

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE MANAGERIAL STYLE OF UPPER AND LOWER LEVEL MANAGERS

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**Abstract:** *In this paper we intend to research the managerial style at upper and lower level within the same organization. Obviously, the managerial style differs from an organization to another, but the question is whether/to what extent it differs within the same organization at different levels. The managerial style is closed related to the corporate culture. Managers can and should determine the kind of corporate culture they wish to work within and strive to make sure that kind of culture develops. Culture is often viewed in terms of the level of participation within the organization. The managerial approach in most organization has been characterized as highly structured. Consequently, most attempts to alter organizational culture have been directed towards creating a more open and participative culture. In accordance with participative and non-participative cultures there are participative and nonparticipative managers at all levels of the organization; they influence one another. We would be tempted to say they are the same within the same organization, but people think and action in the different ways, even if they work within the same organization. The supervisors can behave different from their managers. The attitudes and preferences of supervisors affect how a job is done. This deserves special emphasis here because of the problems that can result if the managerial style of upper-level managers differs from that of lower-level managers. The managerial style of the immediate supervisor will have a considerable effect on the culture of the group, and vice versa. If the manager is aloof and distant in dealing with subordinates, this attitude could have a negative influence on the organization. Consideration is a desirable leadership characteristic that can positively influence group effectiveness. We studied these theoretical aspects in practice as well. We chose investigation within the Flexibility and Performance by Management (FPM) Project, as a research method. 76 managers or entrepreneurs from Bihor county participated at this project, attending seven courses in management field. The project's general objective was: development of the managers' professional skills for both to prepare them for promoting adaptability and introduction of new technologies. We used the project's base data, but focused on finding out whether the managerial style differs within the same organization at different levels.*

**Keywords:** managerial style; upper managers; lower managers; influence; attitude; organizational culture; efficiency; effectiveness.

**JEL classification:** M14, M20

## **1. Introduction**

Whether we define management as the process of getting things done through the efforts of other people and leadership as the process of influencing others to do what the leader wants them to do, we easily notice that the definitions overlap. That is because managers must lead. The main distinction between the two terms is one of focus.

The managerial style of upper and lower level managers are influenced by the corporate culture, that can be defined as a firm's social and psychological climate. Corporate culture has many dimensions. It can be either closed and threatening or open, considerate and participatory. In a closed and threatening culture, decisions tend to be made higher up in the organization: managers tend to lack trust and confidence in subordinates; secrecy abounds throughout the firm; workers are not encouraged to be creative or to engage in problem-solving activities. In an open, considerate and participatory culture, decisions tend to be made at lower levels in the organization; management has a high degree of trust and confidence in subordinates; open communication is advocated; workers are encouraged to be creative and to solve problems with other team members.

Some behaviorists contend that the open, participative culture is the only viable one for all situations. Both, the open, participative culture and the closed, autocratic one may be characterized by high-output objectives. In a closed culture such objectives are more likely to be declared and imposed on the organization by autocratic and threatening leaders. There is greater rigidity in this culture, resulting from strict adherence to the formal chain of command, short spans of management and strict individual accountability. The emphasis is on the individual rather than on teamwork. Workers often simply go through the motions of work, doing as they are told. Despite behaviorists' criticism of traditional corporate culture, a more participative philosophy may not always work. The corporate culture can be neither purely open and participatory nor completely closed and autocratic.

## **2. Participative Versus Non-participative Managers**

According to the majority of the specialists there are four basic managerial styles: autocratic, participative, democratic and laissez-faire (Mondy et al. 1994).

- An autocratic leader is a leader who tells subordinates what to do and expects to be obeyed without questions. Research suggests that autocratic leadership is most effective where the task is simple and fairly repetitive and where the leader has only short-term relationship with subordinates.
- A participative leader is a leader who involves subordinates in decision making but may retain the final authority. He chooses to establish a management team that keeps employees closely informed about company plans and practices.
- A democratic leader is a person who tries to do what the majority of subordinates want. Democratic leaders are becoming more and more important as the use of the team approach to management increases.

- The laissez-faire leader is a leader who is uninvolved in the work of the unit. It is difficult to defend this leadership style unless the leader's subordinates are expert and well-motivated specialists, such as scientists. Practically every leader who has attained recognition for effectiveness has done so by being deeply involved and active.

