NEW PATTERNS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT:
PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT

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Background
Since the late 1940s, the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan has engaged in organizational research primarily to identify the human factors which influence end performance. The research has been conducted largely in American industry which has invested some $15,000,000 in a continuing development of new insights to improve overall management. Organizational data have been obtained from scores of companies of all types including some 20,000 managers and over 200,000 other employees. The results have been published widely. The most extensive coverage can be found in two books on management by Likert, one published in 1961 and the other in 1967.

The industrial studies have successfully identified the human organizational variable which differentiates the more effective from the less effective organizations. The main causal factors are the organizational climate and leadership behavior which significantly affect how subordinates deal with each other individually and in work groups in order to produce the end results. These variables can be used to define consistent patterns of management. In the two Likert books cited, these patterns were classified broadly as Systems 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The range of management patterns begins with System 1, which is a punitive-authoritarian model and extends to System 4, a participative or group-interactive model. In between is System 2, a paternalistic-authoritarian style which emphasizes man-to-man supervision in a competitive (or isolative) environment, and System 3, which is a man-to-man consultative pattern of operation.

Research studies have established that there is a close relationship between the management system of a firm or plant, and the performance results it achieves. The cause/effect relationship becomes more marked when performance results are considered over a period of time. Industrial organizations which have management patterns like System 4 (participative) yield better performance (i.e., as much as 20 to 40 percent, or better) than firms which typically have little better than a System 2½ management.

Perhaps the obvious question for educational leaders is whether these same factors of organizational behavior are applicable to the unique characteristics of school systems. A variety of recent dissertation studies about school administration have validated that the basic organizational factors are similarly associated with differences in school operations. The more effective schools are those with a participative environment more toward System 4, while the less effective are much more authoritarian, with a System 1 pattern of operation.

Stogdill stated, "When teachers and principals are described high in consideration and structure, their pupils tend to make higher scores on tests of school achievement." Moreover, he emphasized that "consideration and structure are positively related to various measures of group cohesiveness and harmony... Consideration is related to low absenteeism, grievances, turnover, and bureaucracy."

Further evidence can be found in a recent study of two New York inner-city schools which located important differences in pupil learning occurring between schools with nearly identical facilities, staff, and low-income student enrollment. The researcher concludes:

The findings of this study suggest that the differences in pupil's reading achievement in these two schools were primarily attributable to administrative policies, behavior, procedures and practice. Effectiveness of teaching, training and experience of teachers, appropriateness and availability of materials, and approaches to teaching reading did not differ significantly between the schools. The abilities of the schools' administrative teams, however, were very different. In School A, the principal and his assistant
principals were able to run an orderly, peaceful, and efficient school with a high degree of cooperation from pupils, teachers, and parents. In this atmosphere, decisions based on educational criteria could be put to practice and children could learn more. In School B, the principal and his assistant principals had difficulty eliciting cooperation from staff, community, and pupils and implementing educational policy. Children in School B had less opportunity to learn. Greenfield and Andrews found that teachers exhibiting a high degree of leader behavior tended to induce high achievement in their pupils.

Key Concepts to Participative Management

Basically, theories and practices of organizational endeavor are highly dependent upon the views of human nature. When these views are analyzed thoroughly, the resulting organization will exhibit a characteristic pattern—a set of mutually self-consistent arrangements. For example, a pessimistic view of human nature (mechanistic concepts borrowed from classical economic theory which depicts man as lazy and work as hateful) would result in an authoritative pattern—one with a maximum of centralized decision and control and a minimum of self-determination by lower management and employees. A more optimistic view of man, one that seeks to capitalize on his potential rather than simply to emphasize his weaknesses, would result in a more participative pattern.

McGregor, formerly of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, made many contributions to participative management theory in both his research and his writing. He rejected the traditional principles of management for three reasons. First, they were derived from the study models of the Catholic Church and the military which differed significantly from modern industrial organizations. Second, traditional theory ignored the influence which the political, social, and economic environment had on organization and management. Third, classical organization theory was based on a number of assumptions about human behavior which were only partially true.

