

## **Advance Course in Social Psychology**

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### **Lecture 43: Group Leadership- Part II**

Hello friends, welcome back. Let us continue with our discussion related to group leadership. In our previous lecture, I talked about definition of leadership, what are the features of leadership, what are the characteristics of leadership and most importantly characteristics of leadership in terms of leadership and motivation, morality and multiple intelligence along with different kinds of leadership styles that is democratic, autocratic and laissez faire. Today, I am going to discuss about the Contingency Theory of Leadership. This is also a contemporary theory of leadership, but yes why contingency because these are the initial theories of leadership which raise the concern that it is not only about being a leader in any group or organization, but any leader can only be effective if the leadership style is suitable to any situation. So, creating an alignment between leader, leadership style and situation forms the basis about contingency theories of leadership.

This is one of the most initial foremost theories of leadership and this theory of leadership supposes that a leader's effectiveness is contingent upon whether or not the leadership style suits a particular situation or not. If leadership style is very much related to just getting the outcome of the task, then that leadership style should be suitable to that particular situation only. According to this theory, an individual can be an effective level leader in one circumstances and an ineffective leader in another one. That means there is no alignment in the situation and the leadership style.

To maximize an individual's likelihood of being a productive leader, this theory that is contingency theory of leadership posits that one should be able to examine each situation and decide if a particular leadership style is going to be effective or not. As I mentioned just now that if a situation which demands outcomes in terms of quantity of products manufactured, then under such circumstances a leadership style should be accordingly where members are being pressurized and compelled to perform in a very robust manner. Sometimes it is all about using the expertise in a way that task has to be performed, then maybe the leadership style should be accordingly that the interaction between the leader and the member should be so cordial that the expertise can be used to a larger extent in a very robust and effective manner. So to support this theory, Fred Fiedler proposed a widely recognized situation based on contingency theory of leadership effectiveness. So to promote and support this notion that leader is only effective when it suits the situation, this position or assumption was very much supported by Fred Fiedler who created a contingency theory of leadership effectiveness.

According to a contingency model of leadership, it proposes that the effective group performance depends on the proper match between the leader's style of interacting with his or her subordinates and the degree to which the situation gives control and influence to the leader. As I said that if the task has to be accomplished based on quantity of products manufactured, then under such circumstances or situation the leadership style should be as such that the members are functioning in a way based on the leadership style that they tend to produce or manufacture maximum products in a day. If it has to be related to any task, policy or procedure, then it has to be, the leader style has to be accordingly that members expertise can be utilized in order to create all the policies and procedures accordingly for the effective functioning of the organization. But ultimately there has to be a perfect fit between the leadership style and the situation to make the performance effective and give control and have proper control on the situation. Therefore the basic assumption of contingency theory of leadership is that an individual's basic leadership style is a key factor in leadership success.

Fredler developed an instrument which he called the least preferred co-worker questionnaire that supports to measure whether the person is task oriented or relationship oriented. Now Fred Feddler has identified this instrument in order to identify two leadership style. The first is task oriented and relationship oriented. How to identify that which leader is a task oriented leader or a relationship oriented? In order to identify these leadership styles, he has proposed and devised a tool which is known as least preferred co-worker questionnaire which consists of 16 adjectives on a scale of 1 to 8 and based on these objectives, the subjects are asked to respond to think of any co-worker he or she has ever worked with and describe one person with whom he has least enjoyed working with. Now the point is that every member in the organization has to work with different kinds of workers.

They have their own experiences and their interaction with different kind of co-workers and according to least preferred co-worker who is that co-worker with who you think is a least enjoyed work that a person has least enjoyed working with. Now evaluating or responding that particular person with whom he or she has least enjoyed working with has to be responded on a scale of 1 to 8 based on 18 adjectives. Now the point is that although marking is there, evaluation is there, assessment is there of a co-worker but Feddler at the same time assumed that on the basis of the responses of the least preferred co-worker questionnaire an individual's basic leadership style can be determined. Now how it can be determined? What is that assumption that Feddler has posed on this LPC questionnaire? So he has assumed that when a respondent is describing about the other person with whom he or she has least enjoyed working with then actually that person is talking about his own criteria. He is saying more about the respondent than about the least preferred co-worker because he is telling about what he expects from the other person which is his own expectation and orientation to perform the task.

So if the least preferred co-worker is describing relatively positive terms that is if the score goes to a higher side then the respondent is primarily interested in good personal relations with co-worker and the individual would be labeled as a relationship oriented. So if the least

preferred co-worker has been evaluated on higher terms or values then he is expressing his own opinion of being a relationship oriented leader. And in contrast if the least preferred co-worker is perceived in relatively unfavorable terms that is the score is low on LPC then the respondent is primarily interested in productivity and thus he would be labeled as task oriented leader. Ultimately the respondent who is evaluating his co-worker is basically reflecting his own expectation and desire that what he requires as a leader, what he is within insight that is task oriented or relationship oriented. So Fredler assumed that an individual's leadership style is fixed and either relationship oriented or task oriented.