### 3. Managerial Style as Related to Types of Workers

The four managerial styles can be presented as related to types of workers:

**Table 1:** Leadership style as related to types of workers

Autocratic style	Participative style	Democratic style	Laissez-fair style
Leaders tells workers what to do	Leader allow and expects worker participation	Leader seeks majority rules from workers	Leader lets group members make all decisions
McGregor's Theory X workers	McGregor's Theory Y workers		Expert-specialist workers

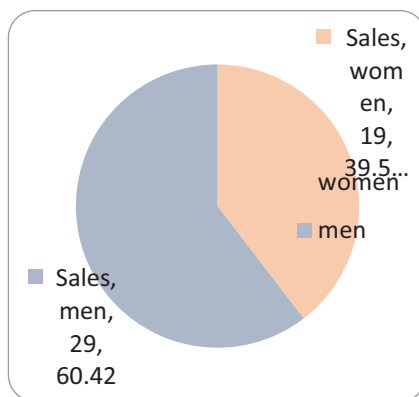
Source: Mondy R.W., Sharplin A. and Premeaux S.R. (1994) *Management: Concepts, Practices, and Skills*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.331

There are a group of theories – situational leadership theories that assume there is no single best way to lead. Situational, or contingency, leadership theories start out with the assumption that appropriate behavior depends on the circumstances at a given time. These theories advocated a leadership behavior based on the concept that the choice an effective leadership style depends on the demands of the situation. What makes a manager an effective leader in one situation is not necessarily what that manager needs to be equally effective in another situation. Whether or not a manager is an effective leader is the result of the interplay between what the manager is like, what he does, and the situation in which leadership takes place. Effective leadership is contingent on both the characteristics of the leader and of the situation. Leader style is the enduring, characteristic approach to leadership that a manager uses and does not readily change.

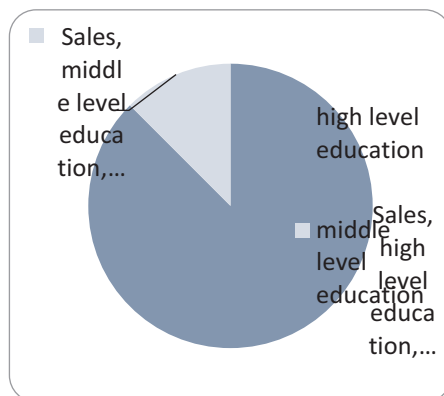
### 4. Research Methodology

The research is a descriptive one, of transversal type. In order to implement this quantitative research, the investigation was chosen as a research method. In this view, there was drawn up a questionnaire structured in 10 questions. The target population is represented by the course attendants of focus groups within the

*Flexibility and performance by management (FPM) Project*, a project financed from the European Social Fund – “Investing in People!”. The data base has in total 76 managers or entrepreneurs from Bihor county, 31 women and 45 men. 48 people completed the questionnaire, which means that response rate is 63%. From those 48 people, 19 are women and 29 are men.



**Figure 1:** Gender affiliation of the respondents



**Figure 2:** Educational level of the respondents

Regarding the level of education of the respondents, 42 of them have university and post-university education. Regarding the field, more than a half (31 respondents) have economic studies, followed by technical studies, exact sciences, social-human, etc. (see Table 6). Regarding the age group, the situation is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Field of education and the respondents' age

Field of education		Respondents' age		
		Age (years)	Number of persons	percent
Economic	24-50%	18 – 24	5	10,4
Technical	11-22,91%	25 – 34	18	37,5
Exact Sciences	4 - 8,33			

Social-Human	3 -6,25	35 – 44	14	29,1
Law	2 -4,16	45 – 54	9	18,8
Others	4 -8,33	55 – 64	2	04,2

Our objective was to find out whether the managerial style differs within the same company at different levels.

### 5. Results and Discussions

The results of our reasearch are presented in Figure 3÷6. We analysed the managerial style of the respondents as well as other mamagers' style (MS) that are situated at different levels within the same organization, taking into account: gender (Figure 4), level of education (Figure 5), field of education (Figure 6) and age (Figure 7). We wanted to find out in what extent the lower and upper managers use the same managerial style (SMS) or a different managerial style (DMS).