These assumptions were labeled, by McGregor, as Theory X:

1. The average human being has an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it if he can.
2. Because of this human characteristic of dislike for work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, (or) threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives.
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, (and) wants security above all.

In contrast to Theory X, McGregor developed Theory Y which he described as the integration of individual and organizational goals. The underlying assumptions of Theory Y are:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest.
2. External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed.
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement.
4. The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility.
5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population.
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.

Theory Y implies that if the conditions are right, the individual within an organization can best achieve his goals by working to achieve the goals of the organization. Hence, the integration of goals is accomplished.

Maslow expanded upon McGregor's Theory Y and labeled it "eupsychian" management. A few of
the 36 assumptions which underlie eupsychian management are:

1. Assume everyone is to be trusted.
2. Assume everyone is to be informed as completely as possible of as many factors and truths as possible, i.e., everything relevant to the situation.
3. Assume an active trend to self-actualization.
4. Assume that people are improvable.

Likert discovered a different pattern of leadership evident in high-producing managers in American industry and government when compared with those managers achieving less impressive results. High-producing managers tended to differ from low-producing managers in the general patterns of operation by more often showing the following characteristics:

1. More favorable attitudes by all members of the organization exist toward (other) members, supervisors, the work, the organization, and all aspects of the job.
2. There is a high level of mutual confidence and trust throughout the organization.
3. Identification with the organization and its objectives is strong.
4. Performance goals are high and dissatisfaction may occur whenever the goals are not met.
5. Many motivating forces are utilized in a cumulative and reinforcing manner to include ego, security and economic motives, curiosity, creativity, and the desire for new experiences. Motivation is oriented toward achieving the organization's goals as well as the needs of each member.
6. The organization consists of a tightly-knit, fully-functioning social system made up of interlocking work groups with a high degree of group loyalty among the members and favorable attitudes and trust between supervisors and subordinates.
7. Measurements of performance are used primarily for self-guidance.
8. Employee participation and involvement in decisions is a habitual part of the leadership process.

Likert derived a general principle from these findings on high-producing managers which he referred to as the "principle of supportive relationship." Of utmost importance in this principle is the fact that the subordinate must perceive the supervisor's relationship as supportive. The principle of supportive relationship in simple terms means the general enhancement of the human dignity of everyone in the organization.

Utilizing the principles of supportive relationship as the integrating thread, Likert provided the key concepts of participative management, or System 4, as: (1) The Principle of Supportive Relationship; (2) Multiple-Overlapping Group Structure; (3) Group Problem-solving by Consensus; (4) High Performance Goals, and (5) Adequate Levels of Technical Competence.

System 4 harnesses human motivation in ways which yield positive cooperation rather than fearful antagonism on the part of the people in the organization; by contrast, Systems 1 and 2 tend to develop less favorable, and more hostile and submissive attitudes. System 4 doesn't use economic motivation alone to accomplish goals; it also uses what Maslow calls the high need of self-actualization and sense of personal worth and importance, and it combines those kinds of motivational forces to help achieve high productivity, high levels of satisfaction, high levels of sense of personal worth, which in turn yield high levels of physical and mental health.

System 4 emphasizes that the structure of the organization ought to be looked at as a series of face-to-face groups, each of which is effective in having the capacity for highly-productive problem-solving in the face of difficulty. Each group consists of a supervisor and his subordinates. The groups work toward finding solutions that are going to yield results favorable to all the different parties and interests represented, so it's not a zero-sum game as the problem-solving tends to be in Systems 1, 2, and 3. It is much more a win/win, rather than a win/lose, kind of problem-solving.

The System 4 organization is held together by people who hold overlapping memberships—or, linking pins. This kind of linking occurs both vertically and, when necessary, laterally, in order
to achieve effective coordination in large, complex organizations.

**Improving Participative Management in Schools by Quantitative Measurement**

The basic organizational factors which explain differences in overall performance are summarized in Figure 1. The major factors are classified as Causal, Intervening, and End-Result Variables.

