

Volume 4

Encyclopedia of
LEADERSHIP

George R. Goethals | *General Editor*
Williams College

Georgia J. Sorenson | *General Editor*
University of Maryland, University of Richmond

James MacGregor Burns | *Senior Editor*
Williams College

A Berkshire Reference Work

A SAGE Reference Publication

 **SAGE Publications**
International Educational and Professional Publisher
Thousand Oaks ■ London ■ New Delhi

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 in that it helps a 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 and Coons, 1957) 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 the 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; Wofford and Liska, 1993) validated the path-goal theory by examining the moderators that are proposed to influence 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 analyses indicated that much of the research testing path-goal theories has been flawed" (Wofford and Liska 1993, 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 most studied work-environment moderator 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 structure his or her role and those of subordinates 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 instrumentation 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 about the independent variable (i.e., leader 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 charismatic leadership and substitutes for 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 delegate. When subordinates are willing and unable, 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; Vecchio, 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 team effectiveness 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 behavior. In the normative model, the leader's decision strategy is the focus, whereas in the path-goal and situational leadership theories, the leader's supervisory behaviors are the focus.

The difference between the contingency model of leadership effectiveness and the path-goal theory lies in how the leader is assessed and how the situation is approached, among other 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 (Sternberg and Vroom, 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

defined the situation by the leader-member relationship, the leader's task structure, and his or her position power. However, the substitutes for leadership theory (Kerr and Jermier, 1978), which emerged from the path-goal theory, proposes a taxonomy (system of classification) of the situational contingencies by presenting fourteen situational factors that interact with a leader to determine leadership effectiveness. To clarify these concepts, Schriesheim (1997) described these types of situational factors as they relate to leadership and four classes of outcome variables.

These four classes of outcome variables are (1) substitutes, which are factors that are directly related to a subordinate's outcome and that block the effect of leader behavior; (2) neutralizers, which are factors that inhibit a leader's behavioral influence on the outcome; (3) enhancers, which are factors that augment the relationship of a leader's behaviors with the outcome; and (4) supplement factors, which are factors that are related to outcome variables but that neither augment nor cancel the effects of a leader's behaviors (Bass, 1990). Therefore, the substitutes for leadership theory focuses on how subordinates' needs, abilities, and perceptions interact with the situation. In contrast, the contingency model of leadership effectiveness focuses more on the power source of the leader and how that power source interacts with the situation. Although the theory and the model focus on two separate factors, both are important to examining situational contingencies.

In summary, leader traits, perceived behaviors, and situational contingencies influence leadership effectiveness. Therefore, the answer to the question, "Is there a universal leadership characteristic?" must be, based on situational and contingency approaches, "It depends." Contingency factors can manifest in various ways through particular traits, skills, or behaviors, depending on the person, the method of assessment, and the leadership situation. Therefore, if we want to really understand the leadership phenomenon, contingencies must not be ignored.

—Roya Ayman and Erica L. Hartman

See also Contingency Theories; Organizational Climate and Culture; Organizational Dynamics

Further Reading

- Antonakis, J., & Cianciolo, A. T., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2004). *The nature of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ayman, R. (2002). Contingency model of leadership effectiveness. In L. L. Neider & C. A. Schriesheim (Eds.), *Leadership* (pp. 197–228). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Ayman, R., & Chemers, M. M. (1991). The effects of leadership match on subordinate satisfaction in Mexican organizations: Some moderating influences of self-monitoring. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 44, 299–314.
- Ayman, R., Chemers, M. M., & Fiedler, F. (1998). The contingency model of leadership effectiveness and its levels of analysis. In F. Yammarino & F. Dansereau (Eds.), *Leadership: The multi-level approaches* (pp. 73–96). New York: JAI Press.
- Ayman, R., & Romano, R. (1998). Measures and assessments for the contingency model of leadership. In F. Yammarino & F. Dansereau (Eds.), *Leadership: The multi-level approaches* (pp. 97–114). New York: JAI Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications* (3d ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Burke, M. J., & Day, R. R. (1986). A cumulative study of the effectiveness of managerial training. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 242–245.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Chemers, M. M. (1997). *An integrative theory of leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Chemers, M. M., & Ayman, R. (1985). Leadership orientation as a moderator of the relationship between performance and satisfaction of Mexican managers. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 11, 359–367.
- Chemers, M. M., Hays, R., Rhodewalt, F., & Wysocki, J. (1985). A person-environment analysis of job stress: A contingency model explanation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 628–635.
- Evans, M. G. (1970). The effects of supervisory behavior on the path-goal relationship. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 5, 277–298.
- Evans, M. G. (1996). R. J. House's "A path-goal theory of leader effectiveness." *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7, 305–309.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1964). A contingency model of leadership effectiveness. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 1, 149–190.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1978). The contingency model and the dynamics of the leadership process. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 11, 59–112.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1993). The leadership situation and the black box in contingency theories. In M. M. Chemers & R. Ayman (Eds.), *Leadership theory and research: Perspectives and directions* (pp. 2–28). New York: Academic Press.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1995). Cognitive resource and leadership performance. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 44, 5–28.

