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Explanatory Remarks on Fiedler's Theory of Consequences

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ABSTRACTS

An accessible explanation of Fiedler's Contingency Theory is provided in this article. For readers who want to use the article for basic knowledge, fundamental ideas are given. The review is meant to provide senior and graduate students studying business management, educational psychology, and educational management with a self-study approach. It might also be used in academia and business as a textbook or reference.

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1. INTRODUCTION

American psychologist Fred Edward Fiedler, who was born in Austria, developed one of the first situational leadership theories. He served as the director of organizational research at the University of Washington for more than twenty years before leaving in 1992. Fred Fiedler introduced the leadership contingency technique in his 1958 study on the performance of leaders in group situations (Vecchio, 1983). He believed that a manager's capacity for exerting control over the situation and his or her competence were the two most important factors in determining a leader's success.

Fiedler combined the findings of numerous earlier academics to develop the formula that is now known as Fiedler's Situation Leadership Model or Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leadership. He is recognized for being the first management theorist to claim that a leader's effectiveness is influenced by the situation. Amazingly, Fred seems to have been the only person to have given that any thought before then, which says a lot about academics and management theorists. Unsurprisingly, the title of Fiedler's influential paper is A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness (1967) (Vecchio, 1983).

One of the earliest formal management theories to emphasize the significance of choosing leaders based on group dynamics and goals is Fiedler's Contingency Theory. The application of contingency theory helps us understand how leadership style affects group dynamics and results. The Contingency Model calls for the following three-step procedure to achieve group effectiveness: It is important to evaluate a leader's leadership style, the environment they are in, and how their style fits the circumstances (Carson, 2018).

According to the general theory of contingency, there is no one optimum way to organize your business or manage your workforce. The best course of action will depend on the circumstances. Therefore, contingency theories look at how to manage your group or organization under various circumstances (Maslow, 1943).

The ideal leadership approach will depend on the circumstance, to put it another way. The notion conflicts with more recent contingency theories, such as situational leadership. Fiedler's Contingency Theory emphasizes the roles of situational favorableness and leadership style. Here, an accessible explanation of Fiedler's Contingency Theory is provided in this article.

For readers who want to use the article for basic knowledge, fundamental ideas are given (Kenrick *et al.*, 2010; Zauddin & Bakar, 2022). The review is meant to provide senior and graduate students studying business management, educational psychology, and educational management with a self-study approach. It might also be used in academia and business as a textbook or reference.

2. METHODS

This paper was provided from internet source literature, including books and articles in International journals.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Leadership Style

To use the approach, you must first identify your natural leadership style. Fiedler created a scale known as the Least Preferred Co-worker Scale to do this (LPC). You must explain the co-worker you least enjoy working with to rate yourself on this scale.

The more favorably you assessed the person you least want to work with, the more relationship-oriented you are, the model claims (Pathania, 2023). The more task-oriented you are, the less favorably you assessed the person you least enjoy working with.

The LPC scale asks a leader to score a co-worker they dislike working within the following categories on a scale of 1 to 8, with 1 representing the least favorable rating and 8 representing the most favorable rating:

- (i) Unfriendly or friendly
- (ii) Uncooperative or cooperative
- (iii) Hostile or supportive
- (iv) Guarded or open

The leadership style of the leader is then determined by matching the scores. A leader who has a high or positive LPC score is more relationship-oriented and prepared to manage teams in advantageous circumstances.

They are more task-oriented leaders and better able to lead in both favorable and unfavorable circumstances if the LPC score is low or more negative. Task-oriented executives typically excel at assembling teams, managing projects, and completing tasks. Relationship-oriented executives typically excel at creating positive connections and handling disputes to move things along.

3.2. Situational Factor

Fiedler contends that a leader's actions depend on how favorable the leadership environment is. To what extent a situation is favorable to a leader depends on three elements such as:

- (i) Leader-member relations: A leader's actions rely on how favorable the leadership position is, according to Fiedler. The combination of three elements determines how favorable a circumstance is for a leader. In these
- (ii) Task structure: A leader's actions are influenced by how well the leadership situation is going, according to Fiedler. An environment's favorableness to a leader is based on three variables. As these
- (iii) Position power: According to Fiedler, a leader's actions rely on how favorable the leadership position is. To what extent a scenario is advantageous to a leader depends on three elements. These are
- (iv) Using the Model. To use Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership, follow these steps.

