

# **LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR. LEADERSHIP STYLES. AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE.**

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# CONTENTS

|                                                    |           |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Abstract .....</b>                              | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                          | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Literature review.....</b>                      | <b>3</b>  |
| Leadership.....                                    | 3         |
| Leadership behaviours x Employee performance ..... | 4         |
| Leadership styles.....                             | 4         |
| Leadership styles x Employee performance .....     | 6         |
| <b>Research philosophy .....</b>                   | <b>7</b>  |
| Ontology.....                                      | 8         |
| Epistemology & axiology.....                       | 8         |
| Reliability, validity .....                        | 10        |
| Ethical reflection .....                           | 11        |
| <b>Reference.....</b>                              | <b>12</b> |

## LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

|                                                                                          |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Table I: The level of circumstantial vantage among the six major leadership styles ..... | 7 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

## Abstract

*Purpose* - The relevance between leadership behaviors and employee performance within organizations will be investigated in this research. Six major styles of leadership has been discovered through time will also be analysed to evaluate the effect of leadership styles to the level of employee commitment in area of management. *Analysis* - Reflect on the role of theory, epistemology, ontology and axiology in clarifying research on the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance; discuss approaches to reliability, validity and bias in social research and examine the ethical considerations in social research. *Originality/value* – this research widen the argument about the connection between leadership styles and employee performance within organizations, figuring out how those leadership styles affect other followers in terms of motivation and empowerment. *Key words*: Leadership behaviour, leadership styles, employee performance, contingency model.

*"I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure, which is: Try to please everybody." - Herbert Swope*

## Introduction

Nowadays, organizations have little choice in the context of progressively intense competition on the marketplace, but to frequently improve their competitiveness (Amit et al., 2009). And in the expertise of organization and management theory, leadership is one of the most extensively researched and debated. Analysing the activities of leaders in corporations, they describe their role as creating organization strategy, setting goals for profit and growth as well as maximize the compatibility between them and the workplace environment they are working in (Mintzberg, 1983). Researchers view the role of leadership as one of the most important factor on top of corporations and the hypothesis is created that the styles as well as behaviours of a leader could impact acutely the performance and future of an organization. House et al. (1974) on an investigation of comprehensive leadership-research illustrated the discrepancy between the role of leadership and the character of experimental work on leadership has been accomplished (Andrews and Field, 1998). Micro level in organizations has been mostly conducted throughout the history of leadership research. The character of superior-subordinate relations at middle/lower levels of corporations and the effect of those relations on the performance and fulfillment of employees (House et al., 1974; Van Wart and Suino, n.d.). A limited quantity of research has been conducted in order to investigate the macro effect and the effect of leadership on corporation performance (Luo and Jackson, 2011; Majocchi et al., 2013; Mattingly and Olsen, 2018). There has been ambiguous among macro studies of operationalisation of leadership. In the absence of field data on attitudes and behaviours, leadership was assessed based on strategies accompanied by an organization or patterns of sequence of CEOs. There has been a limited number of studies of quantitative work has conducted the relationship between peculiarities and behaviors of elite leaders towards organization performance (Betz and Hall, 1973).

In the meanwhile, there has been a lot of researches in the area of leadership has classified the intimate connection between leadership styles of leaders and the performance of employees – one the the most critical factors on the competitiveness of a company (Gilbert, 1978). According to *The Fiedler Contingency*

*Model* (was created in the mid-1960s by Fred Fiedler), the efficiency of employees in every case would mostly dependant on the appropriate match between the ability to lead of leaders and the factors inside organizations, example – employee demands. This could be easily explained because the personal characteristics and motivations of managers are admitted to connect with situations they employees are dealing with. As a result of this connection, Zu et al. (2008) stated that leadership styles have an observational impact on these factors: employee fulfillment and employee empowerment, which are key drivers of staff performance. The level of empowerment and fulfillment is eminently dependent on how leaders choose to lead their staffs, according to Zu et al. (2008). That means in order to improve employee performance in particular and organization performance in general, it is extremely crucial for organizations to reach the feasible match between leadership styles and employees demands, so that employees could be effectively boosted with empowerment and fulfillment.

#### Objectives:

- ✓ Critically reflect on the role of theory, epistemology, ontology and axiology in shaping and interpreting research;
- ✓ Critically discuss approaches to reliability, validity and bias in social research;
- ✓ Examine the ethical reflections in social research, and develop research designs that meet a high standard of ethical practice.

