

Theories of Leadership - II

Structure

1. Objectives
2. Introduction
3. Contingency Theory of Leadership

1. Objectives

At the end of the session learners will be able to

- Explain Contingency Theory of Leadership
- Apply Contingency Theory of Leadership in Education

2. Introduction

Contingency theory is a framework for examining leadership. It is leadership perspective that analyzes leadership based on leadership styles and the context of situation. Effective leadership is the result of matching of a leader to the context of situation. Leadership will not be same in all situations. It differs from situation to situation.

3. Contingency Theory of Leadership

In 1967 Fiedler introduced the contingency model of leadership. It is one of the first major approach that emphasize the impact of situation on leaders, it is predictive of effectiveness. It allows leaders to not to be effective in all situations and it can provide useful leadership profile. Fiedler's basic assumption is that it is quite difficult for a manager to alter the management style that made them successful. In fact Fiedler believes that most managers are not flexible, and trying to change manager's style to fit unpredictable or fluctuating situations is inefficient or useless. Since styles are relatively inflexible and since no one style is appropriate for every situation, effective group performance can only be achieved by matching the manager to the situation or by changing the situation to fit the manager.

Fiedler in his contingency theory explores a leader's behavior in a particular situation. Fiedler tries to explain that effective leadership is dependent less on style

of leading and more on three factors i.e nature of task, leader team relationship and leader's ability to reward.

This theory attempts to match leaders to its suitable situation. It's called contingency because it suggests that a leader's effectiveness depends on how well leader's style fits the context of a particular situation.

Contingency theories explains role of situation in leadership determination. Contingency model of leadership explains relationship between leadership styles and the favourableness of the situation. Effective leadership depends upon proper match between leader's style of interacting with subordinate and the degree to which situation gives control to the leader. The contingency leadership theory argues that there is no single way of leading and that every leadership style is based on certain situations, which signifies that there are certain people who perform the maximum level at certain places.

Fiedler's contingency model suggests that a leader's effectiveness depends on the situation and incorporates both the leader's personality and complexities of the situation. The situational context is conceptualized in terms of its favourableness for the leader. Fiedler described two personality traits of leadership viz task motivation and relationship motivation.

Fiedler measured leadership style on a scale that indicated "the degree to which a man described favourably or unfavourably his least preferred co-worker (LPC) the employee with whom the person could work least well". This measure locates I on the leadership style continuum. According to Fiedler's findings a person who describes his least preferred co-worker in relatively favourable manner tend to be permissive, human relation oriented and considerate on the feelings of his men. A person who describes his least preferred co-worker in an unfavourable manner tend to be managing, task oriented and less concerned with human relation aspects of the job. High LPC managers have close ties with employees whereas low LPC managers want to get the job done.

Fiedler has identified three leadership situations that help determined which leadership style will be effective: leader member relations, task structure, and leader's position power.

Case I

There are two profiles of the teacher for the post of school supervisor. Ms Vaishali and Ms Anita. As a school Principal you have to choose one of them for the post of school supervisor. Ms. Vaishali is a school teacher with 10 years of experience . She is hardworking, sincere, honest, foresighted, technically sound, pleasant

personality, good communication skills and can handle employee grievances, provides employee satisfaction. Shows concern for employee's problems.

Ms. Anita is a school teacher with 15 years of experience. She is calculative as thinks ten times before taking any decisions, evaluates pros and cons of issue at hand before proceeding, hard task master, obedient, maintain distance from worker, focuses on task. strives hard to achieve the goals.

As a principal whom you will choose for the post of supervisor?

Identify leadership style of Vaishali and Anita.

Ms Vaishali is relationship oriented whereas Ms Anita is task oriented. Task oriented leaders are recognised as individuals who are focussed on reaching goals. Relationship oriented leaders are focussed on interpersonal relations. These leaders increase their self esteem by achieving goals and tend to interpersonal relationships after the task is defined. Leaders who are relationship motivated are first concerned with interpersonal relationships and the task as secondary. These leaders see good in all co-workers and values the work relationship as essential in leadership. To place leader in a correct situation, leader member relations and task structure are evaluated. Leader member relation is evaluated on the basis of group atmosphere, loyalty, trust and willingness to follow leader. Task structure is evaluated on the basis of steps of goal achievement are clearly defined or not.