3.2.1. Step 1. Identify your leadership style

Using the LPC scale, identify your favorite leadership style as the first stage. To rate yourself using the LPC scale, utilize the following **Table 1**. Enter your responses while keeping in mind the one person you enjoy working with the least (Wulff & Maslow, 1965; Sopian *et al.*, 2022).

By adding up all the numbers you circled, you can now get your LPC score. Your score can be interpreted as follows:

- (i) 73 and above: You are a relationship-oriented leader.
- (ii) Between 55 and 72: You are a mixture of both and it's up to you to determine which style suits you the best.
- (iii) 54 and below: You are a task-oriented leader.

Table 1. Leadership style based on LPC scale.

Negative	Score	Positive
Unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Pleasant
Rejecting	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Accepting
Tense	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Relaxed
Cold	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Warm
Boring	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Interesting
Backbiting	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Loyal
Uncooperative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Cooperative
Hostile	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Supportive
Guarded	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Open
Insincere	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Sincere
Unkind	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Kind
Inconsiderate	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Considerate
Untrustworthy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Trustworthy
Gloomy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Cheerful
Quarrelsome	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Harmonious

3.2.2. Step 2: Understand your situation

To understand the situation, you must answer the following questions:

- (i) Is trust with your team high or low (member relations)?
- (ii) Are tasks vague or clear-cut and well understood (task structure)?
- (iii) Is your authority low or high (position power)?

The easiest way to do this is to score each answer from 1 to 10, with 10 representing the highest value.

3.2.3. Step 3: Find the right leadership style

Now add up all of the numbers you circled to get your LPC score. You can read your result as follows: Matching the Group Situation with the Leadership Style, see **Table 2**.

The success of the group-task situation, according to Fiedler, "determines the appropriateness of the leadership style for maximum group performance." More specifically, he discovered that the following leadership trajectories best suit the aforementioned group settings.

According to Fiedler's theory, "the suitability of the leadership style for maximizing group performance depends upon the favorableness of the group-task context." He discovered that the following leadership trajectories are most appropriate for the aforementioned group scenarios.

Table 2. The result of the LPC scale.

Group Situation	Leader-Member Relations	Leadership Style
Informal groups with structured tasks	Good	Task-oriented
	Moderately poor	Relationship-oriented
Groups with structured tasks and powerful leadership positions	Good	Task-oriented
	Moderately poor	Relationship-oriented
Creative groups with unstructured tasks and weak leadership positions power	Good	Relationship-oriented
	Moderately poor	Task-oriented
Groups with unstructured tasks and powerful leaders	Good	Task-oriented
	Moderately poor	Relationship-oriented

Overall, the findings of Fiedler's research can best be summed up as follows: A relational leader is ideal when member-leader relationships are moderate. This is because member relations are in flux and can thus be positively influenced by the more thoughtful and affable relationship-focused leader. A task-oriented leader is best suited when there are either good or bad member-leader relationships. The task-oriented leader's objectivity, efficiency, and decisiveness are to blame for this (Estrellan & Loja, 2021).

In Fiedler's View of Personality, Fiedler's theory had a strong and significant concept of personality. He asserted that an individual's leadership style represented their personality (which incidentally he assessed in his research using a psychometric instrument). Fiedler believed that each person's personality is fixed and does not change over a leader's life or career, which was the popular belief at the time. Fiedler's thesis, therefore, stressed the importance of "mapping" leaders to situations by the perceived leadership style of the leader and the scenario at hand (by the organization).

The extent to which a leader's personality is fixed, and the extent to which personality controls behavior, are further perspectives Fiedler's theory invites us to take into account when analyzing a leader's personality and behavior. Fiedler's idea adopted a major and unwavering perspective on personality. He claimed that a leader's personality might be seen in his or her leadership style (which incidentally he assessed in his research using a psychometric instrument).

The popular belief at the time, and Fiedler's perspective on personality, was that a leader's unique personality is fixed and doesn't change throughout their life or career. As a result, Fiedler's thesis stressed the importance of "mapping" leaders to circumstances based on the perceived leadership style of the leader and the scenario at hand (by the organization). The extent to which (a leader's) personality is fixed, and the extent to which (a leader's) personality governs (a leader's) behavior, are two additional viewpoints Fiedler's theory invites us to explore while examining the relationship between the leader's personality and behavior (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976).