The *causal* variables are those which the leaders can modify, or if modified, they cause change to occur subsequently in the intervening, or intermediate, variables, and later in the final performance results. Organizational Climate, Leader Behavior, and Organizational Policy and Structure are the causal factors that should be the main targets for change. Technical competence is also a key element but is omitted here since it is not a behavioral characteristic in itself.

The *intervening* variables reflect the internal state and health of the organization, e.g., the loyalties, attitudes, and motivations of all members and their collective capacity for effective interaction, lateral communication, sharing of influence, and decision-making. The state of these intervening variables is determined by the causal variables and, as a rule, changes in the intervening variables lag in time behind changes in the causal variables.

The *end results* are the actual performance achieved, and include also the satisfaction with various aspects of the school environment. There is usually a time lag before the full effects of the causal—intervening—end results linkage become evident.

Because of this sequential linkage, it is necessary to change the causal factors first. Many experimental or demonstration projects for improving educational administration make an unfortunate miscalculation of the immediate target for change. This miscalculation is usually the end result of focusing on the wrong kind of variables—the intervening, or intermediate. Often they seek directly to increase communication or motivation among school staff. Lasting improvement, however, requires changes of the causal variables, e.g., organizational structure, organizational policy, etc.

The organization research which is identified with Likert and the Institute for Social Research has always been based upon obtaining reliable, quantitative measures of the actual human relationships in a work setting. Out of this research, survey instruments were perfected which accurately measure perceived human behaviors in an organizational setting, rather than merely attitudes or motivations. The survey information is obtained from respondents at all levels within an organization, not just from the leaders. The reliability and validity of these measures have been reported elsewhere.10

In 1968, Dr. Likert and Jane Gibson Likert, modified the basic survey questionnaire (Profile of Organizational Characteristics) for administrators in public schools and colleges.

Six interrelated questionnaires obtain accurate perceptions from students (fourth grade and higher), teachers, principals, central office staff, superintendents, and school board members. Special forms were added for counselors, department heads (and grade chairmen or teaching team leaders) and parents.

This type of quantitative instrument can provide educational administrators and other school leaders with real insight into the impact of their own leadership on everyone else in the system. Its broader purpose is to evaluate the progress of the system toward a more participative (System 4) management. One particularly valuable use will be in longitudinal comparisons with objective educational performance criteria. The linkage of causal leadership behavior to performance outcomes must soon become better understood by accountable school leaders who seek ways to do their own jobs better. The School Profile measures can help create such an understanding.

**Conclusion**

Participative management may be defined as the practical application of Theory Y assumptions about human behavior. This notion may necessitate a re-examination of much of the tradition, of so-called administrative leadership, which presumes that power, authority and influence of the educational leader provide the major source of thrust and significance to the educational enterprise.

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the more effective from the less effective organization as *organizational climate* and *leadership behavior*. These causal variables significantly affect how subordinates deal with each other individually and in work groups in order to produce the end results. These variables can be used to define a range of management patterns which begins with a punitive-authoritarian model and extends to a participative or group-interactive model.

Modern school systems need educational leaders who apply a systems approach to organizational effectiveness and not merely perpetuate existing traditions. The infusion of the social behavioral sciences in the field of educational administration is generally accepted conceptually, yet rarely effectively operationalized.

The Likert-derived key concepts of participative management, or System 4, utilizing the principle of supportive relationship as the integrating thread coupled with quantitative measures of actual human relationship in a work setting should enhance the operationalization of the basic concepts contributed by the social-behavioral sciences.

Participative management has been carelessly mistaken for *permissive management*. Participative management is the antithesis of permissive management. Unlike permissive management, participative management is a "no-nonsense" high performance goal-oriented management pattern. This new pattern of school management could enable schools and school systems to confront the demands of our enormously complex and dynamic society and assist educational leaders to behave in ways which will "open up" the school climate for a significant payoff in student growth.

**Footnotes**


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