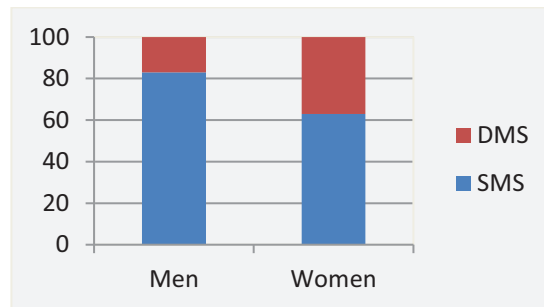


Figure 3: Lower MS versus Upper MS -Gender

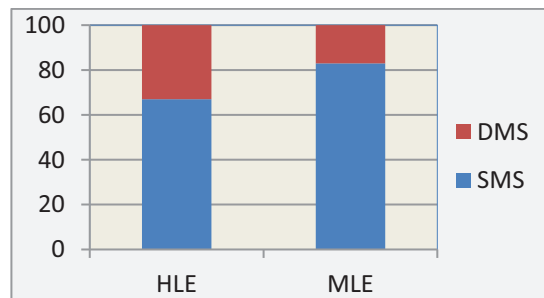
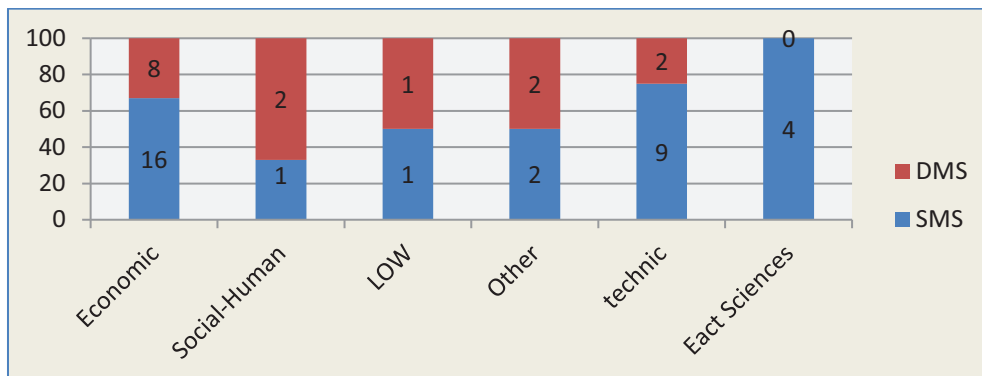
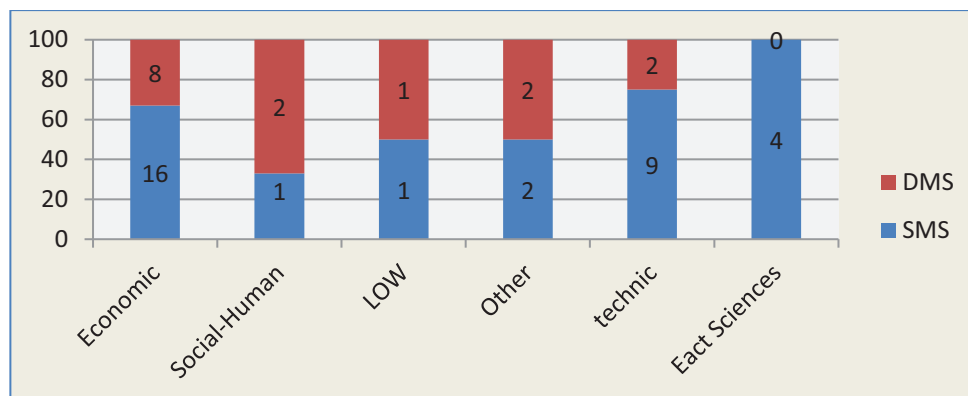


Figure 4: Lower MS versus Upper MS -Level of education



**Figure 5:** Lower MS versus Upper MS –Field of education



**Figure 6:** Lower MS versus Upper MS -Age

## 5. Conclusions

Our practical research findings can be summarized as:

- Most of lower-level managers make use of the same managerial style as upper-level managers;
- The women lower-level managers make use a different managerial style than upper-level managers more than men;
- Lower managers high level educated people make use a different style than upper-level managers more than people who have a middle educational level;
- Lower managers who graduated Faculty of Social-Human but also Faculty of Economics or Masters in Economics, Faculty of Low and others, make use a different style than upper-level managers, more than those who graduated Technical or Exact Sciences faculties;
- Lower managers who are 25-34 years make use a different style than upper-level managers more than the other categories.

In essence, managers must be able to diagnose the situation confronting them and then choose a leadership style that will improve their chances of effectiveness. The challenge is for managers at all levels to develop an effective personal management style.

The most effective leaders are flexible enough to select a leadership style that fits their needs as well as the need of their subordinates and the situation.

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