

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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ARTICLE INFO

Review Scientific Paper

Received: 03.11.2020

Revised: 23.11.2020

Accepted: 26.11.2020

doi 10.7251/ACE2033115T

UDC

342.511:316.46]:005.322(100)

Keywords:

leader, employee,

leadership style,

development, success

JEL Classification:

M21, M15

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present a situational leadership model. The model is universal and can be applied in small, medium and large enterprises of various industries. Numerous surveys on U.S. Fortune 500 companies and surveys on other companies around the world have shown its universality, but also the need to improve the model. The aim of this paper is to adapt the model to the needs of the service activity that deals with vehicle servicing. The paper presents the hypothesis that by adapting the situational leadership model in service activities, it will lead to better personnel leadership, increased profits and satisfaction of the demands and requirements of stakeholders. We used quantitative and qualitative methodology in our paper. We collected numerical data based on a situational questionnaire, and we collected qualitative data based on interviews with employees and leaders. The results of the conducted research confirm that by adjusting the situational leadership model, the profit of the organization can be improved. The extension of the model refers to the clear definition of business objectives, and the requirements of the CEO that leaders must have the highest knowledge and skills to effectively manage staff in given situations. The limitation of the research refers to a small sample, because we applied and adjusted the model only to one service organization. The originality of the work refers to the adaptation of the model of situational leadership in a service organization that deals with vehicle servicing. For the first time, the development of leaders is assessed in situational leadership models at the request of the CEO. Based on the results, the CEO analyses the development of leaders and the development of employees. To achieve the defined goals, the CEO requires from leaders to be at the highest level of development. Therefore, the introduction of continuous training of leaders is necessary. There are several ways to assess employee development. For the first time, employees are developed based on their ability to perform jobs. Leaders must be able to adapt their leadership style to all employees, to train employees as quickly as possible to perform tasks independently.

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1. INTRODUCTION

If we analyze the structure of employees in an organization, we can notice that the structure of employees is different in terms of knowledge, skills, motivation, and years of experience. We have employees who are beginners with insufficient knowledge and skills, but with great motivation ([Morten Emil, 2016](#)). Although they do not earn their salary, they are promising staff. The second category are somewhat more advanced beginners with certain knowledge, skills, and high motivation in performing tasks who for the most part earn their salary ([Drea Zigarmi, 2017](#)). The third category consists of employees with certain years of work experience who have adequate knowledge and skills, and sufficient motivation to perform work tasks ([Elizabeth Chapman, 2017](#)). They earn their salary but contribute little to the organization's profits. In the fourth category, they are employed with experience, knowledge, and skills, but with lower motivation, so they can independently perform work tasks and earn their salary and significantly contribute to the profit of the organization.

The task of the leader is to bring the staff from below the fourth level to the fourth level as quickly as possible and to earn their salary and contribute to the profit of the organization ([Salehzadeh, 2017](#)). By applying the situational leadership model, the leadership style is harmonized with the development level of employees to perform work tasks in order to make a profit ([Northouse, 2016](#)).

For leaders to be able to deal with employee development, it is necessary to know what knowledge and skills employees have ([Yariv Itzkovich, 2020](#)), but also what knowledge and skills employees need to perform work related tasks in different situations ([Joseph A Crawford, 2019](#)). Since leaders have a different structure of employees, their knowledge and skills must be at the highest level ([William A. Pasmore, 2017](#)). Leaders must provide employees with what they need and how much they need through directive and supportive behavior.

It is no wonder the situational leadership style appeals to small business owners. It affords flexibility as they assess both the situation and the people in it before rendering the best leadership response they can master.

The research problem refers to the insufficiently developed model of situational leadership in small service enterprises.

The aim of the research is to describe the model of situational leadership, determine and connect the causes and consequences, and to present new information about the model of situational leadership in small service enterprises.

In this paper, we hypothesized that adapting the situational model of leadership in small service companies will lead to better human resource management, more efficient leadership, increased profits and increased stakeholder satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies on leadership and leadership styles have not led to a consensus among researchers on what factors are conducive to effective leadership (Kara Arnold, 2016). There is a consensus that the interactions between the personality of the leader and the abilities of the employees are important factors (Marques, 2018) but those new factors should also be introduced in the research of the leadership process (Sam Shriver, 2018).

