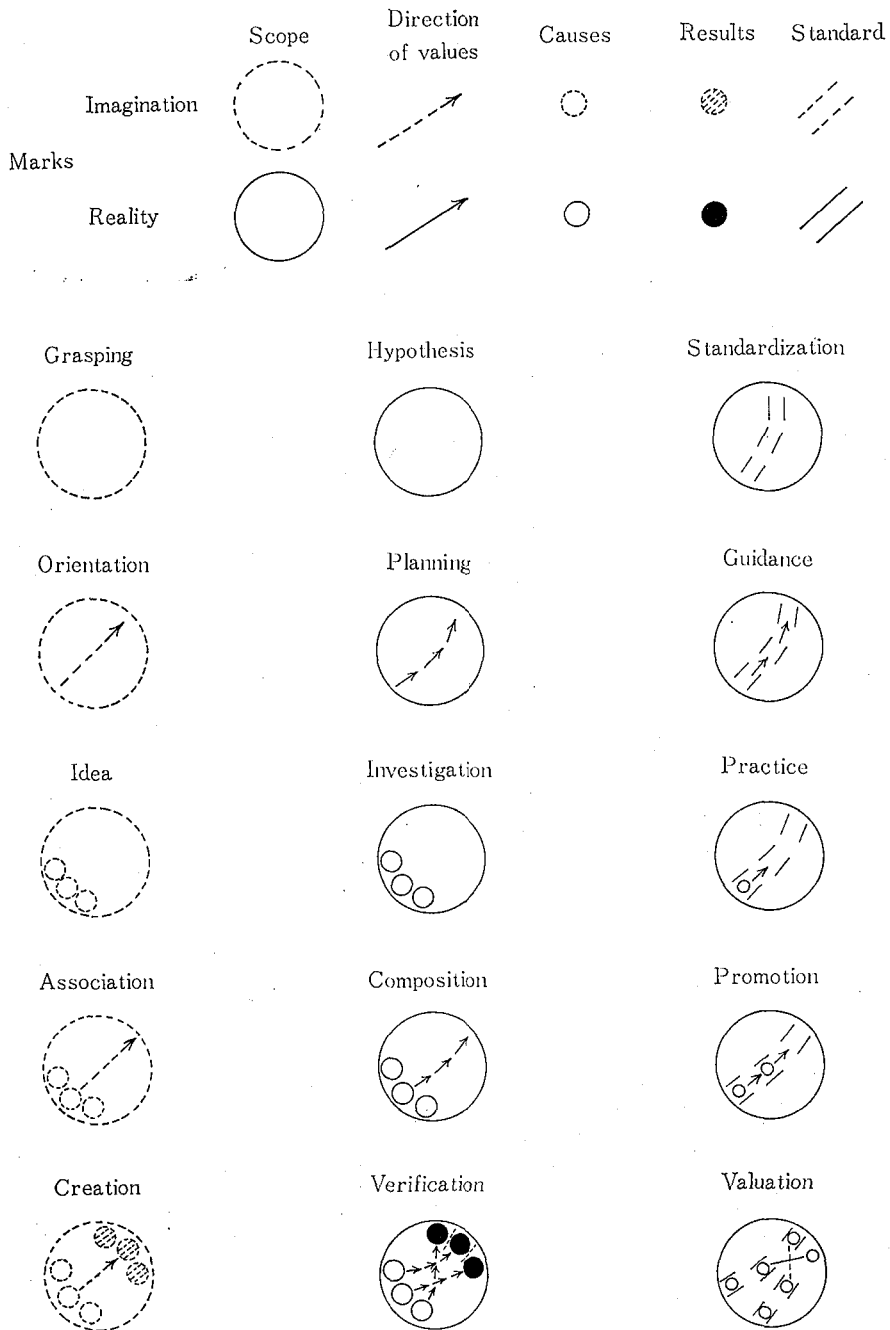
In the old theory, the process is divided into four stages, of which second and third ones are essentially the same in tempering with the humanity. In this connection, Schein divides the process

into three stages. In the new theory also, the process is roughly divided into three stages. Each of this rough classification is further divided into five stages, because the new theory mainly aims at solving the problem, for which it is essential to find the combination of causes and effects. Consideration should consequently be placed on the five factors of the cause and effect, their relationship, the sense of direction, and the field to think them over. These are applied to each of the three stages, which may result in fifteen stages. On several occasions, the author has published this idea, of which process may be listed up as follows:

