the group, not only so that quality decisions are reached, but also so that the group treats the decisions as its own. Therefore, in these situations, a leader may have to sacrifice the cost of time, and perhaps the quality of decisions, to ensure group support and cohesion. Achieving a balance among quality, time spent, and maintenance of group support is a goal that leaders may need to attain rather than high-quality decisions and high acceptance by group members.

The normative decision-making model can assess a leader’s decision-making style by having the leader choose the appropriate behavior over thirty situational conditions. On the other hand, the model is mostly prescriptive and it helps the leader determine how to respond to a given situation. However, in descriptive studies, the model shows that the situation is three times stronger than the leader’s style in affecting the way the leader responds (Vroom and Jago, 1998). Therefore, the model demonstrates that a leader needs to base the level of participative decision making on the situation and outcomes that are important to the leader (e.g., time, accuracy, commitment, etc.).

**Path-Goal Theory**

Researchers developed the path-goal theory out of Ohio State University leader behavior studies (Stogdill, 1948) and the expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964). The premise of the path-goal theory is to determine leader behaviors that increase subordinates’ motivation by clearing the path to a goal. In other words, a leader’s behavior is a major contributor to subordinates’ satisfaction and motivation. However, the extent to which a leader’s behavior is effective is determined by the extent to which a leader complements the environment in which subordinates work. In the original theory, House (1996), who was inspired by the work of Evans (1970), identified four leadership behaviors that can affect subordinate satisfaction: directive, achievement oriented, supportive, and participative behaviors. Furthermore, the extent to which these behaviors are effective is dependent on three groups of contingencies: the task, characteristics of the subordinates, and the nature of the subordinates’ group.

Two meta-analyses (Indvik, 1986; Wer Liska, 1993) validated the path-goal theory by showing the moderators that are proposed to increase the effectiveness of leader behavior on subordinate motivation. These moderators can be considered contingencies that impact the relationship between the leader’s behavior and the subordinate’s motivation. After examining several of the proposed moderators, the “the analyses indicated that much of the research testing path-goal theories has been flawed” (Wofford and Liska, 1992, 857). This flaw may be due to the fact that of the sixteen possible moderator tests, only seven met the criteria as moderators, and one moderator was in the opposite direction than was hypothesized.

The situational leader model in this paradigm (framework) has been subordinates’ task structure (Evans, 1996). However, Wofford and Liska (1993) did not find support for the moderating effect of subordinates’ task structure on the relationship between a leader’s initiation of structure behavior (the extent to which a leader is likely to define and specify his or her role and the characteristics in the search for goal attainment) and subordinates’ satisfaction, performance, or role clarity. However, subordinates’ task structure was found to have a positive effect on the relationship between considerate leader behavior and performance. When the task was unstructured, considerate leader behavior led to higher levels of performance. Fewer studies have examined the personal characteristics of subordinates as moderators (e.g., ability, locus of control). Schriesheim and Schriesheim (1980) demonstrated that subordinates’ need for affiliation, subordinates’ authoritarianism, and subordinates’ ability and experience moderated leader behavior and outcome relationship. Other studies have shown that subordinates with an external locus of control (believing that their lives are controlled by outside forces) were more satisfied and productive with participative and directive leaders, whereas subordinates with an internal locus of control were more productive and happier with task-oriented leaders. Finally, the results of a recent meta-analysis (Wofford and Liska, 1993) found that ability was the only subordinate characteristic that moderated the relationship between leader behavior and outcomes.

Researchers have highlighted several limitations of the path-goal theory. These limitations include problems with the instrument of the leader behavior measure (Schriesheim and von Glinow, 1977: Fisher and Edwards, 1988) as well as Yukl’s (1989) concern relating to the broad conceptualization of the leader behaviors in the measure. Other problems stem from the lack of research that has examined moderators besides task and subordinate characteristics. Finally, Wofford and Liska (1993) expressed concern with the fact that the majority of the studies performed with the theory suffered from source bias. Source bias refers to overreliance on a single source for data, particularly when the information is about the independent variable (i.e., subordinates’ behavior) and dependent variable (i.e., subordinate satisfaction) are both obtained from the subordinate.

On a positive note, path-goal theory encouraged evolution of important conceptualizations of leadership. House acknowledged that it was the basis of the development of his own role and characteristics structure leadership theory (House, 1996) and potentially an impetus for the development of vertical dyad theory.

**Situational Leadership Theory**

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) based their situational leadership theory on previous studies of leader behavior. They identified four leadership behaviors: telling, selling, participating, and delegating, which are measured by the LEAD (leadership effectiveness and adaptability description) instrument. The theory predicts that the extent to which these behaviors are effective depends upon subordinates’ task maturity and subordinates’ psychological maturity. Subordinates’ task maturity is measured using such factors as ability, education, and experience, whereas subordinates’ psychological maturity is measured using such factors as willingness, self-esteem, and motivation. The theory predicts that when subordinates are able and willing, a leader should sell (that is, decide on a course of action and “sell” it to the subordinate). When subordinates are unwilling but able, the leader should engage in participative decision making. When subordinates are unwilling and unable, the leader should tell them what to do.

Although the situational leadership theory is popular, it has received limited empirical examination, and the results have been mixed at best (Bass, 1990; Vechio, 1997).

All leadership contingency models and theories acknowledge the role of the situation. However, two key factors make them different. First, some use the leader’s traits, whereas others use the leader’s perceived behavior as reported by direct reports. Second, some have shown validity for predicting employee satisfaction and job stress, and others have shown validity for predicting productivity and morale. In addition, some have more face validity, whereas others have more empirical validity.

More specifically, among the behavioral contingency theories, the path-goal theory and situational leadership theory are different from the normative decision-making model on the basis of the scope of a leader’s role and the characteristics and subordinates’ leadership behavior (House, 1996) and potentially an impetus for the development of vertical dyad theory.

All leadership contingency models of leadership effectiveness and the path-goal theory lies in how the leader is assessed and how the situation is assessed: leader factors. In the path-goal theory, the perceived leader behavior is the focus, whereas in the contingency model of leadership effectiveness, the leader’s trait or internal state is the focus. In path-goal theory, the situation is assessed through the eyes of subordinates; in the contingency model of leadership effectiveness, the situation is assessed through the eyes of the leader.

Most of the theories and models in the contingency approaches consider the situation as the contingent factor that interacts with the leader’s characteristics (e.g., traits or behaviors). However, another set of theories attempts to determine the set of characteristics on which the situation varies (Stogdill and Tjosvold, 2002). Thus far, only two approaches attempt to conceptualize the characteristics of the situation, one being Fiedler’s contingency model and the other the substitutes for leadership theory. Fiedler