Situational leadership was created by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard (Paul Hersey, 2013) who combined their research results and created a situational leadership model. They started from the assumption that there is no most efficient leadership style and that it depends on the situation and development of employees (Chanho Song, 2020). Leaders who want to be successful must adapt their leadership skills to their subordinates and the type of task (Paul Hersey, 2013). The situation leadership model considers the level of development of subordinates, the choice of an adequate leadership style, the development of leadership theory and empirical evidence, and the impact on leader (Francis J. Yammarino, 2020). The situation leadership model suggests that effective leadership requires a rational view of the task and the level of employee development, as well as giving an adequate response (Aniefre Eddie Inyang, 2018), rather than the development of authority and dedicated followers (Glasø, 2018).

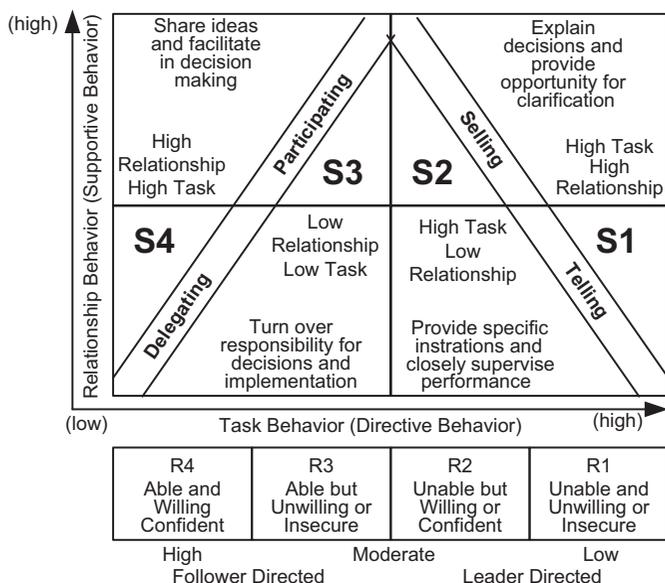


Figure 1. Situational leadership model

Source: Paul Hersey, 2013.

Leadership is the process of influencing individuals and group members to achieve the goals set before them (Paul Hersey, 2013). The main concept of situational leadership theory is that leadership consists of two components: the dimensions of task behavior (horizontal axis) and the relationship behavior (vertical axis). Combinations of these two dimensions give four leadership styles (Figure 1).

Blanchard presents the idea of leader behavior and argues that leaders behave differently in different situations (Paul Hersey, 2013). Therefore, the author argues that leader must be good diagnostician and adapt to different situations to solve tasks effectively.

In line with the original setting of the situational approach model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (Paul Hersey, 2013), they focused on two dimensions of leadership that relate to:

- Focus on a specific work task or planned goal and
- Focus on subordinates or associates performing a specific task.

Situational leadership style refers to the behavior of a leader that affects a subordinate. This impact includes:

- An order related to the execution of tasks in a way that helps subordinates by creating plans, defining goals, giving instructions, setting norms and deadlines. In this mode of behavior, communication is one-way.
- Support in the task execution process, through helping and encouraging associates to solve tasks. In this mode of behavior, communication is two-way.

Combinations of these two dimensions give four leadership styles:

- S1-TELLING - This style is a highly directive and low-supporting style. In this approach, the leader focuses on communication, on achieving goals and spends little time on support. Using this style, the leader instructs subordinates on what goals and how those goals should be achieved and then carefully monitors them.
- S2 – SELLING - This style is highly directive. In this approach, the leader focuses on communication, on achieving goals, and on supporting the social and emotional needs of subordinates. This style requires from the leader to help subordinates by giving encouragement and arousing the interests of subordinates.
- S3 – PARTICIPATING - In this approach, the leader does not focus exclusively on the goals, but uses supportive behavior that encourages the

skills of employees around fulfilling tasks. A leader using this style gives subordinates control over daily decisions but remains available to help solve problems.

- S4 – DELEGATING - This approach is a low supporting and low command style. In this approach, the leader supports and motivates employees to complete tasks. The delegating leader reduces his or her involvement in planning, controlling details, and clarifying goals. A leader who uses both leadership skills transfers control to subordinates and refrains from interfering with unnecessary support.

