MODULE

6

Contingency Theory & Situational Leadership

"Effective leaders need to be flexible and must adapt themselves according to the situation."

- *Kenneth Blanchard*

Time Period and Situation

Contingency Theory was developed in 1958, which paved the way for further contingency theories and models such as Situational Leadership. The Contingency Theory was first developed by Fred Fiedler in a research study analyzing the effectiveness of leaders in the military. Contingency Theory supposed that the success of leaders was dependent upon their control of the situation. As leadership studies progressed, the Situational Approach to leadership slowly developed in the late 1960s off the basis of the Contingency Theory. In 1969, psychologists Blanchard and Hersey published their book, "Management of Organizational Behavior", in which they described the Life Cycle Theory of Leadership, which was an early form of situational leadership theory. One way the Contingency Theory progressed was when theorists found that rather than the situation always determining the efficiency of a leader, leaders were also capable of changing themselves to fit a situation, which became the start of Situational Leadership and also divided the two theories. These studies focused mainly around the workplace environment and managerial aspects of leadership.

Agenda

1. Theories
   a. Contingency Theory
   b. Situational Leadership
2. Contingency Theory Examples
   a. Rani of Jhansi
   b. Joko Widodo
   c. Elizabeth Holmes
   d. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
3. Situational Leadership Examples
   a. Shamma bint Suhail Faris Mazrui
   b. Sarah Kay
4. Activities

Student Objectives:

1. Students will be able to understand the fundamentals of Contingency Theory and Situational Leadership.
2. Students will be able to differentiate between the two theories.
3. Students will understand the tools utilized in Contingency Theory and how they interact with each other.
4. Students will understand the scale of Situational Leadership and the dimensions that influence the efficiency of each style.

Facilitation Notes:

- Show videos whenever possible to break up your speaking, especially the Sarah Kay TED talk.
- Make sure you talk about how Elizabeth Holmes was only a successful leader in a relationship-oriented setting, but wasn't effective in the task-oriented project of building her "revolutionary" machine.
- Also note that Holmes was mentioned in Module 3: Style Approach. Make sure to clarify that leaders can be various types and she is an example of Contingency Theory in this module.
- Emphasize that situational leadership theory was an offshoot of the earlier contingency theory and the differences between the two.

Theories

1. Contingency Theory
   a. Contingency Theory is based on the idea that the effectivity of a leader is dependent upon how well their leadership style matches a given situation.
   b. Least Preferred Coworker scale (LPC)
      i. Applying contingency theory relies on the LPC (Least-Preferred Coworker) scale. Fred Fiedler developed the LPC scale which measures an individual's leadership orientation using the idea that your leadership style can be described by your opinion on your least-preferred coworker to determine the situation in which you would thrive. The LPC scale assumes that people whose leadership style is more relationship-oriented tend to describe their least preferred coworkers in a more positive manner, while those whose style is task-oriented rate them more negatively. Again, people who are more relationship-motivated tend to describe their LPC in a more positive manner, and they would least prefer to work with a coworker who is friendly, supportive, and cooperative and as a result score high on the LPC scale. While those who are task-orientated describe their LPC in a more negative manner, and would least prefer to work with a coworker who is unfriendly, hostile, uncooperative, etc. and score low on the LPC scale. Individuals who rank higher on this test are considered to be relationship/people oriented because they are willing to work, while lower scorers are considered to be task oriented. The distinction

between task oriented and relationship oriented leaders defines leaders' success in the contingency theory.

c. Within contingency theory, a leader can find their fit in a situation by evaluating the situation using three principles:
   i. Leader-member relation: how the leader interacts with team members
   ii. Task Structure: how the tasks are set up by the leader
   iii. Positional Power: how much power the leader has over the group

d. Once all factors have been evaluated, the most effective leader of each situation is as follows:

Leader-Member Relations	Task Structure	Leader's Position Power	Most Effective Leader
Good	Structured	Strong	Low LPC
Good	Structured	Weak	Low LPC
Good	Unstructured	Strong	Low LPC
Good	Unstructured	Weak	High LPC
Poor	Structured	Strong	High LPC
Poor	Structured	Weak	High LPC
Poor	Unstructured	Strong	High LPC
Poor	Unstructured	Weak	Low LPC

2. Situational Leadership
   a. The Situational Approach to leadership is based on the idea that a leader must adapt their leadership style to fit a given situation. The main difference between situational leadership and contingency theory is that situational leadership follows the idea that leadership style can be changed and adapted, while contingency theory does not.
   b. Situational Leadership is based on the idea that leadership has both directive and supportive behavior dimensions which comprise the style of a leader. To determine what is appropriate for a certain situation, the leader must analyze and process the situation and what the group needs and act accordingly. Based on the idea that the attitude and efficiency of the followers can change over time, situational leadership implies that leaders have to conform to meet their changes.
   c. The division of directive and supportive behaviors has served to create a spectrum of styles for leaders. This spectrum is divided into four main styles that are ideal for different situations:

Figure 5.1 Situational Leadership® II
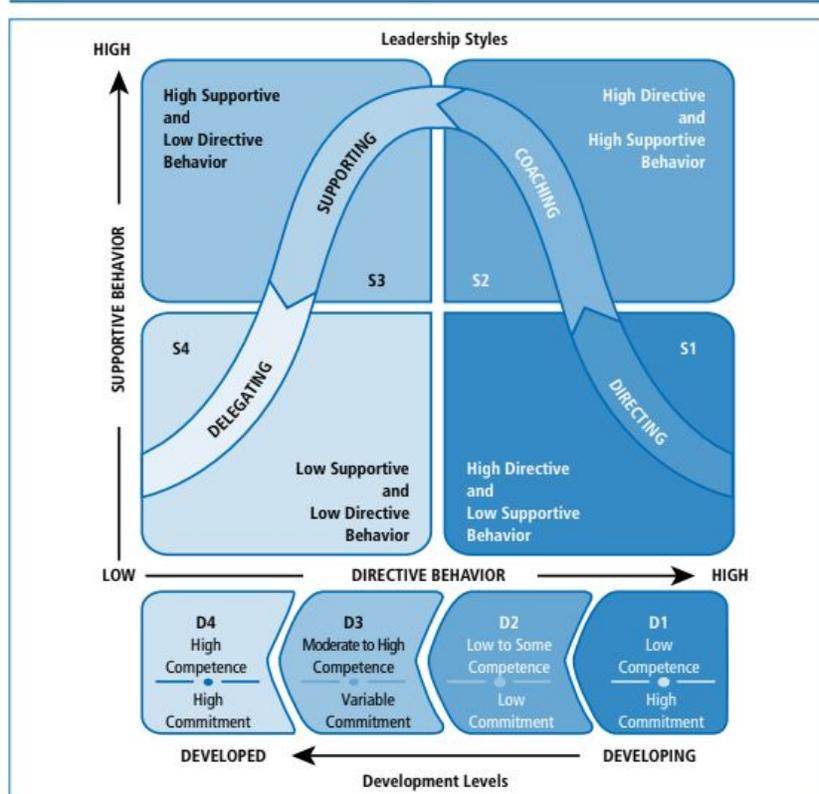
Examples of Contingency Theory
Rani of Jhansi (1828 - 1858)
Resources:

1.
2. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lakshmi-Bai

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

The Rani of Jhansi was an Indian queen who rebelled against unfair British annexation of her country. Her decision to join the movement against the British galvanized the mutineers, and she became a figurehead of the anti-British insurrection in 1857. As a rebel leader, she was respected by her troops as someone who held a personal stake in the fight; the British were threatening to take her kingdom away through politics. As a child, she had been trained to fight alongside the boys, and as an adult, she used those skills on the battlefield. Fighting next to her men disguised as a man herself, she fought fiercely. Ultimately, she, her kingdom, and the Indian rebellion were all vanquished. She died on the battlefield alongside her soldiers, shot by a British Hussar.

