



## The Many Facets of Leadership: Exploring Fiedler's Contingency Theory

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### ABSTRACT

This article delves into various theories of leadership, with a particular emphasis on Fiedler's Contingency Theory. It discusses the dynamics of leadership in different contexts, highlighting how situational factors influence leadership effectiveness. Key concepts such as leader-member relations, task structure, and the leader's position power are examined. The article critiques Fiedler's model while also acknowledging its impact on understanding leadership complexities. It serves as a comprehensive guide for those interested in leadership dynamics, especially within organizational settings.

### KEYWORDS

Leadership, Fiedler's Contingency Theory, Situational Leadership, Organizational Behavior, Leadership Effectiveness, Leader-Member Relations.

## Discussion

Numerous schools of thought try to define what constitutes effective leadership and what qualities or characteristics an individual needs to have to be successful in that role. The topic of leadership and the distinguishing characteristics that some people have that enable them to achieve the highest levels of success while others continue to follow others is a popular topic of conversation.

The contingency theory of leadership will be the primary emphasis of this study. Other leadership theories will also be briefly discussed. In the middle of the 1960s, one of the earliest situational leadership models to appear on the scene was Fiedler's Contingency Theory. Fred Fiedler was a psychologist who was born in Austria but raised in the United States. After more than twenty years of service, he retired in 1992 from his position as director of organizational research at the University of Washington. The Fiedler's Situation Leadership Model, also known as the Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leadership, was developed by Fiedler by combining the findings of numerous earlier investigations.

The contingency theory was one of the first situational leadership theories that were developed. In the 1960s, Fred E. Fiedler presented what is considered to be one of the earliest versions of the contingency theory. According to Fiedler's theory, the success of a leader is dependent on the degree to which the situation and the job are compatible with the particular leadership style that the leader employs. The ground-breaking theory developed by Fiedler identifies task-oriented and people-oriented leadership as the two primary philosophies of leadership. The degree to which the work is clearly defined, the level of authority possessed by the leader, and the connection between the leader and the followers are all factors that influence the extent to which a person's style is influential in a particular setting. The situation of a leader can be impacted in either a positive or negative way by both internal and external circumstances. Internal considerations include things like the type of organization, the size of the team, and a person's natural leadership style. Other examples include the size of the team. The state of the economy and the opinions of customers are two examples of things that are considered to be external. The theory of contingency is impacted in various ways by each of these scenarios. The proponents of the contingency theory assert that the most influential leaders are those who can modify their leadership philosophies according to the specific contexts in which they operate. These leaders are conscious that simply because a specific leadership technique was successful in the past does not guarantee that it will be successful in the future when the situation or task is different from what it was in the past.

According to the contingency theory, the ability of a leader to successfully navigate a given situation is contingent on the nature of the challenge at hand. A number of elements decide whether a particular leader or leadership style is suitable for the circumstance. The activity itself, the personality of the leader, and the make-up of the group that has to be led are examples of these aspects. It begins with the fundamental notion that whether or not leadership is successful is contingent on the circumstances.

Carl Lindberg described the two leadership styles included in Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leadership in an article published online at [www.leadershipahoy.com](http://www.leadershipahoy.com).

These two categories of leadership behavior are task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership conduct. A leader who places a strong emphasis on relationships builds strong alliances and connections not only with their coworkers but also with other stakeholders. A supportive team atmosphere can be developed by cultivating trust, camaraderie, and behavior focused on relationships. On the other hand, a task-oriented leader is more concerned with the accomplishment of the work, its implementation, its quality, and its conclusion, in addition to other non-human elements. For the task-focused leader, relationships with other people and their well-being take a back seat.

According to Gill, two of the most significant criticisms of contingency theories are the roles of the leader and the manner in which styles evolve (2011). These hypotheses do an outstanding job of shedding light on the gravity of the predicament as a whole. They do not, however, go into detail regarding how various organizations and positions within structures influence leadership styles. Most crucially, they do not elaborate on how leaders might modify their behavior or approach based on the circumstances or qualities of the group they are directing.

The Leadership Contingency Model developed by Fiedler outlines three different situational facets. The first category is called Leader-Member Relations, and it indicates how well the team and its leader work together in terms of trust levels, enthusiasm to follow the leader, and other similar characteristics. Good and Poor are the two possible evaluation outcomes that might be given for the leader-member dimension. The concept of "Task Structure" is Fiedler's Contingency theory's second situational component. Task structure describes the degree to which aspects such as clarity, instructions, rules, regulations, and processes are present. In situations with a high task structure, the input, method, output, guidelines, job descriptions, and other defining rules are all familiar to the individuals involved. This means that what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, how it needs to be done, and by whom needs to be apparent.

Due to the fact that many factors that must be satisfied to perform the work are unknown, a low task structure requires more significant judgment, inventiveness, and frequent decisions. The Task Structure of a given circumstance can be ranked as either low or high.