From this concept of changing leadership styles, the situational leadership theory has developed (Curseu, 2016). They emphasized the behavior of leaders in relation to their subordinates (associates). In situational leadership theory, the “ability relevant to performing a task” is considered in terms of the associate’s ability and willingness to perform the task (John R. Turner, 2018). There are four skill levels R1, R2, R3, and R4 ranging from low to high ability to perform tasks. Skill level R1- Employees have low competence and high commitment. The task is new to them and they do not know exactly how to do it, but they are excited about the challenge of the task. Skill level R2- Employees have some competence, but they have a low level of commitment. They started learning the job, but they also lose some of their initial motivation for the job. Skill level R3- Employees have moderate to high competence but may lack commitment. They have essentially developed job skills but are unsure if they can complete tasks on their own. Skill level R4 - Employees have the highest level of development, they have the highest level of competence and the highest degree of commitment to this task.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper uses a combined research methodology, i.e., a combination of quantitative and qualitative scientific research methodology. With the quantitative methodology, we collected numerical data, to explain and investigate the relationships between variables, and to establish causal relationships between the observed phenomena. Through qualitative research, we have collected countless data obtained in the natural environment through extensive observation, interviewing and conversation, whose primary task is to explain the meaning of the observed phenomenon.

Data were collected in the organization Verano Motors in Banja Luka.

The interview was conducted on the basis of a structured questionnaire, where specific questions were asked about the situational leadership.

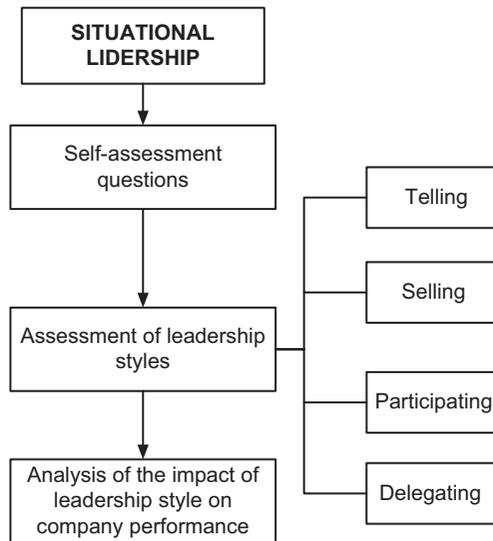


Figure 2. Evaluation procedure in the situational leadership

Source: authors

Additional data were collected in the survey. The aim of the survey was to expand the data collected at the interview and to improve their quality.

4. RESULTS

The situational leadership implementation process shown in Figure 3 begins with a request from the CEO that all leaders complete a standard situational leadership questionnaire. With this questionnaire, you can assess how leaders most often react when they want to shape the behaviors and attitudes of their associates in a certain way. The information obtained allows the CEO to see which dominant leadership style is used by his subordinate leaders, as well as at what level of development individual leaders are. The level of development of leaders is assessed in the same way as the level of development of employees from underdeveloped to developed.

Leaders who apply the S1 (Telling) leadership style are at the lowest level of development, leaders who apply the S4 (Delegating) leadership style are at the highest level of development. The goal of the CEO is to raise the development of the leader to the highest level and to be able to use all four leadership styles, i.e. to train them for the S4 leadership style. If the leader does not apply the leadership style S4, the CEO requires the leader to raise their level of competencies through additional trainings (Figure 3).