Her newly assumed role as a warrior queen contrasted with the status of other Indian women at the time, who did mostly nothing. The fact that her kingdom had been under attack her entire life led her to ride elephants instead of staying inside; she led her troops from the battlefield (a markedly different leadership style). She adapted to the situation she was placed in and she didn't choose to stick with the norm of Indian culture that placed women in the

situation of being in less of a position of power. As a result, we can consider Rani of Jhansi a good example of contingency leadership.

Discussion Questions:
1. Why do you think the Rani took a different leadership style in contrast to other Indian queens?
2. Does contingency leadership require extenuating circumstances such as a British invasion?
3. Is contingency leadership important in breaking societal barriers (gender, race, etc.)?

Joko Widodo (1961 - Present Day)
Resources:
1. www.britannica.com/biography/Joko-Widodo
2. https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/21/asia/indonesia-election-jokowi-intl/index.html
3. https://time.com/4416354/indonesia-joko-jokowi-widodo-terrorism-lgbt-economy/

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Joko Widodo is the current president of Indonesia. He was raised in a lower class family and graduated from Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia with a degree in forestry engineering and began a career in furniture exporting. He was elected as the mayor of Surakarta, Indonesia in 2005 and was extremely successful in reducing the crime rate there. He was reelected for mayor in 2010 and elected president of Indonesia in 2014. Widodo is a populist candidate, which made him well liked and trusted among many of the people in Indonesia, especially the common classes. During his presidency, he has gained support for his attentiveness to the common people and their problems as well as his in-depth plans to solve problems such as aiding the poor. He has also implemented a large infrastructure drive to create roads, schools, airports, and other community-impacting structures as well as hiring a new chief of the national police. Widodo has also connected with his followers showing a more friendly, laid-back side through YouTube videos of him and his son. This shows adaption to the crowd he is trying to appeal towards. Not to mention, President Joko just got reelected, so he was clearly conveying the right points to the Indonesian citizens. President Joko can be considered a great example of contingency theory.

Discussion Questions:
1. Looking at Widodo's history, where do you think he would score on the LPC spectrum? What qualities does he possess that makes you think so?
2. Does he seem to be a good fit for his situation based on the three factors of Contingency theory? Explain.
3. How would you describe Widodo's leadership style? Does he seem more relationship-oriented or task-oriented?
4. Many say that Widodo's small scale changes, rather than tackling systematic issues directly, make him more of a tinkerer than a visionary. If this is true, is Widodo still a good fit for his leadership scenario?

Elizabeth Holmes

Resources:
1. https://www.biography.com/business-figure/elizabeth-holmes

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Elizabeth Holmes is the founder and former CEO of Theranos, a health company that hoped to bring new technology to the field of phlebotomy (a practice of drawing blood from a patient). She claimed her revolutionary machines could run 200 potential medical exams with a single drop of blood. The idea became well-known and the valuation of the company exceeded nine billion dollars. Elizabeth aligned herself with many powerful men including Henry Kissinger, James Mattis, and George Shultz who continually praised her. However, soon after, a series of reports emerged that Holme's technology was a hoax and more than seven million tests it ran may have been inaccurate. It was soon discovered that Holmes never employed truly qualified employees, planned effectively, or ever did the tasks required to make her business work. Instead she spent her time forming relationships with the individuals who funded and marketed her idea. A popular theory states that Holmes may have faked her extremely deep voice to seem more assertive. **She is a representation of Contingency Theory as her leadership style was relationship-oriented, rather than task-oriented, and it was effective throughout the marketing of her product when the population was excited however once the population became skeptical she was no longer effective and was discovered as a fraud.**

*italics represent the important aspects of Contingency Theory that should be presented on

Discussion Questions:
1. In terms of Contingency Theory, would you consider Elizabeth Holmes relationship-oriented or task-oriented?
2. How does Holmes' situation change? Does the population's level of skepticism change the situation? In which situation do we see Elizabeth Holmes' leadership as effective? In which do we see it failing?