#### **Literature review**

The ultimate purpose of this literature review is to illustrate an all-inclusive review of relevant leadership theoretical issues to create the theoretical foundation for the research. Taking into consideration the aims to be referred, covered issues will contain: relationship between leadership and organization performance, leadership styles and the crossovers between leadership styles and employee performance (as suggested by Fred Fiedler through *The Fiedler Contingency Model*).

#### Leadership

Seeman did define 'leadership' as activities by a person that influence other people in a mutual direction (Simpson, 1961). Coming back from WWI & WWII as a senior British army officer, Montgomery (1961) shared his thoughts about the nature of leadership as the capacity and the will to people to a common aspiration, and the character which influences confidence. Hodgson (1994) stated that whenever there are personal interactions between 2+ people, it's where leadership present; the approach present in leadership cultivates that one or more people in a communication commits more to the meeting and guiding of coming situations, that is 'leadership'. Those definition had been barely changed through time, Kellerman (1984) defined 'leadership' as a process by which one person relentlessly apply more impact than other people on the essence and direction of group activity. For the most intuitive explanation, 'leadership' is an ability to make influence towards other members by their personal characters or behaviours in order to accomplish one mutual goal of an organization (Northouse, n.d.). But 'leadership' could not be explained if the leader is put far from a team, even though leaders could be differentiated from other members in terms of their personal behaviours or character, many researches in the leadership are has pointed that out (Sawyers et

al., 2000). Instead, essentially 'leadership' should be considered as an act of combine those who lead and those who follow into one common proper and emotional commitment (Zaleznik and Kets de Vries, 1985). 'Leadership' should not be defined as an individual but an act of an organization with a positive emphasis on exchange of leader, employees and other aspects which affect the efficiency of leadership (Anderson and Huang, 2005). These disputes is broadly rational with the idea of Allcorn et al. (1999) that even though leader's role in an organization is undoubtedly essential, they still express and enable other members' inner desires carrying out as the 'spinner of their dreams'. There is a deep unconscious connection which can't be easily detached between followership and leadership according to Burns (2005). Subsequently, at the moment, the prevalent view in literature of leadership has been to differentiate leaders from each other by putting them into different situations and divisions. Example – by leading employees, we can easily occupy the demeanor of leaders through their leadership styles.

#### Leadership behaviours x Employee performance

Tolbert and Hall (n.d.), Tosi et al. (1973), Reitz (1979), Pilotto and Young (1999) and Aldrich (2008) shared the same arguments about the relationship between leadership and performance, that leadership behaviors and natures have no momentous impact towards the performance of an organization due to the hindrance of structure and workplace environment. There is a little impact of leaders' activities to organizational outcomes because the outcomes are not controllable and the organization could do nothing about it. Industry aspects could be explained for the differences between corporational leaders. In a complicated and belligerent environment, an effective leaders will manage this environment by achieving more influence activities (Pfeffer, 1976). Alternately, it is believed that leadership characteristic do have a momentous impact on organizational performance, excluded from other internal or external factors. Therefore, there is, obviously, impact from internal and external factors, not every deviation in performance could be explained by those factors (Mahoney, 1981). The environment could be less restricted than forecasted, giving more freedom for leaders to have their own attention in influencing activities. For example, Hartzell et al. (2000) in studying benefits received by target CEOs in completed mergers and acquisitions, indicated that even in the same industry, CEOs have a variety of options from which to determine targets. Plus, corporations choose their specific environments based on their operational area (Valle et al., 2017). The definition of environment selection is the core of strategic planning. Despite the fact that there are still barriers to exit an environment (Porter, 2004), almost corporations maintain a firm control over selection of the environment in which they operate. Indeed, organizations choose environment based (partly) on their CEOs' knowledge of the industry and confidence in their competence to operate or utilize the influence on specific situations (Donaldson and Lorsch, 1985).

#### Leadership styles

In the field of management, previous studies of McQueen (n.d.), McGee et al. (2006) and others have identified six major styles of leadership, including: (a) Democratic style, (b) Laissez-faire style, (c) Autocratic style, (d) Paternalistic style, (e) Transformational style and (f) Transactional style. Each leadership style delivers unique management fashions in which leaders execute their roles inside their corporations (Woods, 2005). Nonetheless, in 2006, McGee et al. (2006) suggested that this approach of categorizing leadership styles doesn't seem to be reasonable as in reality, a leader could demonstrate more than just one explicit leadership style, and through time his/her leadership style could keep evolving flexible. For example, a

leader could not be described exclusively as having the laissez-faire style and it wouldn't make sense if he/she would preserve that style during his/her whole career.

