Fred Edward Fiedler (born 1922) is one of the leading researchers in Industrial and organizational psychology of the 20th century. He was business and management psychologist at the University of Washington. He helped this field move from the research on traits and personal characteristics of leaders, to leadership styles and behaviours. In 1967 he introduced the contingency modeling of leadership, with the now-famous Fiedler contingency model.

First situational theory of leadership

Not one form of leadership is appropriate for all situations.

View most people as having a predisposition to be either task or relationship oriented as a primary style of leadership.

Leadership style first step in using his model:

LPC – Least Preferred Co-worker scale. Fiedler believes leadership style is fixed and can be measured through a scale.

Think about a person you’ve least enjoyed working with. Rate how you feel about the person for each factor. High score is you are relationship oriented leader low score means you are task-oriented leader.

Low LPCs very effective at completing tasks.

High LPCs focus on personal relationships – good resolving conflicts and make complex decisions.

Next step in model is situational favourableness on three factors.

Fred Fiedler’s contingency model focused on a contingency model of leadership in organizations. This model contains the relationship between leadership style and the favorableness of the situation. Situational favorableness was described by Fiedler in terms of three empirically derived dimensions
1. The *leader-member relationship*, which is the most important variable in determining the situation's favorableness

   Degree to which a leader is accepted and supported by group members

2. The *degree of task structure*, which is the second most important input into the favorableness of the situation

   Extent to which the task is structured and defined with clear goals and procedures

3. The *leader's position power* obtained through formal authority, which is the third most important dimension of the situation

   The ability of the leader to "control" constituents through reward and punishment – Fiedler i.d.s as strong or weak.

Situations are favorable to the leader if all three of these dimensions are high. That is, if the leader is generally accepted and respected by followers (first dimension), if the task is very structured (second dimension), and if a great deal of authority and power are formally attributed to the leader's position (third dimension), then the situation is favorable.

Sources:

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