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (1938 - Present Day)

Resources:
1. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ellen-Johnson-Sirleaf

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was born and raised in Monrovia, Liberia with a father who was the first indigenous Liberian to be a part of the national legislature. She attended the college of West Africa and later traveled to the United States to study economics and business administration. She earned her degree in public administration from Harvard University and returned to Liberia to be part of government service. She served as the assistant minister of finance and became well known for her personal financial integrity, though she had conflicts with both heads of the state. She was imprisoned twice and nearly executed. When running for a seat in the Senate in 1985, she criticized the military government and was given a 10-year prison sentence, of which she was shortly released and fled the country. She lived 12 years of exile in Kenya and the US while Liberia fell into civil war. Meanwhile, Sirleaf became a big name economist and worked as the director of the Regional Bureau for Africa. She ran for president in 1997 and was again sentenced to exile by the party she lost to when they accused her of treason. She ran again for president in 2005, promising to end civil dispute, corruption,

establish unity, and rebuild the nation. She won the election and throughout her presidency vowed to bring back emotion and motherly leadership to the war torn country, and she stayed true to her word. Sirleaf served as Liberia's first woman president and worked to minimize and eliminate corruption by establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Committee to bring the country back to a peaceful state.

Discussion Questions:
1. What kind of leadership style does Ellen Johnson Sirleaf follow? Is this leadership style appropriate for her situation?
2. Sirleaf faced extensive hardship throughout her career. How do you think a change in Sirleaf's approach to obtaining a role in the Liberian Legislature would affect her chances? Would this be a better alternative than to stick to her truth?
3. What kind of score do you think Sirleaf would have on the LPC scale? Does her situation meet her style based on the three factors?

Examples of Situational Leadership
Shamma bint Suhail Faris Al Mazrui (1993 - Present Day)
Resources:
4. https://upclosed.com/people/shamma-al-mazrui/
5. https://es-la.facebook.com/unitednations/videos/live-from-unga-with-shamma-suhail-faris-al-mazrui/10155817232465820/

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Shamma bint Suhail Faris Al Mazrui was born in Abu Dhabi to an upper class family, when her father was the Chairman of Dubai Investments Board of Directors. Al Mazrui attended the International School of Choueifat, Abu Dhabi, and earned a bachelors in economics from NYU and a Masters in Public Policy from the University of Oxford. Al Mazrui worked in private equity in Abu Dhabi as well as as a policy analyst at the UAE Mission to the UN. She also had an internship at the UAE Embassy in Washington D.C. Since then, she has had a variety of leadership positions and has fought adversity in each of them as a woman of today's youth, In February 2016, Al Mazrui was appointed the Minister of State for Youth Affairs at the age of 22, which made her the youngest member of the UAE cabinet and youngest government minister in the world. She had to change the approach she took to managing her position numerous times to reach this point and have continued success as a young woman in the UAE. As the minister, she presides over the National Youth Council and establishes youth circles that allow young people to participate in collaborative meetings to discuss major world issues. She has also served on a variety of other government committees such as the Special Olympics UAE Board and the Education and Human Resources Council, where she has, once again, demonstrated strength and adaptability as a young leader..

Discussion Questions:
5. Based on the teams that Al Mazrui works with, what leadership styles do you think she uses from the spectrum of Situational Leadership?
6. Al Mazrui was appointed to many of her positions by high ranking officials that requested for her specifically to be there, though she still faces some sort of adversity in the workplace, being 1 of 8 women out of 29 board cabinet members. What aspects of her leadership style can she enhance to possibly improve this situation?
7. How do you think Al Mazrui changes her leadership style when working with older vs.

younger people in the UAE?