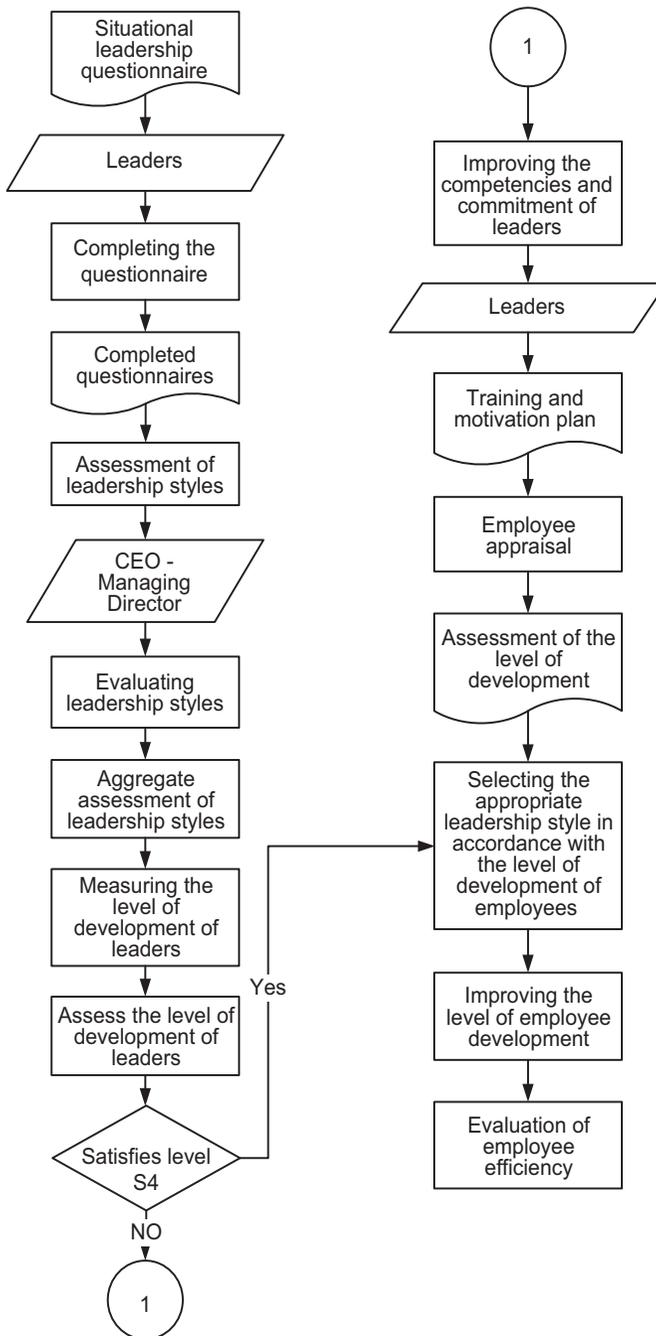


Figure 3. Situational leadership implementation process

Source: authors

When necessary knowledge and the skills for performing tasks are defined, the first step is to assess the development level of the employee, which refers to the ability to perform work independently. Employees differ in the level of competencies for performing tasks independently, as shown in Figure 4.

Employees at the lowest level of development are incapable of performing the simplest tasks, even under the supervision of a leader. Employees at a higher level of development are capable of performing tasks, but they need to repeat, explain and control the process of performing tasks. Employees at an even higher level of development can perform tasks on their own when they are clearly defined. Employees at the highest level of development can perform multiple, complex and diverse tasks on their own and have the initiative.

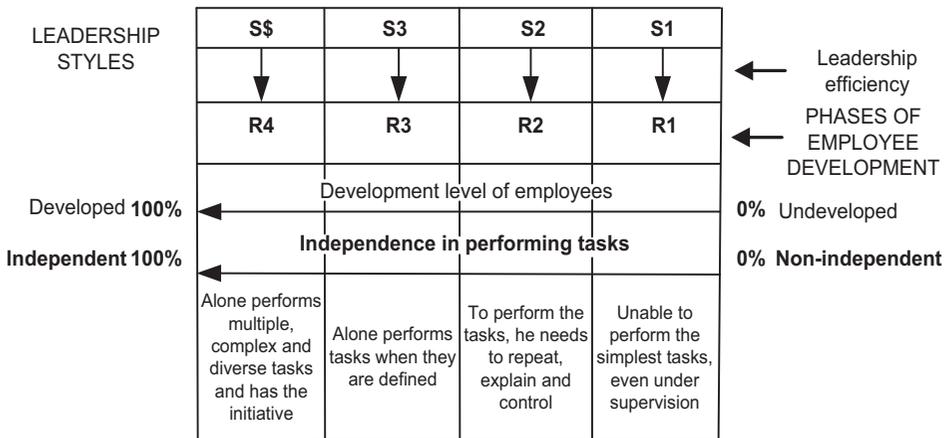


Figure 4. Independence in the work of employees

Source: authors

Table 1 presents the average assessments of the independence of employees in the performance of work, which were assessed by their immediate superiors. The scale of independence in work and the level of development of employees are presented in Figure 4. If the employee performs multiple, complex, and diverse tasks and has the initiative, he is at the highest level of development and is awarded 100 points. If the employee performs the tasks on his own when they are defined, he is at a lower level of development and is awarded 75 points. If the employee needs to repeat and explain the job and continuously control it while performing the job, he is at an even lower level of development and is awarded 50 points. If the employee is incapable of performing the simplest tasks, even under supervision he is at the lowest level of development and is awarded a maximum of 25 points.