Classification	Imagination	Trial	Reality	Definition
Field	Grasping	Hypothesis	Standardization	Concept
Direction	Orientation	Planning	Guidance	Object
Cause	Idea	Investigation	Practice	Behavior
Relationship	Association	Composition	Promotion	Cooperation
Result	Creation	Verification	Valuation	Value
Definition	Freeness	Faithfulness	Restriction	

Table 2 show each process in a diagram, of which definitions may be made as follows:

1. Grasping: Efforts are made to find out a higher dimension than a conventional one.
2. Orientation: To find a moral standard by which all member may think in the same way.
3. Idea: To present as many ideas as possible.
4. Association: To combine conventional ideas as many as possible so as to develop combinations of ideas.
5. Creation: To proceed in such a way that the final combination may be made as desirable as possible.
6. Hypothesis: To look for a test field which may be a miniature of the reality for a proposal which is supposed to be satisfactory.
7. Planning: To make a plan of tests which may enable to clarify all of the main factors of the proposal.

Table 2. *Diagram of the Thinking Processes*

8. Investigation: To carry out tests on the proposal in a state as close to the reality as possible.
9. Composition: To find a group of ideal behaviors being realizable from the result of the tests.
10. Verification: To judge if the result of the behavior group may be within the desirable area.
11. Standardization: To determine the limits of each behavior which may bring about a desirable effect.
12. Guidance: To clarify which behavior group is the most desirable from the viewpoint of the relation of all the behaviors.
13. Practice: To arrange in such a way that all the behaviors are faithfully realized in accordance with the standard or the guidance.
14. Promotion: To put back partial behaviors which are diverged out of a number of the behavior groups.
15. Valuation: To reflect whether or not the effects of the practices of the behavior groups are desirable, so as to take necessary actions later on.

(3) The reason why the progress in a severe direction.

As described in (1), if there is a remarkable difference in knowledge among the managing staffs and workers the attitude is to be converted from severe one to mild one. If, however, the difference is negligible, the attitude to be taken should be inversed, because the unknown field should be developed by all member. Today, the latter example is often occurred in the problems solved at the offices or workshops. This matter will be further described later.

(4) System formation as a basis of attitude conversions.

As mentioned above, in the case of a challenge upon an unknown field, fragmentary ideas, to begin with, are to be found, which are gradually theorized in an allround idea. They are substantiated, partially at first, and then synthetically. At first, they are executed in a limited section, and then with a consideration on the effective operation for the whole system. Thus, the progress may be based on the system formation.

4. *Reasons why the new theory differs from other process ideas.*

While there are many processing ideas such as the QC circle, the

ZD program, VA, TWI, or the MIC program, they are slightly different from one another even in case of similar processes. The points of differences are roughly observed in a number of the stages and the sequence. A number of stages is different depending upon the difficulty of solving problems; that is, it is not necessary to pass through all of the stages when a problem is easy, and the stages may be mostly omitted on their way of solving when the problems are self-explanatory. On the other hand, when a very important plan is to be carried out, its investigation should be fully and carefully made for its prospective success. Methods for substantial evidences vary in merely theoretically substantiating, carrying out partial experiments on a minor scale, statistically substantiating, operating a simulation by means of the random processing by a computer, executing an all-round experiment on a large scale, trial manufacture on a trial sale, or a field test where investigation may be made on the situation nearly the same to actual activities. This means that the proposal may often repeat the substantial process, sometimes, oftener than fifteen stages or several tens stages, depending on its influence and importance. The basic stages are, however, only fifteen, where the proposal passes repeatedly. Concerning the sequence, the process may inversely be proceeded when the ideal state to look for is known, as previously mentioned. For example, in the case of such as the branch processing according to the decision instruction in the program of a computer, the thinking process is inversely proceeded. The diagnostic process is just the case. Since the desirable state is known, if a series of behaviors do not result in the desirable state, for amending it to a desirable state, it requires less efforts than to start all over again in returning to the departure, to examine whether or not, the just previous behavior is right, to go back further to the previous behaviors in turn if the just previous behavior has been right, and to continue so, until a mistake may be found. However, as many cases are to be developed toward an unknown field, it is less effective to make an inverse progress. Of course, even in an unknown field, there is a method to suppose before an ideal state is found and to examine if there exist possibilities which may realize it.