Sarah Kay (1988 - Present Day)

Resources:

3. https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2018/03/14/tch-talks-sarah-kay-project-voice

4. https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter/transcript?language= en

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Sarah Kay is an American poet, especially well known for her spoken word poetry. She attended Grinnell College, earning an honorary doctorate in humane letters as well as a Masters in teaching from Brown University. She is also the co-director and founder of Project VOICE, which is a group dedicated to using spoken word poetry to educate and inspire students around the world. She is also well known for her 2011 TED talk, "If I Should Have A Daughter," with over 10 million views online. With Project VOICE, she has had the opportunity to travel all across the world, visiting countries including India, Singapore, the Philippines, the UK and more. In each environment she visits, she is tasked with a different set of challenges and is pushed to reach every kid in her classroom, regardless of the tremendous struggle it can take to get there. However, through adaptability, she has proven to be a remarkable cultivator of youth intelligence. Often in her speeches, she discusses the difficulty of teaching kids in a large group setting and still being able to foster individual success.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which leadership style would be best suited to the problem Sarah Kay faces in reaching all of her students? Why?
2. In big group settings, is the success of the leader and their fit to the dynamic determined by the success of individuals or the success of the group?
3. What kind of unique challenges might a leader face when moving between different, large groups, and how could they go about dealing with them?

Activities

It's a dance off! (20 min)

Resources: – A pre-prepared dance for the students to teach (you may want to print out instructions)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QA46-CGXkt0 (1:16 to end)

Instructions: At the start of the activity, choose three students from the class who do well with direction. Away from the rest of the class, assign each of the three students a different Situational Leadership behavior (Delegating, Supporting, Coaching, Directing) to teach a dance to the rest of their class. Each one of those students will teach a group utilizing their respective style.
Purpose: The different teaching styles will have varying levels of success in teaching the dance. Students will be able to see the importance of adjusting your style for the task at hand by seeing how teaching styles act as crucial aspects of leadership.

Discussion Questions:
1. What went well in the activity? What could you do to improve aspects of this activity?
2. Did you find it challenging to emulate your leadership style? Do you think you would have found more success teaching in your own way?
3. Did your group find any aspects of your style difficult to adjust to?
4. Do you think other factors made teaching the dance difficult?

Roleplay (20 min)

Resources: Utilize one or more of the scenarios below

Instructions: Have one facilitator act in the situation while the other guides the discussion. Grab a student volunteer to come up and tutor/command/teach the acting facilitator's character. After the scenario is over, be sure to ask questions to make them go deeper with their ideas and tie them back to the module.

1. You (student volunteer) are in a one-on-one tutoring situation with a young boy named Trent (facilitator). He is having trouble keeping up with math. Trent prefers to learn with visuals, needs lots of practice problems, and responds well to positive reinforcement (high LPC). What is your planned approach for when you meet him for you first tutoring session? What changes do you make as you meet with him regularly?
2. You (student volunteer) have been given military command of the most elite battalion of soldiers (facilitator) in the United States Space Forces. They respond best to directive behavior and are not bothered by negative reinforcement (low LPC). How will you command these space commandos in order to get the most from their specialized skills?
3. You (student volunteer) are teaching senior citizens (facilitator) how to use technology and you need to get through to them. Senior citizens are slower at comprehending concepts, need clear, simple instructions, and get easily frustrated when things don't work out. How will you adjust your style to these old croakers?

Purpose: The student will have to adapt based on the various situations, and will have to consider how to adjust their style of leading based off the above prompts. Students will see the importance of changing your style and will see which style best fits their environment.

Discussion Questions:
1. How did you adjust your style based on your audience's perception of you?
2. Did the base of your power change your leadership style? How so?
3. How did your style change based on the factors described in the LPC conditional leadership chart?

References

1. https://oer.missouriwestern.edu/rsm424/chapter/contingency-theory-of-leadership/
2. http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/files/leadership.pdf
3. https://online.stu.edu/articles/education/what-is-situational-leadership.aspx