**Situational and contingency theories**

*Main articles:* [*Fiedler contingency model*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiedler_contingency_model)*,* [*Vroom–Yetton decision model*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vroom%E2%80%93Yetton_decision_model)*,* [*path–goal theory*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Path%E2%80%93goal_theory) *and* [*situational leadership theory*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situational_leadership_theory)

[Situational theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situational_leadership_theory) also appeared as a reaction to the trait theory of leadership. [Social scientists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_science) argued that history was more than the result of intervention of great men as [Carlyle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Carlyle) suggested. [Herbert Spencer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Spencer) (1884) (and [Karl Marx](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx)) said that the times produce the person and not the other way around. This theory assumes that different situations call for different characteristics; according to this group of theories, no single optimal psychographic profile of a leader exists. According to the theory, "what an individual actually does when acting as a leader is in large part dependent upon characteristics of the situation in which he functions."

Some theorists started to synthesize the trait and situational approaches. Building upon the research of Lewin et al., academics began to normalize the descriptive models of leadership climates, defining three leadership styles and identifying which situations each style works better in. The authoritarian leadership style, for example, is approved in periods of crisis but fails to win the "hearts and minds" of followers in day-to-day management; the democratic leadership style is more adequate in situations that require consensus building; finally, the laissez-faire leadership style is appreciated for the degree of freedom it provides, but as the leaders do not "take charge", they can be perceived as a failure in protracted or thorny organizational problems.Thus, theorists defined the style of leadership as contingent to the situation, which is sometimes classified as contingency theory. Four contingency leadership theories appear more prominently in recent years: Fiedler contingency model, Vroom-Yetton decision model, the path-goal theory, and the Hersey-Blanchard situational theory.

The [Fiedler contingency model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiedler_contingency_model) bases the leader's effectiveness on what [Fred Fiedler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Fiedler) called *situational contingency*. This results from the interaction of leadership style and situational favorability (later called *situational control*). The theory defined two types of leader: those who tend to accomplish the task by developing good relationships with the group (relationship-oriented), and those who have as their prime concern carrying out the task itself (task-oriented). According to Fiedler, there is no ideal leader. Both task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders can be effective if their leadership orientation fits the situation. When there is a good leader-member relation, a highly structured task, and high leader position power, the situation is considered a "favorable situation". Fiedler found that task-oriented leaders are more effective in extremely favorable or unfavorable situations, whereas relationship-oriented leaders perform best in situations with intermediate favorability.

[Victor Vroom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Vroom), in collaboration with Phillip Yetton (1973) and later with Arthur Jago (1988), developed a [taxonomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_%28general%29) for describing leadership situations, which was used in a normative [decision model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vroom-Yetton_decision_model) where leadership styles were connected to situational variables, defining which approach was more suitable to which situation.This approach was novel because it supported the idea that the same manager could rely on different [group decision making](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_decision_making) approaches depending on the attributes of each situation. This model was later referred to as situational contingency theory.

The [path-goal theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Path-goal_theory) of leadership was developed by Robert House (1971) and was based on the [expectancy theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expectancy_theory) of [Victor Vroom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Vroom). According to House, the essence of the theory is "the meta proposition that leaders, to be effective, engage in behaviors that complement subordinates' environments and abilities in a manner that compensates for deficiencies and is instrumental to subordinate satisfaction and individual and work unit performance".The theory identifies four leader behaviors, *achievement-oriented*, *directive*, *participative*, and *supportive*, that are contingent to the environment factors and follower characteristics. In contrast to the [Fiedler contingency model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiedler_contingency_model), the path-goal model states that the four leadership behaviors are fluid, and that leaders can adopt any of the four depending on what the situation demands. The path-goal model can be classified both as a [contingency theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contingency_leadership_theory), as it depends on the circumstances, and as a [transactional leadership theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transactional_leadership), as the theory emphasizes the reciprocity behavior between the leader and the followers.

The [situational leadership model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hersey-Blanchard_situational_theory) proposed by Hersey and Blanchard suggests four leadership-styles and four levels of follower-development. For effectiveness, the model posits that the leadership-style must match the appropriate level of follower-development. In this model, leadership behavior becomes a function not only of the characteristics of the leader, but of the characteristics of followers as well.

**Functional theory**

Functional leadership theory (Hackman & Walton, 1986; McGrath, 1962; Adair, 1988; Kouzes & Posner, 1995) is a particularly useful theory for addressing specific leader behaviors expected to contribute to organizational or unit effectiveness. This theory argues that the leader's main job is to see that whatever is necessary to group needs is taken care of; thus, a leader can be said to have done their job well when they have contributed to group effectiveness and cohesion (Fleishman et al., 1991; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Hackman & Walton, 1986). While functional leadership theory has most often been applied to [team](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team) leadership (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001), it has also been effectively applied to broader organizational leadership as well (Zaccaro, 2001). In summarizing literature on functional leadership (see Kozlowski et al. (1996), Zaccaro et al. (2001), Hackman and Walton (1986), Hackman & Wageman (2005), Morgeson (2005)), Klein, Zeigert, Knight, and Xiao (2006) observed five broad functions a leader performs when promoting organization's effectiveness. These functions include environmental monitoring, organizing subordinate activities, teaching and coaching subordinates, motivating others, and intervening actively in the group's work.

A variety of leadership behaviors are expected to facilitate these functions. In initial work identifying leader behavior, Fleishman (1953) observed that subordinates perceived their supervisors' behavior in terms of two broad categories referred to as [consideration and initiating structure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consideration_and_initiating_structure). Consideration includes behavior involved in fostering effective relationships. Examples of such behavior would include showing concern for a subordinate or acting in a supportive manner towards others. Initiating structure involves the actions of the leader focused specifically on task accomplishment. This could include role clarification, setting performance standards, and holding subordinates accountable to those standards.

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