The autocratic leadership style which is also assigned as the authoritarian leadership style, illustrates leaders who tend to control their followers (or employees) tightly through strict application of regulations and rules, he/she also usually put the first priority for work efficiency and the improvement of professional relationships in corporations (McQueen, n.d.). It is a widely held view that in the modern literature of management that a leader has this autocratic leadership style, they always use one-way interaction and make decisions based on their own ideas and rarely accept other opinions, which could lower the satisfaction of employees (Erben and Güneşer, 2007).

Opposing to leaders with autocratic leadership style, the ones with paternalistic style tend not to control their followers tightly, they give their employees more room to develop and in fact, they act like a father within a team (Erben and Güneşer, 2007). That explains for the warm and cozy relationships between leaders and followers who show more engagement to the corporation. In general, leaders with the paternalistic style, they have quite good organization skills and they can boost their employee performance in an effective way (Sadler, 2003). By applying the paternalistic style within an organization, two-way communication has a lot of room to spread. This kind of leadership explains why employees are happier and committed more to the corporations. Nonetheless, as advocated by Zinni (2010), this style with much freedom of expression and opinion could be a double-edged sword, as the leaders with paternalistic style tend to have less-efficiency decisions, followed by less-efficiency performance of organizations.

Previous research of Sawyers et al. (2000) stated that the democratic leadership style could be a consolidation of paternalistic and autocratic leadership styles, in a certain degree. With this leadership style, leader can achieve good performance by executing social equality in the corporation. According to Sawyers et al. (2000), within organizations with democratic leadership style, leaders tend to encourage employees to share ideas and debate more, as well as allow them to be involved in decision-making process. Nonetheless, unlike paternalistic and autocratic leadership style, leaders with this style still maintain a certain status of control. As a consolidation of paternalistic and autocratic style, many research papers have constantly declared as the most effective style because leaders can harmonize between organization performance and employee fulfillment (commitment as well) in an optimal way (Poole, 2002).

Setting itself apart from these three leadership styles above, the leaders with laissez-faire leadership style give their followers absolute control in terms of decision-making (Stone, 1993). Particularly, employees now take over the decision-making process. As a result of this character, this leadership style only functions efficiently if those employees have exceptional skills, experience and credibility. Furthermore, it is still very indispensable for leaders to routinely give employees comments and feedbacks so as to improve the productivity in decision-making process, even when they do not apply any forces towards their staffs conceivably (McGee et al., 2006).

Last but not least - the transformational and the transactional leadership style. These two leadership styles are literally different from all leadership styles above, those leaders with these kinds of leadership, they have very little impact on the control status and they don't involve in the decision-making process of employees (Williams, 2005). In details, Williams (2005) suggested that leaders with transactional leadership

style, they focus on the aspect of pushing employees through a system of awards and disciplines in exchange for enhanced performance. In order to figure out the best method to galvanize followers, transactional-style leaders will try to understand the needs of their followers. Correspondingly, employees can have a high level of fulfillment and hence, their commitment for the organization depends a lot on the emotions of the leader (Hersey et al., 2017).

The transformational leadership style is different from the transactional leadership style. Instead of providing space for pioneers or innovators, leaders with the transformational style tend to convert demands and thinkings of followers. As distinguished from motivating followers through awards and disciplines, leaders with this style always give their employees more challenging and exigent tasks (Jarvis et al., 2005). By correlating transactional and transformational leadership styles, Schermerhorn (2013) indicates that in general, transactional style managers tend to feel comfortable working in a corporation, cultivate the current circumstance, say no to changes, possess critical thinking and push followers externally through awards and disciplines. On the other hand, transformational style leaders use internal approach for their followers. They don't follow, they are willing to be themselves and they don't hesitate to be the pioneers (House et al., 1974).

Inclusively, although the way of categorizing leaders into different styles (six styles on this paper for example) has been based on the characteristics of leaders and which methods they use to influence the team, improve organization performance, McGee et al. (2006) still criticized this divide as 'subjective, invariable' and couldn't ignore the fact that leaders could change their leadership styles through career. Bear that in mind, the process of clarifying leadership styles of a manager should be run with caution.