There are three steps in this model

1. Identifying leadership style (Leadership style)
2. Defining the situation (Situational Variable)
3. Matching leaders and the situation (Relation between style and situation)



(Source- <https://businessjargons.com/fiedlers-contingency-model.html>)

1. Identifying leadership style

According to Fiedler, the leadership style depends on two dimensions, task-oriented and human-relations oriented. The task-oriented leader is primarily concerned with the task performance and the accomplishment of task goals. He gets satisfied with the accomplishment of task performance. While, the manager concerned with human relations lay more emphasis on developing the interpersonal relationship with his subordinates. Fiedler believes that key factor in leadership success is individual's leadership style. Whether the person is task oriented or relationship oriented decides his leadership style.

2. Defining the situation

It has been observed that, several situational factors influence the effectiveness of the leadership styles. Fiedler identified three contingency dimensions that define the key situational factors.

a) Leader member relations

It refers to personal relationship between subordinate and their leader. Leader member relations refers to degree of trust, respect and confidence that exists between the leader and the worker. The quality of leader member relations is the most important influence on managers power and effectiveness. If the manager gets along well with rest of the group, if the group members respect the manager for reasons of personality, character or ability, then the manager might have to rely on formal authority. On the other hand if the manager who is disliked may be less able to lead informally and could have to rely on directives to accomplish task.

b) Task structure

Task structure is the second most important situational variable in the leadership situation. It indicates situational favorableness. Degree to which job assignment are procedurized. A structured task is simple, routine, easily understood and unambiguous. Group members therefore have a very clear idea about what they are expected to do. Task structure refers to the degree to which tasks are clearly explained to the workers. Such tasks are presumed to be more favourable. When the task are unstructured, group members roles are very ambiguous.

c) Leader's Position and power

It refers to power inherent in leadership role. Degree of influence leader has over the subordinates. Leader's position power is the final situational variable

identified by Fiedler. Some positions like president of the company carry a great deal of power and authority. The chairperson of the company on the other hand less power and authority over workers. Thus high position power simplifies the leaders task of influencing others while low position power makes leader's task more difficult.

If first dimension (Leader member relations) is high leaders are accepted by the followers and situation is favourable.

If second dimension (Task structure) is high, task is very structured and everything is spelled out properly so situation is favourable.

If third dimension (Leader's Position and power) is high situation is favourable for a leader.

Situations are favourable to the leader if all the three dimensions are high. If all the three dimensions are low situation will be unfavourable. When the situation is moderately favourable or unfavourable, lenient (human relation) type leader will be effective.

3. Matching leaders and the situation

After knowing leadership style and the defining the situation one needs to chose the leader who fits the situation. There are two ways to improve effective leadership

1. Change the leader to fit the situation.

or

2. Change the situation to fit the leader.

(Source-<https://i1.wp.com/www.business-to-you.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Fiedler-Contingency-Model.png>)

