

The Effects on the Interactions between Supervisors and Subordinates Brought by Congruent or Incongruent Goal-orientations

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The purpose of the study was to figure out what conditions would enhance the quality of interactions between supervisors and his/her subordinates when their goal-orientations were either congruent or incongruent. To set out, it was hypothesized that supervisors and his/her subordinates would have better relationship (1) when they had similar goal orientations and (2) when the subordinates demonstrated more task-oriented behavior even when they didn't have similar goal orientations or when the subordinates were dissatisfied with the instructions they received from the supervisors. It was also hypothesized that the factors which would make the subordinates more task-oriented were the quality of the relationship they would have with their supervisors as well as how they perceive their organization.

In this study, goal-orientation was defined as the most dominant psychological tendency that is used when a person would choose a particular behavior as most effective in information-process and achieving his/her goal.

The Study I examined the goal-orientation behavior by the subordinates and found that, like their supervisors, there were two components in their goal-orientation behavior called Task-orientation and Relation-orientation. Two components seen in the supervisors' goal orientation were called Performance-orientation and Maintenance-orientation.

The Study II was an experiment and examined how the subordinates Task-oriented or Relation-oriented behavior influence on their supervisor's behavior. There were 38 participants who were male undergraduate students. They were assigned to a leader of a work group as subordinates. There were three subordinates under a leader. The instruction was given to each leader by the experimenter in advance that the leader should lead his/her group to achieve one of two goals; Performance-oriented or Maintenance-oriented. The members of the group were the confederates who were also instructed to response to the instructions and commands given by the leader. Two kinds of response were expressed in the goal-oriented behavior by the subordinates; one was identified as Task-oriented and the other Relation-oriented. In this experiment, a major independent variable shows the observed behavior of the naïve leaders. It was found that the subordinates' Task-oriented behavior could induce their leaders to be more directive and considerate in leading the group toward task achievement.

The Study III investigated the factors to help the subordinates facilitate the Task-oriented behavior. It focused especially on the ingratiation tactics based on discussion (hereinafter called the discussion-ingratiation tactics) employed by the subordinates when they were dissatisfied with their leader's command. There participated 231 employees in different corporations. It was shown that, in the organization in which employees were judged by his/her merit and competence, they tended to use the discussion-ingratiation tactics to solve their dissatisfaction more than the

employees in the organization in which they were judged by pay-for-age base. It was also found the same tactics were used often when the subordinates tended to attribute their dissatisfaction to their supervisor. In contrast, when the subordinates attribute their dissatisfaction to their relationship with the supervisor or when their supervisor was performance-oriented (therefore their goal-orientation was incongruent), the subordinates showed the tendency to hide their dissatisfaction and not to use the discussion-ingratiation tactics as much.

In the Study IV, the final study, it was examined how the discussion-ingratiation tactics were used by the subordinates to influence the behavior of their leader in the dissatisfied situations. It was found that the leaders, who recognized the fact that their subordinates were employing the tactics to resolve the situation, showed more directive and considerate leadership than those who didn't recognize it.

From the findings stated above, it is concluded that the subordinates' Task-oriented behavior is effective to develop better relationship with their supervisor no matter that their goal-orientations are congruent or incongruent. To promote Task-oriented behavior in subordinates, two factors are recognized as important, the supportive characteristics of the organization and the favorable relationship between the supervisors and his/her subordinates.

key words: congruent or incongruent goal-orientation, upward influence process, perceived organizational system (pay-for-age vs. merit and competence), relationship, causal attribution