#### Leadership styles x Employee performance

As stated above, *The Fiedler Contingency Model* provides the theoretical aspects on the probable connection between leadership styles and employee performance (Gilbert, 1978). The whole concept of this model is that the efficiency of employees in every case would mostly dependant on the appropriate match between the ability to lead of leaders and the factors inside organizations. Moreover, based on this model, in spite of having a variety of leadership styles, they distinguish from each other primarily on the subject of relationship between leaders – followers (Zhang et al., 2012). As suggested by (Lowe et al., 1996), there is everything but the best style of leadership in the area of management. Rather than working out to find the best leadership styles, the efficiency of a leader could be predominantly measured in explicit situational aspects, therefore it heavily depends on the level of vantage which is simultaneously framed by these specific aspects (x) power authorization, (y) function framework and (z) the relationship between leader and follower. Leadership styles enclose entirely cover those specific aspects, *The Fiedler Contingency Model* introduced a steady connection between leadership styles and employee performance.

In the first place, 'power authorization' indicates to the extent to which managers empower their follower to process decision-making. Previous researches prove that if leaders give more power for their employees, their employees would gain much more confident and could bring more compelling ideas to the table (Woods, 2005). The autocratic leadership style reaches the bottom in terms of the lowest level of 'power authorization', in contrast the laissez-faire style has the highest.

Furthermore, ‘function framework’ refers to which functions employees are running (Men, 2012). When functions are coherent and organized, employees would have more chance to accomplish tasks successfully. Previous researches in the past had remarkably proved that compared to the laissez-faire style leaders, those with autocratic style would give their followers much more coherent and organized tasks.

Last but not least, ‘the relationship between leader and follower’ demonstrates how much leaders and followers trust each other (McKie and Willis, 2015). It is believed that those who are more trusted and favored by their followers could motivate them more productively. Leaders with paternalistic leadership style has always reached the top spot in terms of level of trust between leaders and followers, in contrast the autocratic style makes the lowest level (McKie and Willis, 2015).

Taking everything into account, the level of circumstantial vantage represents motivation and freedom – the most important driving-forces of employee performance. The level of circumstantial vantage in terms of these aspects above among six leadership styles on the scale from 1 (min) to 10 (max) could be encapsulated in the table below:

| Leadership Styles | Power Authorization | Function Framework | Relationship Between Leader And Follower |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Autocratic        | 1                   | 10                 | 1                                        |
| Democratic        | 8                   | 4                  | 6                                        |
| Laissez-faire     | 10                  | 1                  | 6                                        |
| Paternalistic     | 4                   | 4                  | 10                                       |
| Transformational  | 7                   | 8                  | 4                                        |
| Transactional     | 8                   | 7                  | 6                                        |

**Table I: The level of circumstantial vantage among the six major leadership styles**

Despite the fact that *The Fiedler Contingency Model* helped to illustrate a comprehensive picture of the connection between leadership styles and employee performance, that model has been disapproved relatively by (Jung et al., 2014). They argued that *The Fiedler Contingency Model* is conducted under a perfect hypothesis which indicated that leadership styles wouldn’t change over time. One suggestion here is in order to maintain the effect of leadership within an organization, companies must change their executives when new circumstances emerge.

### **Research philosophy**

In the literature review, an overall review of leadership behaviours and leadership styles in the area of management, and their connections with employee performance has been demonstrated. In this part, *The Fiedler Contingency Model* - created by Fred Fiedler in the mid-1960s, will be critically analysed. The ways human-being uncovers new knowledge are subjective hence it is essential to interpret thoroughly about the elemental epistemological and ontological hypothesis behind each page of researches that we read. This paper will critically reflect the function of the ontology, epistemology and axiology in constructing the paper. Moreover, we also discuss approaches to reliability, validity and ethical examination of this research.

### Ontology

(Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998). Ontological beliefs are dealt with what establishes reality.)

*The Fiedler Contingency Model* is a model which was created by an Austrian psychologist Fred Edward Fiedler, he was one of the leading experts in the area of leadership and organizational efficiency (Spsp.org, n.d.). *The Fiedler Contingency Model* was first established in 1964 and then interpreted and broadened in 1974. In 1964, people paid a little attention to the literature of leadership study and this model was a revolution in the area of leadership at that time, it helped to answer two main questions: Which elements are which make a leader & which characteristics are which make them practical.