Table 1. Assessment of employee independence in the performance of work, the level of leadership diversity and leadership style

Leaders	Development level of employees Independence in performing work tasks										Level of development of leaders and leadership style			
	Alone performs multiple, complex and diverse tasks and has the initiative	Column 1 x 100	Alone performs tasks when they are defined	Column 3 x 75	To perform the tasks, he needs to repeat, explain and control	Column 5x 50	To perform the tasks, he needs to repeat, explain and control	Column 7x 25	Total employees	Level of development of employees (sum of col. 2,4,6,8 / 9)	Level of development	Level of development	Leadership style	Recommended Leadership Style
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
X ₁	3	300	1	75					4	94	R4	64	S3	S4
X ₂	3	300	11	825					14	80	R4	60	S3	S4
X ₃	1	100			1	50			2	75	R3	58	S3	S4
X ₄	2	200							2	100	R4	58	S3	S4
X ₅	3	300	1	75					4	94	R4	58	S3	S4
X ₆	3	300	2	150	1	50			6	83	R4	56	S3	S4
X ₇	1	100	1	75	1	50			3	75	R3	56	S3	S4
X ₈	1	100							1	100	R4	56	S3	S4
X ₉			1	75					1	75	R3	54	S3	S4
X ₁₀	1	100			1	50	1	25	3	58	R3	54	S3	S4
X ₁₁					1	50			1	50	R2	54	S3	S4
X ₁₂	1	100	1	75					2	88	R4	54	S3	S4
X ₁₃	1	100	1	75	1	50			3	75	R3	54	S3	S4
X ₁₄	6	600	3	225	1	50	1	25	11	82	R4	52	S3	S4
X ₁₅	1	100	1	75					2	88	R4	48	S2	S4
X ₁₆	1	100			1	50			2	75	R3	48	S2	S4
X ₁₇	12	1200	5	375	3	150	1	25	21	83	R4	46	S2	S4
X ₁₈	4	400	2	150	4	200	1	25	11	70	R3	44	S2	S4
X ₁₉	1	100	1	75	13	650	1	25	16	53	R3	42	S2	S4

Source: authors

After the assessment of all subordinate employees by the immediate supervisor, the average assessment of employee development as team members is calculated in column 10 of Table 1. The average level of employee team development is related to the stages of employee development. The percentage of development from 0 to 25 is assessed as the development phase R1. The development percentage from 25 to 50 is assessed as the R2 development phase. The development percentage from 50 to 75 is assessed as the R3 development phase. The development percentage from 75 to 100 is assessed as the R4 development phase.

For example, leader X1 has 4 employees. Three employees are at the highest level of development because they can perform multiple, complex, and diverse tasks on their own and have the initiative and each of them is awarded the highest level of development of 100 points. One employee performs the tasks alone when they are defined and is at a lower level of development and is awarded 75 points. The average development of the team is 94 points, and they are at the highest level of R4 development. The leadership style is S3, so he needs to improve his leadership style to S4 level.

Leader X17 has 21 employees. Twelve employees are at the highest level of development because they perform multiple, complex, and diverse tasks on their own and have the initiative and have been awarded the highest level of development of 100 points. Five employees perform the tasks themselves when they are defined and are at a lower level of development and have been awarded 75 points. Three employees require repetition, explanation, and control to complete the tasks and are awarded 50 points. One employee is incapable of performing tasks independently and has been awarded 25 points. The average development of the team is 83 points, and they are at the level of R4 development. As we can see from Table 2, his level of development was rated with 46 points and he applies the S2 style. To be able to manage efficiently and effectively, it is necessary to raise his competencies (knowledge and skills) to a higher level and transfer to the S4 style.

Since the goal of the CEO is to make the dominant style S4 and to raise the level of development to the maximum level, it is necessary to create a training program to improve the competencies of leaders, and a motivation program to perform tasks (Figure 5).