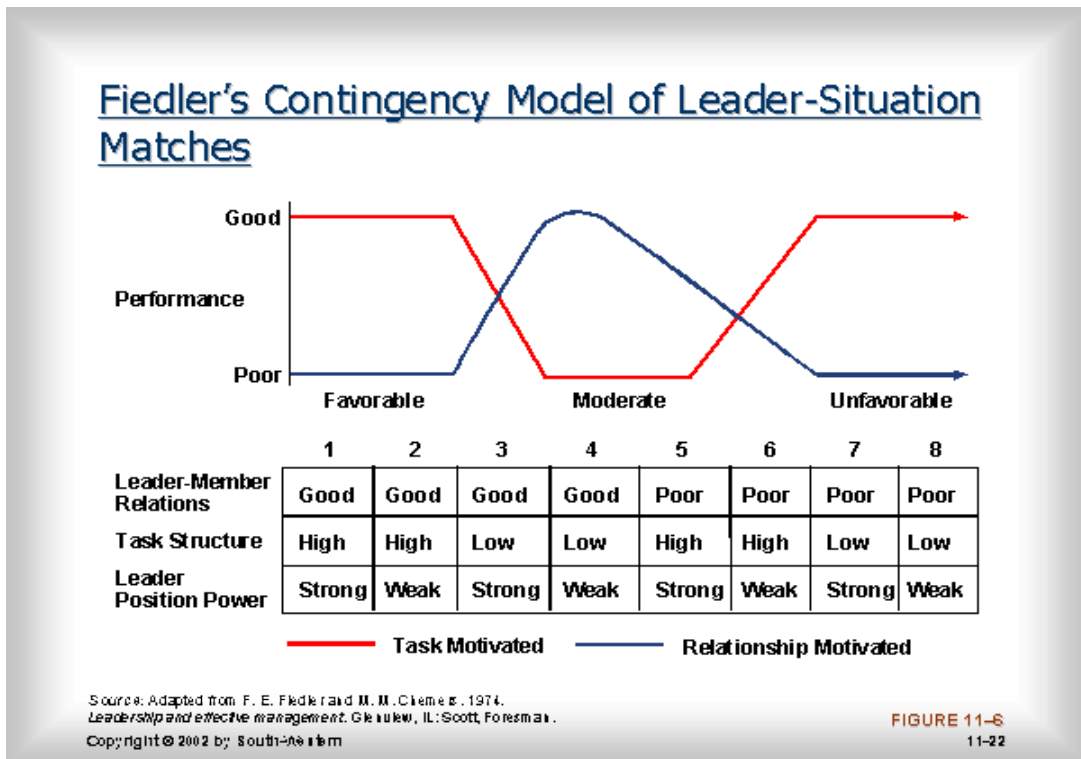
Situation favorableness occurs when the three dimensions, leader member relations, task structure and leader power position is high.

If employees and the leader have trust, respect and have confidence in each other, there are clear and structured tasks and the leader possesses formal authority in his position. The situation is considered favourable. Let's look at following example of how each dimension works.

Case II

Imagine that you have just started at working in new school replacing a much loved principal who has recently retired. You are leading a team who views you with distrust (so your leader member relations are poor). The task you are doing together is well defined and your position power is high because you are a boss and you are able to offer reward or punishment to the team.

What would be the most effective leader in this situation?