Circumstantial favorableness and style of leadership were the major concepts in *The Fiedler Contingency Model* (Sashkin, 1972). Fiedler stated that team performance is “contingent upon both the motivational system of the leader and the degree to which the leader has control and influence”, he viewed the leadership practice as a stadium in which leader needs to please both company’s goals and himself (Fiedler and Chemers, 1974). For the definition of ‘groups’, he stated that it is a common circumstance on task connected events sharing analogy or proximity. *The Fiedler Contingency Model* focus on groups in which employees have a bilateral connection, in order to accomplish a mutual target, not an individual working independently to achieve that goal.

According to Fiedler, the leader is a person that control and organize task-relevant group activities. Moreover, he/she is chosen, assigned or is the most important member in terms of managing performance tasks (Fiedler, 1964). In his research of ‘psychotherapeutic relations’ in 1951, Fiedler indicated that highly-skilled therapists see themselves as their patients, in contrast, lower-level ones claimed they are totally different from their patients. In his hypothesis, he claimed that those people who feel the similarities with someone tends to feel closer and more open-minded towards ‘someone’, after that he explored that attitude have a close connection with team performance (Fiedler, 1964).

Fiedler stated that teams with more close connection in psychology could perform better than teams with task-oriented connection. He mentioned the term ‘sociometric relationship’ which means friendship or assistance from other members in a team. And that ‘sociometric relationship’ plays a vital role in achieving goals of the organizations (Fiedler, 1964). By introducing a revolutionary framework, he hoped this model would help other researchers to figure out the way the personal characteristics of a leader affect organizational performance. He also declared that it is very essential to know if the organizational environment would make the leader’s work easier or harder, to impact other followers (Fiedler, 1964).

### Epistemology & axiology

(Epistemology is described as the essence and forms of knowledge (Hatch, 2002). Epistemological assumptions are dealt with how knowledge can be established, achieved and corresponded. On the other hand, ‘axiology’ (aka methodology) asks how conclusive knowledge can be achieved. Hence, axiology is the study of methods (Rosiek, 2003) and it examines methods used in research. There are various ways to gather and analyze research methods, for example, Babbie (1975) found thirteen methods.

In the measurement of *The Fiedler Contingency Model*, the first key was the Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) score which is used to detect the Assumed Similarity between Opposites (ASO score) (Fiedler and Chemers, 1974). He saw the similarity between these two scores hence he applied these two interchangeably (Fiedler, 1964). He collected the ASO mark by giving leaders two questions: which is your most and least preferred employee? Those answers would be analysed on 8 aspects, bi-polar adjective accounts, etc. and he used items descriptive of personality features like acceptable – unacceptable, favorable – unfavorable, etc (Fiedler, 1964). All these measurements will be analysed by computers, and leaders who identified his/her most and least favorable employee as pretty identical will gain high ASO mark, in contrast, leaders will gain low ASO mark if they heavily distinguish those two dimensions of his/her employees (Fiedler, 1964). He indicated that leaders with low ASO/LPC marks tend to focus on tasks more than relationships with staffs, they tend to be more disciplinary, ask for more efforts, be less likely to tolerate mistakes, be more controlling, etc (Fiedler, 1964). The low ASO marks show that those leaders are not interested in making good relationships with employees. On the other hand, leaders with high ASO marks care much about the motivation and satisfaction of employees, they tend to be more flexible and calmed under pressure (Fiedler, 1964). Fiedler also figured out these two types of leaders performing better under specific situations. In comfortable or stress-free situations, leaders with high marks do better jobs on group performance. In contrast, leaders with low marks could manage tasks effectively under intensive or less-pleasant environments; and those prove were collected not in the laboratory but the real-life (Fiedler, 1971).