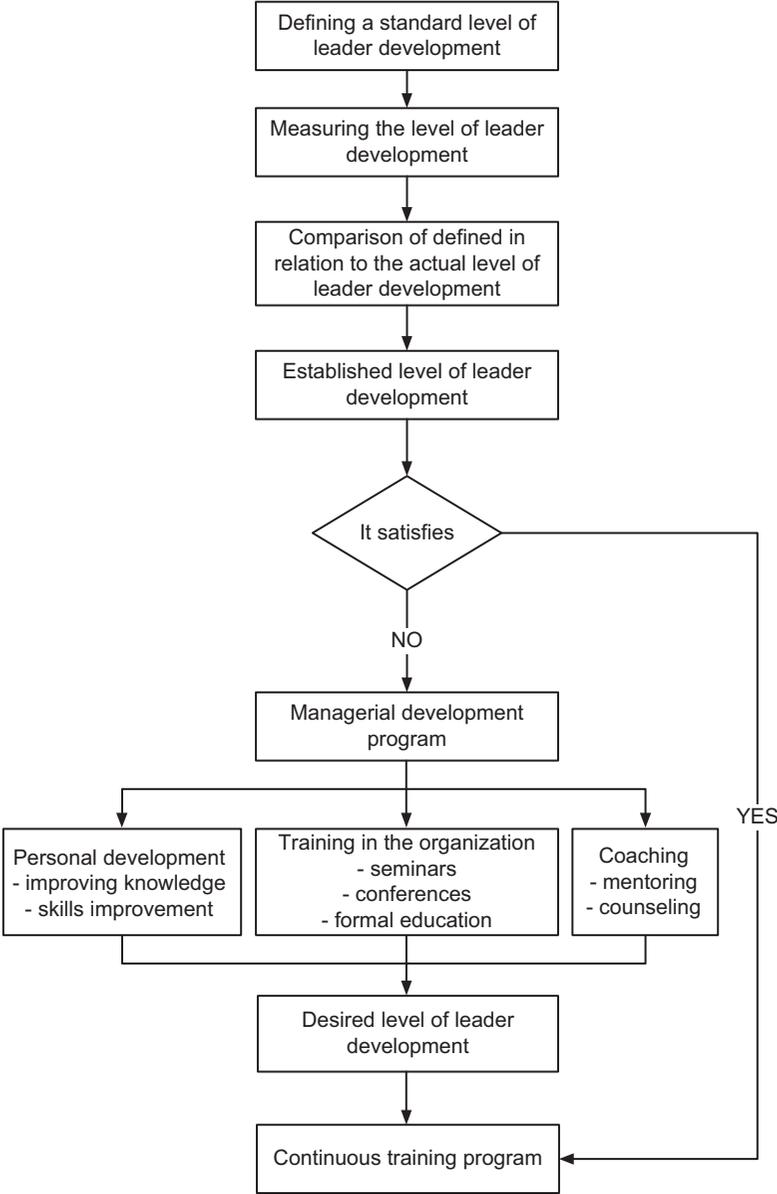


Figure 5. Determining the needs for training and development of managers
Source: authors

After the conducted trainings and raising the level of managerial development and the possibility of using all 4 leadership styles, leaders can approach the process of employee development. The success of the situational leadership model

refers to the harmonization of the leadership style and the level of development of each subordinate employee.

Based on the research results obtained on the basis of the Situational leadership implementation process, we confirmed the set hypothesis. The role of the CEO in the evaluation and development of leaders was emphasized, as well as the role of leaders in the development of employees in small service companies. The data in Table 1 show the development level of employees and the level of development of leaders and leadership style. Based on these data, leadership weaknesses and weaknesses in employees can be identified and the most effective trainings for the development of leaders and employees can be extended. In this way, we have expanded and adapted the model of situational leadership in small service companies.

5. DISCUSSIONS

The situational leadership model of the authors Hersey, P., Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, D. E. (2013) starts from the assumption that there is no most effective leadership style and that it depends on the situation and employee development. Leaders who want to be successful must adapt their leadership skills to their subordinates and the type of task. The situation leadership model considers the level of development of subordinates, the choice of an adequate leadership style, the development of leadership theory and empirical evidence, and the impact on leaders. The situation leadership model suggests that effective leadership requires a rational view of the task and the level of development of employees and giving an adequate response, rather than the development of authority and dedicated followers.

