

Conditional Leadership Theory

Colt developed by Priest and Chase builds on situational leadership theory developed by Hersey and Blanchard.

It suggests that leaders must go beyond the dimensions of relationships, task and group readiness and look at the level of conditional favourability.

Three main concepts to understanding COLT:

1. Relationship and Task Orientation:

-Task-oriented (or task-focused) the leader focuses on the tasks that need to be performed in order to meet certain goals, or to achieve a certain performance standard.

-Relationship-oriented (or relationship-focused) the leader focuses on the satisfaction, motivation and the general well-being of the team members.

2. Conditions of Favourability:

E - Environmental Dangers: weather, hazards, objective and subjective

I - Individual Competence: experience, confidence, skill, attitude, behaviour and knowledge.

G - Group Unity: morale, maturity, trust, cooperation, communication, responsibility, interest.

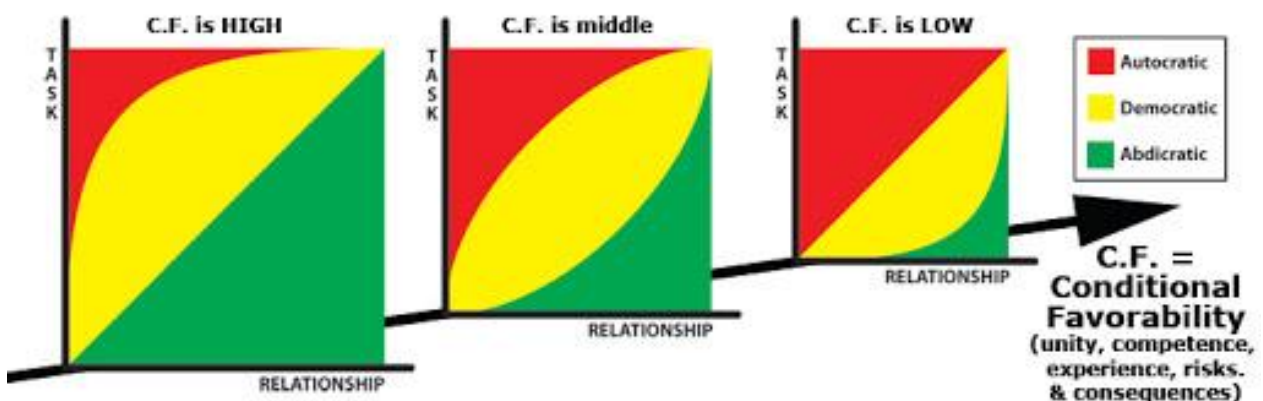
L - Leader Proficiency: credibility, judgement, level of stress, fatigue, and perceived credibility.

D - Decision Consequences: clarity of problem, sufficient solution time, available resources, expected ramification and degree of uncertainty and challenge.

3. Leadership Styles:

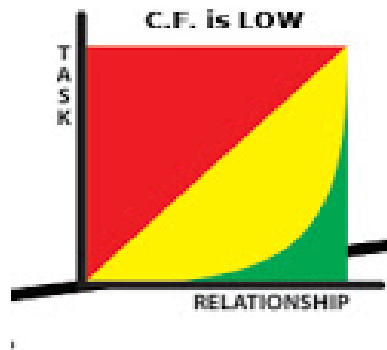
- **Autocratic** : Authoritarian approach in which the leader holds complete decision making power
- **Democratic** : Shared decision making, with the leader and the group working together to solve problems
- **Abdicratic / Laissez-Faire**: Abdication of all decision-making power directly to the group

Below is the Model developed by Priest and Chase:

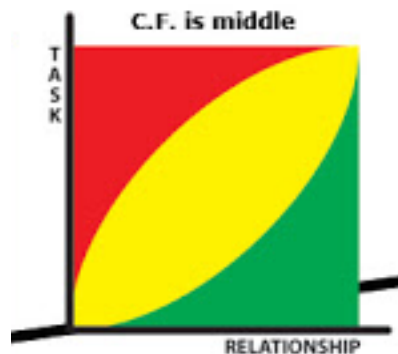


How does the model work?

If the conditions of favourability are **LOW** i.e. The environmental dangers are high, the competency of the individuals is low, the group has poor unity, the leader is fatigued or has low competence and the consequences of poor decision making are high, then the leader is more likely to choose an **AUTOCRATIC** leadership style and have a greater **TASK** orientation.



If the conditions of favourability are **MEDIUM**, i.e. The environmental dangers are moderate, the competency of the individuals is moderate, the group has good trust and morale, the leader is competent and has low stress level and the consequence of decision making is moderate, then leader is more likely to choose **DEMOCRATIC** leadership style, and have an **EQUAL** task and relationship orientation to balance both tasks and relationships. Leader may also choose to focus on either one more than the other.



If the conditions of favourability are **HIGH**, i.e. the environmental dangers are low, the competency of the individuals is very good, the group has excellent communication and co-operation, the leader is competent and has good judgement, and the consequence of poor decision making is low, then the leader is more likely to choose an **ABDICRATIC** leadership style and have a greater **RELATIONSHIP** orientation.

