

Situational Leadership

Introduction:

Developed by Hersey and Blanchard, situational leadership is a very popular approach in leadership and management development (Northouse, 2013). It prescribes a leadership model that is contingent and adjusted to task-relevant competence and commitment level of the subordinates as illustrated below:

Developmental Continuum	Matching Leadership Style
Low Competence and High Commitment	High Directive and Low Supportive Behavior (Directing – focuses communication on goal achievement)
Moderate Competence and Low Commitment	High Directive and High Supportive Behavior (Coaching – meets the socio-emotional needs of the employee)
Moderate Competence and Lacking Commitment	Low Directive and High Supportive Behavior (Supporting – emphasis is on employees skills in performing tasks)
High Competence and High Commitment	Low Directive and Low Supportive Behavior (Delegating – facilitates confidence and motivation in employee task performance)

Strengths	Weaknesses/Criticisms
It is well known and frequently used	Not widely researched as a leadership theory
Has been around for a while	Fails to illustrate how commitment meshes with development levels
It is practical	Theoretical basis is not well-explained
Has prescriptive value	It is unclear how the model matches with subordinate/employee development
It is flexible	Does not account for demographical data
Helps to build subordinates confidence	Does not fully address leading groups

Application:

Situational leadership can be applied to various levels within an organization. Leadership style should be adapted to the changes in subordinates' development levels.

Leadership Instrument:

Questionnaires are frequently utilized for this approach to provide respondents with information and feedback on primary and secondary leadership styles. Additionally, this gives leaders the opportunity to compare their views with the way others view them in a leadership role (Northouse, 2013).

Reference:

Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. (6thed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.