MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOUR: A CASE-STUDY

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SUMMARY

The three problems considered in this study were:

(i) What does a manager do?

(ii) To what extent is a manager's behaviour determined by the situation, person or their interaction?

(iii) How does the behaviour of a manager in a new position change over time?

The investigation of these problems was based on data obtained by direct observation of the behaviours of two retail managers, who were in the same position in succession. Manager A was observed for 4½ consecutive work days. Then, Manager B, who took over the position, was observed for 5½ days when he had been in the position for one month; 5½ days spaced over the next 14 months; then for 3 days when he had been in the position for sixteen months and was classed as 'experienced'.

The 'experienced' behaviours of Managers A and B were compared for their time-spending, behavioural events and content of work. As found in other studies, characteristics of: a high emphasis on verbal communication and a large quantity and variety of work, which is handled in short sessions because of the continual interruptions, were apparent. However, these characteristics were more intense for Manager B.

Their content of work was investigated using Marples' (1967) problem portfolio approach and there was a great deal of variation between the two. The appropriateness of Mintzberg's (1971, 1973) roles to describe what they did, was
discussed. There were only two issues which were handled a
similar amount by both managers and these were both dependent
on others. Manager A's behaviour was more task-oriented, while
Manager B spent more time in the resource controller and
disturbance handler roles, and had a broader outlook on the job.
These discrepancies appeared to be related to the different
circumstances involved with each manager, which in turn
affected their motivation. They also showed that managers do
have considerable control over the content of their work.

The relative effects of the person, situation and their
interaction, on the largest sample of one type of the
experienced managers' behaviour (contact with suppliers), were
analysed by multivariate information transmission. The results
showed that the major contributor to this behaviour was the
person-situation interaction. This finding in conjunction with
similar findings in the field of social behaviour led to the
inference that it is likely to be quite general. Though the
discrepancy between the work contents of the two managers
implied that the relative effects of the person versus the
situation will fluctuate depending on the behaviour.

Manager B's behaviours at different levels of experience
were compared, to investigate the development of managerial
behaviour. It was found that at first he spent most of his
time gathering information, and establishing relationships.
However, he was also active in the basic responsibility of
the job – ordering merchandise. Then in the initial stages of
gaining experience there was an upsurge of task-oriented,
structured activity and improvement projects, all related to
the basic responsibilities of the job (especially advertising).
When he had been in the position for sixteen months, he gave
more attention to broader aspects of the job with more ambitious improvement projects, more self-initiated events and greater efficiency and selectiveness in his time-spending. Thus, there appeared to be three distinct stages in the development of his behaviour.
STATEMENT

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University; nor, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does it contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

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