

# Leadership theory

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



BA365LeadershipTheory Mid Term Paper For this paper I decide to look at four of the leadership theories. The ones I chose are Trait, Contingency, Situational, and Behavioral. I will talk about the definitions of those four theories. Also I will discuss the overviews of the four theories including positives and negativities of each. Leadership Theories There is a wide and ever growing variety of theories to explain the concept and practice of leadership; to me leadership is a dynamic and complex process.

Per our text book leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes. (Daft, 2011) The theories that I will talk about simplify leadership into different theories. The first I will talk about is the Trait Theory. Trait theory assumes that people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them better suited to leadership. (Cherry, 2012) Also Trait theories often identify particularpersonalityor behavioral characteristics shared by leaders. (Cherry, 2012) Per our text book traits are the distinguishing personal characteristics of a leader, such as intelligence, honesty, self confidence, and appearance. (Daft, 2011) Contingency Theories of leadership focus on particular variables related to theenvironmentthat might determine which particular style of leadership is best suited for the situation. (Cherry, 2012) Success with this theory depends upon a number of variables and qualities of the followers and aspects of the situation. (Cherry, 2012) Situational Theories propose that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variables. (Cherry, 2012) Per our book the Hersey and Blanchard's extension of the leadership grid focusing on the characteristics of followers as the important element of the situation, and consequently, of determining

effective leader behavior. (Daft, 2011) Behavioral theories leadership is based upon the belief that great leaders are made, not born. This leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders not on mental qualities or internal states. According to this theory, people can learn to become leaders through teaching and observation. (Cherry, 2012) Trait Theory The trait model of leadership is based on the characteristics of many leaders both successful and unsuccessful and is used to predict leadership effectiveness. (Daft, 2011) The resulting lists of traits are then compared to those of potential leaders to assess their likelihood of success or failure. Scholars taking the trait approach attempted to identify physiological, demographic, personality, intellectual, task-related, and social characteristics with leader emergence and leader effectiveness. (“Trait Theory of Leadership”, 2012) Among the core traits identified are: achievement drive, leadership motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, knowledge of business, emotional maturity, charisma, creativity and flexibility. (“Trait Theory of Leadership”, 2012) Strengths of Trait Theory include: it’s naturally pleasing, and it gives a detailed knowledge and understanding of the leader element in the leadership process. (“Trait Theory of Leadership”, 2012) There are some limitations of the Trait Theory.

They include: subjective judgment in determining who is regarded as a good or successful leader and the list of possible traits tends to be very long. (“Trait Theory of Leadership”, 2012) Contingency Theory In contingency theory of leadership, the success of the leader is a function of various contingencies in the form of subordinate, task, and/or group variables. (Daft, 2011) Fiedler’s contingency theory is the earliest and most extensively researched.

Fiedler's approach departs from trait and behavioral models by asserting that group performance is contingent on the leader's psychological orientation and on three contextual variables: group atmosphere, task structure, and leader's power position. ("Contingency Theory of Leadership", 2012) Fiedler came up with his approach to leadership after realizing that leaders could function well if they changed their styles to suit the situation at hand. (Smith, 2012) According to Fiedler, leadership style may be defined as the way leaders and employees interact with one another. (Smith, 2012) It should be noted that Fiedler's theory does not cover all the possible factors affecting leadership. Some leaders may be more effective if they undergo training or gain experience on the job. Such factors have not been accounted for by the contingency theory. (Smith, 2012) Fiedler was trying to say that leaders are not just successful or unsuccessful. Leaders can either be effective in certain situations and not all of them. Therefore, all individuals can become leaders if they choose the most appropriate situation to apply their leadership styles. (Smith, 2012) Additionally, it is possible to make a leader more effective by altering the following; position power, task structure and leader member relationships.

**Situational Theory** The Situational Leadership Theory was developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. The model shows that leadership of employees must be adapted to the skills and job maturity of the individual employee. ("What is the Situational", 2010) The situational leadership style includes four leadership's styles.

They include telling, selling, participating and delegating. Also the situational theory includes four maturity levels. They include: M1, M2, M3 and M4. Telling is characterized by a strong leader categorizing roles for the

employees, and who conducts his leadership with one-way communication. This leadership style is very autocratic, and is based upon followers being told what to do. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) Selling is characterized by a strong leader providing direction, but there is more communication with followers.

Leaders are trying to sell their messages to the followers, so that the followers understand the importance of their duties, and understand why different processes are important for the organization. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) Participating is characterized by two-way communication and shared decision making. Leaders include followers in job related aspects and in how task are to be accomplished. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) And Delegating is characterized by a leader leaving much of the decision making power to the followers.

Leaders are still monitoring progress, but are not as heavily involved in decision making processes. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) The maturity level M1 is followers with this level of maturity lack knowledge, skills, or confidence to work on their own. They often need to be directed and supervised before they take on tasks. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) Maturity level M2 is followers in this category are still unable to take independent responsibility for tasks, but they are generally willing to work at the task. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) Maturity level M3 are followers in this category are very experienced and able to perform the task at hand satisfactorily. And they do not have the confidence to take on sole responsibility for task accomplishment. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) With Maturity level M4, followers are experienced, and believe that they are

able to perform well. They are not only able and willing to perform their tasks, but are also willing to take on independent responsibility for the accomplishment of tasks.

By using the situational leadership model, leaders honor the different needs of individuals, leaders may increase the learning curve of followers, and get a more skilled and motivated workforce in return. (“ What is the Situational”, 2010) Behavioral Theory Behavioral approach does not focus on the internal states or mental qualities of the leaders. Based on this theory, a person can learn to be a leader through observation and teaching. This theory believed that the environment is a big factor of how a leader behaves. Most behaviorists assume that in order to understand the behavior of the leaders must be observed.

Every behavior can be observed and monitored through the responses in every stimulus. The behavioral theory also assumes that the qualities of a leader are developed, and everyone starts with a clean slate. It is believed that the qualities of a leader are formed based also on the environmental factors. (“ Behavioral Approach”, 2012) Conclusion So in conclusion I discussed in this paper four of the Leadership theories that we have learned about in this class. I went through and defined Trait, Contingency, Situational, and Behavioral theories.

I also discussed the overviews of the four theories including positives and negativities of each theory. References Behavioral Approach. (2012). Retrieved September 20, 2012 from <http://qualities-of-a-leader.com/behavioral-approach/> Cherry, K (2012). Leadership Theories – 8 Major Leadership Theories. Retrieved September 20, 2012 from <http://psychology.https://assignbuster.com/leadership-theory/>

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