

10/6/76

MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOUR: A CASE-STUDY

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Thesis submitted to The University of Adelaide
in fulfilment of the conditions for the
Degree of Master of Arts.

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May, 1975

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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.

Susan M. Coin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Mr. Peter Hornsby and Professor Ian John, of the University of Adelaide, for their help and encouragement in various aspects of this study, and Dr. Gordon O'Brien, of Flinders University, for his time spent in reading and valuable criticism of the draft.

Without the cooperation of the organisation concerned and the two managers, particularly 'Manager B', this study would not have been possible and I express my deep appreciation of their assistance.

I wish also to record my gratitude to Mrs. Kerrie Round for her patience and excellent typing, and to my mother for typing the draft copy and helping in many other ways.

Finally, I owe much to my understanding family, particularly my husband, Charles, who has been a constant support.