3.2.4. How do I become a good leader?

Important leadership abilities are developed by a good leader through experience and practice (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982). This is how to develop into a better leader:

- (i) Be Assertive, without appearing haughty, an assertive person is self-assured in their talents. When you are confident in yourself, your co-workers and employees will be more likely to trust you and your ideas. You can effectively lead and support your team when you are an assertive leader.
- (ii) Possess Integrity, in all facets of life, those with integrity uphold moral and ethical standards. Integrity ought to be applied to work-related decisions, interactions with co-workers, and client or customer service. Integrity cannot be compromised by a leader. He/she makes sure you consistently produce high-quality work without skipping any of the process steps.
- (iii) Emotionally Perceptive, if you have a high level of emotional intelligence, you will be able to comprehend the thoughts of your team members. This characteristic is closely related to empathy. You can keep your emotions under control with emotional intelligence, which will help you communicate effectively.
- (iv) Delegate Tasks, a leader needs to be able to assign assignments. You will move from tightly watching your team to letting them finish their work as their motivation and competence increase. As a result, the team will only need minimum guidance and assistance, which empowers them and increases their confidence in you as a leader. You

will be able to determine each team member's strengths and potential for improvement when you assign assignments to different team members. You'll have more time to take care of other jobs or problems if you let others take on greater responsibilities (Tay & Diener, 2011).

- (v) Develop Your Creative Imagination, organizations look for innovative thinkers who can generate fresh concepts to enhance workflows, output, and productivity. A company's success is influenced by innovative personnel who are inspired by creative executives.

3.2.5. Advantages and disadvantages

The advantages of Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership are:

- (i) It offers a straightforward guideline to help determine which leaders are ideal in those circumstances.
- (ii) It takes into account the context when judging a leader's performance, unlike many other leadership theories.
- (iii) The situational circumstances and the LPC are both simple to quantify.

The disadvantages of Fiedler's Contingency of Leadership are:

- (i) When your leadership style doesn't fit the circumstance, it's not at all flexible. Your replacement is required. You have no control over the circumstance.
- (ii) Due to the subjective nature of the LPC scale, your leadership style may have been inaccurately determined.
- (iii) Since the LPC scale is arbitrary, it likely evaluates your leadership style wrongly.
- (iv) You are judging the situation in your way. As a result, you might make an erroneous assessment of the circumstance and, the kind of leader that is needed (Shala et al., 2021).

Limitations of Fiedler's Contingency Model, you are evaluating the problem in your unique way. As a result, you might make an erroneous assessment of the circumstance and, the type of leader that is needed.

3.2.6. Criticisms of the model

There are several criticisms:

- (i) The Fiedler Contingency Model has some detractors. Lack of flexibility is among the largest. Fiedler thought that since our innate leadership style is permanent, changing the leader is the best approach to managing an issue. He forbade leaders from being flexible. According to the model, the best solution is to replace a low-LPC leader with a high-LPC leader when they are in charge of a group that has good relationships and is performing unstructured tasks and is in a weak position (the fourth situation). This is better than asking them to use a different leadership style.
- (ii) The Least-Preferred Co-Worker Scale has another drawback: if your score is in the middle of the range, it may be difficult to determine what kind of leader you are.
- (iii) The LPC scale has been criticized for not being a trustworthy indicator of leadership skills because, even in ideal conditions, it only has a dependable variance of roughly 50%. It's also entirely possible that your least favorite co-worker is an actual confused, disagreeable, or malicious individual (they do exist).
- (iv) The validity of the LPC scale is also questioned because it does not correspond well with other widely used leadership metrics.
- (v) Additionally, the contingency theory falls short of fully describing how to deal with a leader/situation mismatch in the workplace (Vecchio, 1983).

4. CONCLUSION

According to the contingency theory of leadership, a leader's level of effectiveness is based on the style of leadership they employ. According to the theory, a leader may exercise good leadership in one circumstance but inadequate leadership in another. A leader's leadership style may not be effective if they do not analyze every situation and the different conditions and change their leadership to fit the situation. All of these techniques have helped us understand leadership, but none of them has given us a fully adequate explanation of what makes a leader effective. You can use this model to discover your leadership style, evaluate the scenario that calls for leadership, and assess whether you are the best candidate. Each of us has a single leadership style that can be rated on the scale of "least preferred co-worker" (LPC), according to the theory's underlying tenet. You can identify as a relationship- or task-oriented leader using the LPC scale. Fiedler contends that task-oriented leaders perform at their peak in situations that are either very favorable or strongly unfavorable. Relationship-focused leaders achieve the best success in circumstances with mixed favorable. The paradigm does, however, have significant drawbacks. It does not allow for flexible leadership, and the LPC score may not accurately reflect your leadership style.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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