- Fiedler, F. E. (2002). The curious role of cognitive resources in leadership. In R. E. Riggio, S. E. Murphy, & F. J. Pirozzolo (Eds.), *Multiple intelligence and leadership* (pp. 91–104). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Fiedler, F. E., & Chemers, M. M. (1984). *Improving leadership effectiveness: The leader match concept* (2d ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Fiedler, F. E., & Garcia, J. E. (1987). *New approaches to effective leadership: Cognitive resources and organizational performance*. New York: Wiley.
- Fisher, B. M., & Edwards, J. E. (1988). Consideration and initiating structure and their relationships with leader effectiveness: A meta-analysis. *Academy of Management Best Paper*, 201–205.
- French, J. R., & Raven, B. (1959). The basis of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Georgopoulos, B. S., Mahoney, G. M., & Jones, N. W. (1957). A path-goal approach to productivity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 41, 345–353.
- Guenfeld, L. W., Rance, D. E., & Weissenberg, P. (1969). The behavior of task oriented (low LPC) and socially oriented (high LPC) leaders under several conditions of social support. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 79, 99–107.
- Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. (1969). Life cycle theory of leadership. *Training and Development Journal*, 23, 26–34.
- House, R. J. (1996). Path-goal theory of leadership: Lessons, legacy, and a reformulated theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7, 323–352.
- House, R. J., & Mitchell, T. R. (1974). Path-goal theory of leadership. *Journal of Contemporary Business*, 9, 81–97.
- Indvik, J. (1986). Path-goal theory of leadership: A meta-analysis. *Proceedings of the Academy of Management Meeting*, 189–192.
- Kennedy, J. K., Jr., Houston, J. M., Korsgaard, M. A., & Gallo, D. D. (1987). Construct space of the least preferred coworker (LPC) scale. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 47, 807–814.
- Lord, R. G., DeVader, C. L., & Alliger, G. M. (1986). A meta-analysis of the relationship between personality traits and leadership perceptions: An application of validity generalization procedures. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 402–410.
- Murphy, S. E., Blyth, D., & Fiedler, F. E. (1992). Cognitive resource theory and the utilization of the leader's and group members' technical competence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 3, 237–255.
- Peters, L. H., Hartke, D. D., & Pohlman, J. F. (1985). Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership: An application of the meta-analysis procedures of Schmitt and Hunter. *Psychological Bulletin*, 97, 274–285.
- Podsakoff, P. M., & Schriesheim, C. A. (1985). Field studies of French and Raven's bases of power: Critique, reanalysis, and suggestions for future research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 97, 387–411.
- Potter, E. H., III, & Fiedler, F. E. (1981). The utilization of staff members' intelligence and experience under high and low stress. *Academy of Management Journal*, 24, 361–376.
- Rice, W. R. (1978). Construct validity of the least preferred coworker score. *Psychological Bulletin*, 85, 1199–1237.
- Rice, W. R. (1981). Leader LPC and follower satisfaction: A review. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 28, 1–25.
- Rice, W. R., Marwick, N. J., Chemers, M. M., & Bentley, J. C. (1982). Task performance and satisfaction: Least preferred coworker (LPC) as a moderator. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 8, 534–541.
- Schriesheim, C. A., & Neider, L. L. (1996). Path-goal leadership theory: The long and winding road. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7, 317–321.
- Schriesheim, C. A., & Schriesheim, J. F. (1980). A test of the path-goal theory of leadership and some suggested direction for future research. *Personnel Psychology*, 33, 349–370.
- Schriesheim, C. A., Tepper, B. J., & Tetrault, L. A. (1994). Least preferred coworker score, situational control and leadership effectiveness: A meta-analysis of contingency model performance predictions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 561–573.
- Schriesheim, C. A., & von Glinow, M. A. (1977). The path-goal theory of leadership: A theoretical and empirical analysis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 20, 398–405.
- Sternberg, R. J., & Vroom, V. (2002). The person versus situation in leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 301–323.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *Journal of Psychology*, 25, 35–71.
- Stogdill, R. M., & Coons, A. E. (1957). *Leader behavior: Its description and measurement*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, Bureau of Business Research.
- Strube, M. J., & Garcia, J. E. (1981). A meta-analytical investigation of Fiedler's contingency model of leadership effectiveness. *Psychological Bulletin*, 90, 307–321.
- Vecchio, R. P. (1997). Situational leadership theory: An examination of a prescriptive theory. In R. P. Vecchio (Ed.), *Leadership: Understanding the dynamics of power and influence in organizations* (pp. 334–350). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley.
- Vroom, V. H., & Jago, A. G. (1978). On the validity of the Vroom-Yetton model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 63, 151–162.
- Vroom, V. H., & Jago, A. G. (1998). Situation effects and levels of analysis in the study of leader participation. In F. Yammarino & F. Dansereau (Eds.), *Leadership: The multi-level approaches* (pp. 145–159). New York: JAI Press.