No matter what how you evaluate the respondent but ultimately any individual who is task oriented will only give response for his co-worker based on those assumptions itself what he or she carries for himself. If an individual is task oriented he will definitely will give response for his co-worker towards least preferred co-worker as task oriented. And if an individual is relationship oriented then he or she will every time or most of the time will evaluate his co-worker to be relationship oriented. But the difference is based on the assumption of Fredler that the respondent who is actually giving more of his own preference and opinions than or rather describing the co-worker. This assumption is important because it means that if a situation requires a task oriented leader and the person is in that situation is relationship oriented either the situation has to be altered or the leadership style has to be altered because there has to be a perfect fit between the situation and the leader.

If the situation requires to be task oriented then the leader should also be task oriented. I am repeating the same example that in any department or in manufacturing department when it is about manufacturing the maximum number of units in a specific period of time then under such circumstances when the demand is high and the market is also dominating then under such circumstances the leader has to be task oriented to get the job done. Under such situation relationship oriented leadership style will be absolutely ineffective. On the other hand if it is about opposite that task oriented leadership is style situation is there and relationship style leadership has to be executed then there is a complete misfit which can not only hamper the production but also the performance of the organization. Under this circumstances it is assumed that either the situation has to be modified or the leader is replaced if optimum effectiveness is to be achieved.

Once the leadership style is assessed through the LEAP LPC that is least preferred co-worker questionnaire it is necessary to match the leader with the situation. Fiedler has identified three situation. Now if I go back to the slide that is okay it is being assumed that the situation requires a task oriented leader and the person is relationship oriented either the situation has to be altered or the leader has to be altered. But most of the time the Fiedler has assumed that the leader has all the leader should also understand the three situation factors which are very much contingent upon the situation. The first is leader member relations.

The degree of confidence, trust and respect subordinates have in their leader. Now even the situation has been identified under circumstances or situation these three elements that is leader

member relations, task structure and position power. These three elements are supposed to be in alignment with the situation and leader. Even the situation calls for task orientation and the leader is also task oriented then in situation these three elements are all must also be in alignment that is the leader member relations that in task oriented situation task oriented leader has been appointed and at the same time the leader member exchange or relations must also be cordial. In nutshell even the task oriented leadership style should be in alignment with the members of the group that how the goal has to be achieved.

This is only achieved when there is high degree of confident trust and respect is there between the leader and the subordinates. Even the task orientation is there but member and the leader have trust on each other. There is mutual trust, there is mutual respect for each other. The other is task structure the degree to which the job assignments of subordinates are structured or unstructured. The more the jobs is structured the more it becomes easy for the leader to achieve the common goal.

If the leader is failing to assign the jobs to the respective members of the group or the jobs are not assigned that how the job has to be performed based on the availability of the resources then it becomes difficult to achieve the goal. The idea is according to Fedler that if the jobs are structured the more the jobs are structured the more the jobs in alignment with roles and responsibilities the more the leadership style is effective. And position power the degree of influence a leader has over power variables such as hiring, firing, promotions, policy making and salary increases. The more the authority the leader possess regarding various organizational process in terms of hiring, firing, promotions, policy making and salary increases the more it is easy for the leader to execute the group members or guide or provide the directives to the group members in order to achieve the common goal. So accordingly if the situation is in alignment with the leadership style for example, relationship orientation and relationship oriented leadership style then even under such circumstances three elements must also be found to be in alignment that is leader member relations, task structure and position power.

This is a least preferred coworker questionnaire. These are certain adjectives which are suggested by Fred Fedler unfriendly and friendly on a scale of 1 to 8. The more the scores are higher the more it indicates that the respondent is reflecting relationship orientation in his own leadership style although responding for the other coworker. The more the score is low on the LPC scale the more the person or the individual is reflecting his task oriented leadership style. So these are unfriendly, friendly, unpleasant, pleasant, rejecting, accepting, tense to relax to, insincere, unkind, inconsiderate and considerate.

Fred Fedler stated that better the leader member relations the more highly structured the job is and the stronger the position power the more control or influence the leader has. Thus the knowledge of an individual's LPC and assessment of three contingency variables will match up to achieve maximum leadership effectiveness. This is an assumption based on the contingency model of leadership which states that a leader's effectiveness is contingent upon

whether or not the leadership style suits a particular situation or not. So the specific alignment or the perfect match between the leader and the situation will decide upon the effectiveness of the leadership style. So this is contingency model of leadership.

I will end this discussion here. Thank you so much. Thank you.