The paper expands the original situational leadership model. The CEO evaluates the leadership styles of subordinate leaders and measures their level of development. It sets a strategic goal for all leaders to be at the highest level of development so that they can apply all four leadership styles. It is important that leaders adjust their level of leadership to the level of employee development in order to maximize the use of human resources. Based on the value of the dominant leadership style and the level of development of leaders, the CEO and the Human Resources Development Service recommend individual trainings for leaders to be as efficient as possible.

The next addition to the original model refers to the assessment of the level of development of employees, and their level of development is measured from incapable of performing the simplest tasks, even under supervision, to the ability to perform multiple and diverse tasks and have the initiative.

6. CONCLUSIONS

We concluded that managers are the most important for the success of a company. For a manager to be successful, he must be efficient and effective. Modern management combines traditional and modern leadership style.

The paper describes situational leadership. The process of situational leadership in Verano Motors was presented, the evaluation of leadership styles of individual leaders by the CEO was given in detail and their level of development was measured. The CEO has set a goal that leaders must be at the highest level of development and use all four leadership styles to raise worker productivity to the highest level. In addition, an algorithm has been created to determine the training needs of leaders. Leaders assessed the level of development of their employees based on the degree of independence in performing the work. In this way, they adapt leadership styles to individual workers to achieve the best possible results.

The advantages of the modified model of situational leadership in relation to the basic model are the presentation of the process for the implementation of situational leadership in a small company. In the basic model, leaders evaluated employees, but leaders were not evaluated by anyone. This model emphasizes the importance and role of the CEO in the process of situational leadership, and especially in the evaluation of leaders. A new approach has been introduced in assessing the level of development of employees. In the basic model leaders evaluated employees on a scale from 0 to 100, i.e. from underdeveloped to developed. A new scale of evaluation of independence in performing tasks has been made, which is in line with the level of development of employees. Examination of the extended model in practice has shown that the situational model of leadership improves the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership and improves the performance of the company.

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СИТУАЦИОНО ЛИДЕРСТВО У УСЛУЖНИМ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈАМА

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САЖЕТАК

Сврха рада је да се представи и понуди иновирани модел ситуационог лидерства. Модел је универзалан и може се примијенити у малим, средњим и великим предузећима различитих дјелатности. Истраживања у 500 америчких компанија и истраживања у другим компанијама широм свијета показала су његову универзалност, али и потребу побољшања модела. Циљ рада је да се модел прилагоди за потребе услужне дјелатности у организацији која се бави сервисирањем возила. У раду се истиче хипотеза да прилагођавањем ситуационог модела лидерства у услужним дјелатностима доводи до бољег управљања кадром, повећања профита и задовољавања жеља и захтјева заинтересованих страна. У раду смо користили квантитативну и квалитативну методологију. Бројчане податке смо прикупили на основу ситуационог упитника, а квалитативне податке на основу разговора са запосленима и менаџерима. Резултати provedеног истраживања потврђују да се прилагођавањем модела ситуационог лидерства може повећати профит организације. Проширење модела се односи на јасно дефинисање циљева пословања, те захтјева извршног директора да менаџери морају имати највиша знања и вјештине како би ефикасно управљани кадровима у датим ситуацијама. Ограничење истраживања се односи на мали узорак, јер смо примјену и прилагођавање модела вршили само на једној услужној организацији. Оригиналноста рада се односи на прилагођавање модела ситуационог лидерства у услужној организацији која се бави сервисирањем возила. Први пут се у моделима ситуационог лидерства оцјењује развој менаџера на захтјев извршног директора. На основу резултата, извршни директор анализира развој менаџера и развој запослених. У циљу остваривања дефинисаних циљева извршни директор захтјева да менаџери морају да бити на највишем нивоу развоја. Ради тога се уводе континуиране обуке менаџера. Постоје бројни начини оцјене развоја (перформанси) запослених. Први пут развој запослених се врши на основу њихове способности за извршавање послова. Менаџери морају бити оспособљени да прилагоде свој стил лидерства свим запосленима, те да запослене што брже оспособе за самостално извршавање послова.

Кључне ријечи:

лидер, запослени, стил лидерства, развој, успјех.