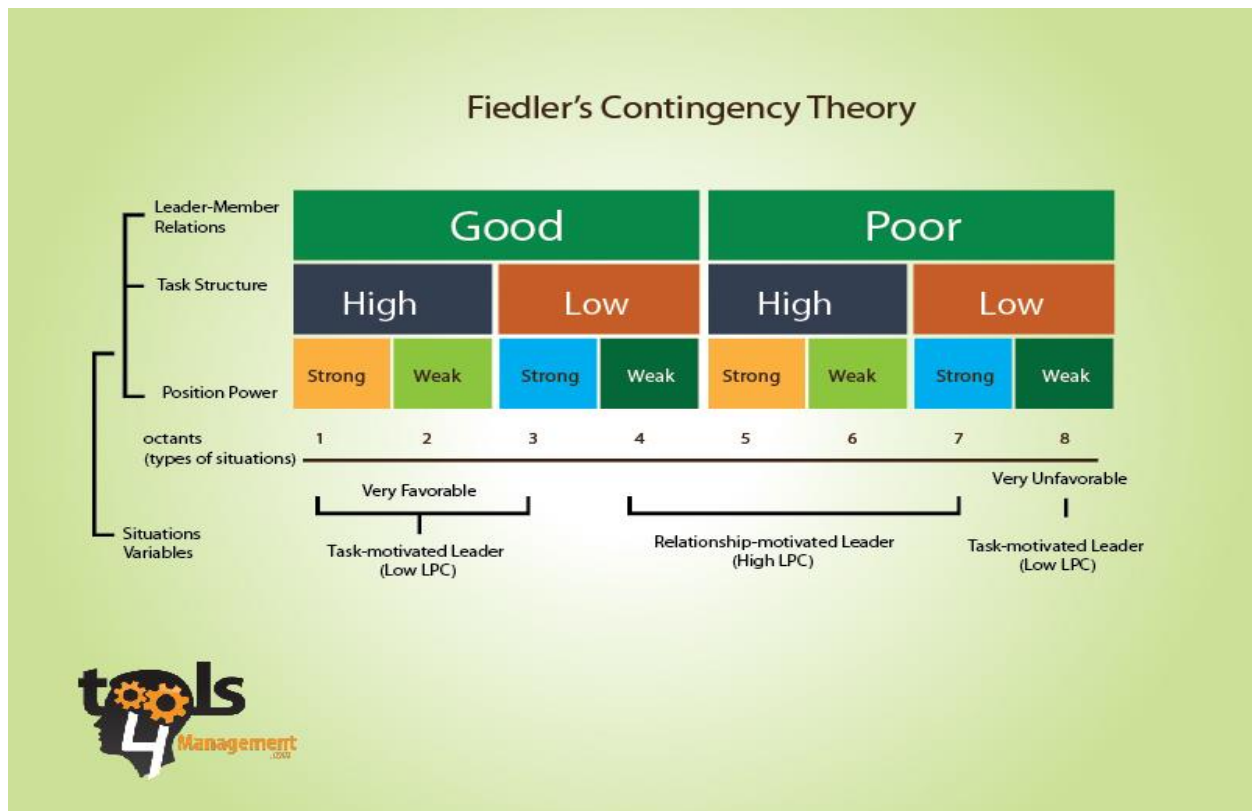


most effective leader in this situation would be a leader who can focus on building a relationship first.

Imagine that you are leading a team who likes and respects you (so your leader member relations are good). The project you are working on together is highly creative (unstructured) and your position power is high since you are in management position.

What would be the most effective leader in this situation?

The most effective leader in this situation would be task focused leadership.



(Source-<https://toughnickel.com/business/Leadership-Theories-Three-Types-of-contingency-and-Situational-Theories>)

Situation demands the type of leadership that is applicable. If it is important to take fast decisions Relationship oriented leadership is desirable. In case situation necessitates high productivity Task oriented leadership will be desirable. For a task master productivity is more important than relationship building.

Task oriented leadership would be advisable in natural disasters. In an uncertain situation the leader member relations are usually poor, the task is unstructured and the position power is weak. The task oriented leader who gets things accomplished proves to be most successful. If the leader is considerate (relationship oriented) they

may waste more time in the disaster, that things gets out of control and lives are lost.

Given that personality (Task orientation and relationship orientation) is reasonably stable, the Fiedler's contingency model suggests that the situation should be adapted to such an extent that it suits the leader.

Following table shows which will be efficient and effective leadership style as per the leader member relation, nature of task and position power of the leader.

Leader Member Relationship	Nature of Task	Leader Position power	Efficient Leadership style
Good	Routine	Strong	Task Oriented
Good	Routine	Weak	Task Oriented
Good	Uncertain	Strong	Task Oriented
Good	Uncertain	Weak	Relationship Oriented
Poor	Routine	Strong	Relationship Oriented
Poor	Uncertain	Weak	Task Oriented

When leader member relation is good, nature of task is routine and leader is in power and position then the efficient leadership style would be Task Oriented leadership.

When leader member relation is good, nature of task is routine and leader's power and position is weak then the efficient leadership style would be Task Oriented leadership.

When leader member relation is good, nature of task is uncertain and leader is in power and position then the efficient leadership style would be Task Oriented leadership.

When leader member relation is good, nature of task is uncertain and leader's power and position is weak then the efficient leadership style would be Relationship Oriented leadership.

When leader member relation is poor, nature of task is routine and leader is in power and position then the efficient leadership style would be Relationship Oriented leadership.

When leader member relation is poor, nature of task is uncertain and leader's power and position is weak then the efficient leadership style would be Task Oriented leadership.

Fiedler's model suggests that an appropriate match of leader's style (as measured by LPC score) to the situation (as determined by the interaction of three situation variables) leads to effective managerial performance.