

Limitations of contingency leadership theories

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Limitations of Contingency Leadership Theories Introduction The concept of leadership is one which is defined from various perspectives, dependent on the theories and practical experience that is available. When defining the various aspects of leadership, it is also noted that there are limitations and other perspectives which are defined. Understanding what these differences are and associating this with the concepts of management and leadership also create a different understanding and response to given situations. A theory which creates a different response is contingency theory, which uses specific situations and responses for motivation. While this particular form of leadership is able to work with motivational aspects, it often doesn't have the correct approaches. The limitations of contingency leadership are based on misunderstandings of leadership and motivational skills that don't consider other perspectives and forms of working with teams and the organizational environment. Limitations of Contingency Theory and Leadership According to a recent study (Ortega et al, 2010), contingency theory is one which is able to offer a competitive approach to those that are in the environment. This is based on the study of a strategy structure performance and resource based view. To define this, several firms were used with the partial least squares technique. It was found that the strategies and the resources grew with competitive strategy that was in the environment (Ortega et al, 2010). While this particular approach may have been effective, it didn't consider the limitations of the contingency theory leadership. It can be said that the firms that were looked into were based on defining strategies that were specific to the organizational structure and which were consistent with an environment that supported this type of

leadership. However, other research (Ortega et al, 1985), shows that a different structural set up and approach has more limitations than opportunities for strategy and structure. From this particular study it was found that the organizational structure and strategy is what makes the difference, whereas the leadership skills simply support and create the competitive advantage which follows (Ortega et al, 1985). From this perspective, there is a question over the influence of contingency theory and whether it is effective in every organizational structure and strategy that is used. Motivational Techniques of Contingency Theory Another concept which is associated with contingency theory is the motivational techniques that are defined by situational basis within an organization. A study which investigates this theory (Ozcelik, Ferman, 2006) is based on understanding whether motivational techniques change the level of competency within employees. To investigate this, a Turkish, international firm is investigated with the motivation that is used in the structure as well as whether the levels of competency change with the level of contingency theory used. The study found that the motivation and techniques changed and were heightened. However, the study also noted that this was dependent on the situation in which the level of competency sometimes remained ineffective (Ozcelik, Ferman, 2006). The contradictory statement in this particular study shows that contingency theory may work in some given environments and situations; however, it is limited and sometimes doesn't apply. This study also is limited because it only investigates one international firm without considering the motivational factors which may change according to the company and the associations which are a part of the techniques which are

used. This implies that the success rate of contingency theory may not be successful in all situations. Other Leadership Perspectives In light of the limitations of contingency theory for leadership are also other forms of leadership which are associated with the responses that are in a given environment. A specific approach which is taken is transformational leadership, which is based on altering the way in which individuals work within a given environment. A study (Felfe, Schyns, 2010) which looks at this particular theory shows that transformational leadership holds the same attributes of situational leadership and motivation that is able to form according to situation. In the study, there was observation used to note the personalities of team members, responses which were given to situations and how the leaders influenced them. The transformational leadership not only worked with basic motivation, such as the contingency theory offers, but also provided more alternatives based on the personality of individuals and the situations which arose. A second research study (McLaurin, Bushanain, 2008), defines that the transformational leadership also changes responses according to the behavior and attitude of the leader as well as the personality, environment and other dependent variables of the situation (McLaurin, Bushanain, 2008). Both of these studies show that contingency theory is limited in the perspectives of ideologies of motivation, how this relates to structure, environment and the individual perspectives and responses. Other forms of leadership; however, are able to show these alternatives. Conclusion The ability to understand leadership is essential to the success of a business, specifically because it develops and offers new forms and perspectives of being a leader. The concept of contingency

leadership is one which is designed as a way to motivate and assist individuals according to the situation and the organization. However, this particular type of leadership is limited by the proposal of the theory, specifically because it doesn't consider the organizational strategy, surrounding environment or the individual and member responses which may arise. This is not only seen by limitations that are noted in the studies, but is also indicated by other theories, such as transformational leadership, which show better results in terms of motivation, individual needs and leadership skills. These different concepts all show that contingency leadership is limited in the theory and practical approaches to ensuring transformation within a given environment. References Gaye, O., and Murat, F. (2006). Competency Approach to Human Resources Management: Outcomes and Contributions in a Turkish Cultural Context. *Human Resource Development Review*, 5(1), 72-91. Felfe, J. and Schyns, B. (2010). Followers' Personality and the Perception of Transformational Leadership: Further Evidence for the Similarity Hypothesis. *British Journal of Management*, 21, 393-410. James, R. M., Mohammed, B. A. A. (2008). Developing An Understanding Of Charismatic And Transformational Leadership. *Proceedings of the Academy of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 13(2), 15-19. Pertusa-Ortega, E., Molina-Azorin, J., Claver-Cortes E. (2010). Competitive strategy, structure and firm performance: A comparison of the resource-based view and the contingency approach. *Management Decision*, 48(8), 1282-1303 Neil Ashworth, D., Claiborne Robins, E. (1985). Should we consider a "contingency" approach to participative management?. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 6(2), 24-26