*The Fiedler Contingency Model* was created based on three critical factors. These factors consider the ‘situational favorableness’ aspect, which is how much power a leader is assigned by the board in specific situations (Fiedler, 1971). The very first one is affective leaders-members relation. Fiedler indicated that the favorable leader doesn’t need too much authority but still can control his/her members; in opposite, the discredited leaders will face conflicts with other members. And for the former case, those leaders make a huge inspiration and positive impact on employee performance (Fiedler, 1964). Fiedler claimed that the leader can create the group atmosphere by setting levels of affability or congeniality. The second factor is task structure – the essence of the task in terms of its precision or uncertainty. Fiedler claimed that leader’s jobs will be significantly more convenience if they could get a highly-constructed job description rather than a fuzzy task (Fiedler, 1964). And the last component is power position which referred to the power of leaders within an organization, these powers are awards, approvals, authority over employees and the support from the board. His statistical conclusion showed that in many technical or military organizations, leaders are likely to be given more authority when the organization perform a highly constructed task (Fiedler, 1964). In the process of collecting data for the research, there were handicaps because any ordering of transitional points is in unstable or erratic scale. To deal with this handicap, Fiedler hypothesized that the most essential one in three dimensions is the relationship between leaders and members, followed by task structure and power position (Fiedler, 1964).

*The Fiedler Contingency Model* was really a game-changer in the area of management, it laid the foundation for other leadership researches in the future. Strube and Garcia (1981) admitted that this model was the first co-operative effort to apply the principle of Price et al. (1951) that behaviour is a combination of a leader and the situation to leadership research. Even though he received a lot of criticisms for this model but

he never showed a conservative, instead he grasped all the comments and then integrating them into his future research.

In conclusion, the positivity of *The Fiedler Contingency Model* depended on the fact that this model was founded on contingency theory and for that reason, other researchers could extend his model as well as as recognizing human elements.

#### Reliability, validity

(Reliability is the compromise between two efforts to calculate the same attribute through maximally comparable approaches (Hammersley, 1987). Validity is the formations of the definition of the attribute in the testing stage and the inquiry of balance (Moss, 2007).)

There were three different studies conducted for the purpose of testing *The Fiedler Contingency Model* in all its eight octants, include himself in 1966, George Graen and friends in 1970, Martin M. Chemers and George J. Skrzypek in 1972:

Fiedler (1966) examined the impacts of leadership background and cultural diversification on performance. He tested 96 groups of 288 men in total, one unstructured and one well-organized. Leaders of each group were people who are highly-skilled and unskilled. Each of 48 homogeneous groups was included three French-speaking men or three Dutch-speaking men. In contrast, 48 heterogeneous groups had a Dutch-speaking leader and two French speaking members, or a French-speaking leader and two Dutch-speaking members. Eventually, there were no differences in performance of these two groups. Years later, the outcomes of this research had been multiply justified. Fiedler (1966) indicated cultural balance is the main component in controlling situations in groups. Four years later, he argued that because this model was founded on culturally homogeneous groups, only these could be accepted for validation functions in 1970 (Fiedler, 1970).

George Graen claimed that it couldn't be easily clarified due to the divergence among interactions and octants. The diversification of circumstances in the group maybe the reason for this divergence. Graen (1970) conducted two similar researches and followed the instructions of Fiedler model, one paper approved partly the predicted curve, the other one didn't. He confirmed *The Fiedler Contingency Model* might not have a relevant explanation and balanced connections.

The last one was created by Martin M. Chemers and George J. Skrzypek in 1972. They analysed 24 groups of 4 military academies, one side will work with well-structured task, the other one will work with unstructured task. They built the relationships between leaders and other members before the test and cross-tested with the group atmosphere extent after each task. And the results of these tests showed an extraordinary agreement between the curve and Fiedler's forecast eight years ago. Consequently, Martin and George called into question about Graen and friends' discovery in 1972.

In 1978, Fiedler made another attempt to test his model moderately and the result was 38 out of 47 independent interactions have the same outcome as 1964 forecast. Fiedler gave an explanation for this research by mentioning the difficulty of building a simulation with an integrated task and low position power

in the lab. Despite the fact that the model was heavily backed by this research, the method that Fiedler used were still controversial.

### Ethical reflection

In the making of *The Fiedler Contingency Model*, Fred Fiedler used primary data hence numerous ethical problems stand at attention (Swanson and Holton, 2005). First of all, before gathering the data, every partner will be clarified clearly about the experiment - what is the purpose, how does it work, how long does it take, how data will be used, etc. Additionally, Fiedler needed to protect the privacy of all information collected from partners, no sharing for any third-party company or group. Last but not least, during the time the experiment is running, Fiedler must guarantee that there will be no corporeal or mental damage to the partners at all.

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