However, it will be fruitless if such possibilities won't be obtained after looking for several methods. Consequently, it is more effective to progress in wondering beforehand what is the best among various

methods which seem to have possibility. Such an inverse progress may be partially applied to the method to search for the cause from such effects as the characteristic diagram in pursuit of inferior causes, or to bring about to one's mind causes and effects respectively, searching for the relationship later on as shown in the input-output method of the creative thinking. In the characteristic diagram such a method is applied when the reasons which may prevent the examination according with the ideal state, which is known in advance. This is required in the case the original system is insufficiently formed. No trouble may occur if the procedure mentioned above is applied. In the input-output method, while a remarkable number of ideas can be obtained, few are effective as compared with the number of ideas. Consequently, this method is not considered effective. The insufficient procedure for orientation at the previous stage may cause such a phenomenon.

In the QC circle, a standardization may be tried after practising it. The practice on this stage should not be on a full-scale, but rather on a trial basis. The standardization may be realized only after a reliability of the method is proved, then a full-scale practice might be started. When one system is accomplished, this system might be worked out afterwards. However, when the environment changes in such a way that the system at first supposed to be satisfactory doesn't work effectively, it is necessary to inversely search for possible causes for the difficulty. This may occur when the change of an environment could not be observed at an earlier stage. Consequently, an effort should be made with an aim of producing a new system standing on a higher viewpoint, after one system was accomplished. This means to predict beforehand the change of environment, on account of which possible troubles may be forestalled in advance. On the other hand, there is a thought, with which no effective activities can be expected without knowing the actual situation well, and a proposal for improvement has to be found only after a collection of informations. However, it should be clarified, first of all, for what informations are to be collected and what can be obtained as a result of the collection of informations, in investigating or analyzing the actual situation. This means to set forth a certain vague hypothesis, for which originality to some degree is also required. In this sense, it can be considered to be progressing in a normal sequence. When much higher investigations are required as the result and they are

successively repeated, new ideas are to be adopted at each time, whereby the experiment may be brought close to the reality. Thus, all of a series of thinking processes are not always proceeded to be straightened out, but intermediate processes are partially repeated, through which the system is gradually proceeded.

5. *Relationship between Managerial Thinking Process and Functional Organization.*

There is an environment, to which such process cyclic thoughts, as only one conventional unit, harder, be applied to a functional organization. Consequently, for example, a group activity in the QC circle and the ZD program is often carried out independently of the functional organization. The management mostly intends not to take an active hand in such a group activity, as it is the workers and supervisors in the first line directly connected with the job, who have much knowledge with respect to the job. Accordingly, the group is not specially guided by anyone, but the members of the group are on the same line and cooperative for one another in solving the problems with a challenge on the unknown field. Thus, they solve the problems in a normal process. Here, a big problem is not to be handled, in that the position of the group is generally low. As a big problem with influence to a major degree has to be carefully handled, a specialized managerial system per each process is respectively established, comprising the persons having personalities most suitable to the characteristic of each process. In the middle-grade management, it may be supposed to be forwarded with the functional organization as the center. Each of the specialized systems should, consequently, have one of the individual characteristics of each process clarified in the life cycle theory of leadership.

Hersey and Blanchard has opinions that the attitude of the 1.1 type should be taken for the management of researchers, and Mr. Ohashi supports this¹⁸⁾. This opinion may hold good, in that the research section is a primary stage for solving a problem in various business enterprises. This idea may also be supported from a viewpoint of the level in knowledge. In the work for which the management has to obtain cooperation from the whole members of a company, a periodical attitude conversion may be necessary, because, the specialization in the work is rather

difficult. Consequently, the management shouldn't look for only one ideal attitude, but should be broad-minded⁹⁾ so as to flexibly take proper attitude according to the development of a company⁸⁾. If such an attitude conversion is not realizable, the management is to be reorganized.

6. Conclusion.

Actual Proof in the Life Cycle Theory of Leadership.

In solving and developing several questions in the theory of Hersey and Blanchard, the author has tried to theoretically endorse several staged managerial methods. This, however, is only a logical proof. While actual proofs are required for a scientific theory of today, such a multi-staged hypothesis may be substantiated with an extreme difficulty. However, the managerial techniques in group process have been improved, and are born by the introduction of case studies, mutual trainings and stimuli, or comments, for example, in the QC circle meeting. While this could be an actual proof in a certain sense, the author is strongly determined to carry on his positive studies of the problem, difficult as it may be.

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