Carl Lindberg, in his comments, also brings up the point that Fiedler's contingency model, like the vast majority of other leadership models, has both its strong points and its weaknesses. The number of leadership behaviors is limited when compared to Goleman's six leadership styles or the Situational Leadership Model, even though the emergence of situational factors was remarkable. The following are some of the benefits it offers:

It takes situational elements into account.

Unlike other leadership models from the same time period, it is simple to understand and offers clear guidance.

It emphasizes the differences between situations.

It assists leaders in assessing and understanding the situation in which they act.

This leadership theory also has several disadvantages. They are as follows:

The belief that leadership behavior is fixed can prevent leaders from even attempting to change their ways.

The LPC scale is based on a subjective judgment, as well as any assessment error can result in incorrect guidance.

Only two distinct leadership behaviors can lead to leaders being evaluated as either-or, causing confusion and ambiguity.

It is incorrect to assume that leaders are relationship or task-oriented. According to modern leadership theory, leaders can exhibit both behavior patterns simultaneously.

According to the contingency theory, the success of a leader is dependent on the particular problem that is being addressed. Whether or not a particular leader or style of leadership is suitable for the circumstance is determined by a number of different factors. These include the nature of the task at hand, the personality of the leader, and the make-up of the group that needs to be led. The primary idea behind it is that a given circumstance will either produce effective or ineffective leadership.

Even though some models of contingency leadership are different from one another, they all share one thing in common. According to the contingency theory of leadership, a good leader is dependent on the situation, the task, and the people involved in it. This is the overarching perspective of the theory.

It is to one's advantage to be familiar with and have a good understanding of Fiedler's Leadership Contingency Model. It enables you to see the various facets of each situation, which can help you in your role as a leader by allowing you to modify the aspects of the situation that need to be modified to create a more appropriate situation. On the other hand, the model places severe limitations on the leader's behavior. Only two distinct behaviors can be defined, and it is assumed that leaders only use one of these behaviors. Despite the fact that Fiedler's Model presented a novel perspective to the field of leadership studies, numerous frameworks that take into account the context in which a leader operates have been developed since then. A good number of these offer a more comprehensive point of view, increased flexibility, and an in-depth comprehension of the circumstance.

In order to provide my perspective on the topic as well as my assessment of the contingency theory, I will say that I think it is founded on rational presumptions and that its philosopher has a solid foundation for it. Organizational behavior has become increasingly popular as a field of study among businesses because it enables employers to comprehend their workforce better. With the use of organizational behavior, employers are able to evaluate, manage, and predict the behavior of their employees, which provides them with a better understanding of how to motivate specific people. The study of organizational behavior and its ability to predict employee behavior can both be impacted by the presence of situational factors.

A good leader is one who, before empowering others, recognizes and capitalizes on their own potential. A good leader is one who is adaptable and who understands that there is no single model of leadership that is optimal for all circumstances or for

mentoring all individuals. It may be more prudent for the leader to delegate duties and involve others in the process of establishing a plan in certain circumstances. In other circumstances, the leader is required to take charge, determine the course of action, and provide the followers with detailed instructions. Figuring out the "right" way to exercise leadership depends on the circumstances at hand as well as the requirements of the people who are involved. Implementing the contingency theory of leadership calls for cultivating a capable and versatile leader at the helm of an organization. Every leader has a favored or natural approach to leadership, but it is essential to understand how to adapt and change your style so that it is the most effective fit for the circumstances at hand and the requirements of the team.

In certain circumstances, the leader must provide task-oriented instruction and specific guidance. In other circumstances, however, the leader must involve the entire team in conceiving up and carrying out the most effective solution that is achievable. For instance, a leader needs to be comfortable being decisive, moving swiftly, and delivering clear and exact directions on how the team should move when faced with a situation in which urgent decisions need to be made. On the other hand, when there is enough time for leaders to include other people in the process of making decisions and planning actions, they will have the opportunity to take a more collaborative approach. Processes and create long-term support for a new initiative. This will allow leaders to take advantage of the opportunity to work together more effectively. As a leader, if you want to be more effective when working with a diverse group of people and responding to a wide variety of situations, you should work on strengthening your flexibility. Flexibility is crucial in today's fast-paced, constantly shifting, and globally diverse corporate world.

In conclusion, the validity of this leadership theory can be demonstrated by the fact that it is established on empirical study and has developed over the course of time. It has given us a more well-rounded perspective of leadership. You are allowed to define leadership in whatever way you deem appropriate because the theory maintains that no single model of leadership is ideal. You determine your own rules, objectives, and standards for yourself. Due to the fact that the contingency theory is situation-specific, it is helpful in keeping up with changing business needs and is perfect for firms that operate at a rapid speed.

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Lindberg Carl, Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leadership – What is it? Pros/Cons? Examples?

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