

THE DUAL PROCESSES OF TEAM LEADERSHIP: A MULTILEVEL PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that team leaders exert strong influence on team processes and outcomes. Both theoretical and empirical research demonstrates the importance of leaders' functional roles to team effectiveness. That said, however, our knowledge about how leadership fosters the integration of subordinate actions still is inadequate (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). The purpose of the current study is to propose and test a model incorporating dual leadership processes articulating how team leaders' behaviors impact team effectiveness via members' cognitive reactions and perceptions. Based on the notion that leadership is a multilevel phenomenon (Yammarino & Bass, 1990), we propose dual leadership processes at two conceptual levels: between-unit and within-unit levels (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 about here

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Team Leadership Process at the Between-Unit Level

At the between-unit level, "members are sufficiently similar with respect to the construct in question that they may be characterized as a whole" (Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994: 199). Therefore, teams are treated as homogeneous units, and variation between teams provides substantive meaning to this line of research. Three categories of leadership behaviors from Bass' transformational leadership framework (attributed and behavioral idealized influence, or charisma; and inspirational motivation; Bass, 1985) reflect the between-unit leadership notion due to their emphasis on common ground and shared values and ideology (Kark & Shamir, 2002). Members' perceptions on these behaviors exhibited by their team leaders tend to be similar and are shared within the same work team (Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino, 1984). We refer to these leadership behaviors as *team-focused transformational leadership style* (TTFL).

In the between-unit leadership process (see the upper part of Figure 1), the collective nature of TTFL breeds a collective identity shared by team members (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Once the collective identity determines self-concept, members tend to evaluate their teams positively (e.g., collective efficacy) in order to maintain a positive social image (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003).

Hypothesis 1. TTFL is positively related to team identification.

Hypothesis 2. Team identification is positively related to collective efficacy.

Team Leadership Process at the Within-Unit Level

At the within-team level, teams are conceived as a heterogeneous entity (Klein et al.,

1994). Leaders exhibit different behaviors to different members within the same work team (Dansereau, 1995). Two categories of transformational leadership behaviors (individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation; Bass, 1985) fit this within-unit leadership notion due to their close influence on individual followers' affective and cognitive welfare (Kark & Shamir, 2002). We refer to these leadership behaviors as *individual-focused transformational leadership style* (ITFL).

The within-unit leadership process (see the lower part of Figure 1) portrays associations between three divergence constructs defined as the extent of the variation in individual characteristics or perceptions within a work team. Members under the influence of ITFL are likely to develop close and unique relationships with their leader and tend to develop personal identification with the leader (Kark et al., 2003). Within a team, the level of divergence in ITFL is transferred to the level of divergence in leader identification due to the pervasive effect within the work team. Once a follower identifies with a leader, the leader's opinions are more apt to shape the focal person's viewpoints about him- or herself (e.g., self-efficacy; Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Thus, at the team level the extent of divergence in leader identification is further transferred to the divergence in self-efficacy perception.

Hypothesis 3. ITFL divergence is positively related to leader identification divergence.

Hypothesis 4. Leader identification divergence is positively related to self-efficacy divergence.

Connecting the Two Processes & Outcome Implications

Watson, Chemers, & Preiser (2001) found that when highly efficacious people are grouped with confident peers, they tend to develop positive perceptions toward their team so that the shared efficacy perception toward the whole team is elevated. Conversely, when people high on self-efficacy are grouped with those with self-doubt, efficacious members tend to suspect their peers' capabilities of executing task requirements and are reluctant to work with them, resulting in low expectations toward the team as a whole (Watson et al., 2001).

Team effectiveness is a multi-facet construct including both external criteria (i.e., performance) and internal criteria (e.g., team viability) (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Previous empirical research generally shows that collective efficacy is positively associated with team performance and viability (Gully et al., 2002).

The rationale of the outcome implications of self-efficacy divergence can be substantiated by research on team diversity. When members' self-efficacy perceptions are alike, members tend to possess higher satisfaction with their peers, and to continue their team tenure (Williams & O'Reilly, 1997). Reversed effects will occur when team members possess different views on their performance capabilities.

Hypothesis 5. Self-efficacy divergence is negatively associated with collective efficacy.

Hypothesis 6. Collective efficacy is positively related to team effectiveness.

Hypothesis 7. Self-efficacy divergence is negatively related to team effectiveness.

METHOD

Sample, Procedure & Measures

A field sample from eight organizations in the southwestern U.S. participated in the study. Data were collected through web-based surveys with a longitudinal design. The overall response rates for leaders and members are 91.55% and 83.52%, respectively. Team size ranged from 2 to 19 members ($M = 8.66$). Within-team response rate ranged from 40% to

100% ($M = 92.59\%$). The final sample consisted of 70 teams with 70 leaders and 573 members.

Measures of TTFL, ITFL, team and leader identification, self- and collective efficacy, team performance and viability are derived from the existing literature (Bass & Avolio, 1995; Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Shamir et al., 1998; Salanova et al., 2003; Riggs & Knight, 1994; Barrick et al., 1998).

For TTFL, team identification, collective efficacy, and team viability, Rwg scores were checked before aggregating the individual-level data up to the team level (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984). The three divergence constructs were operationalized with the coefficient of variation (Allison, 1978).

Analyses & Results

Structural equation modeling with latent constructs was performed to test the proposed seven hypotheses based on the team-level data after data aggregation using EQS program (Bentler, 1995). Model fit was assessed with CFI, IFI, and RMSEA (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989; Browne & Cudeck, 1992). An unmeasured method variance factor (CMV) was included in the structural model (Podsakoff et al., 2003) to partial out method variance. This CMV factor was linked to the indicators measured at Time 1 from members (i.e., TTFL and team identification indicators).

The baseline measurement model consisting of eight latent constructs (see Figure 1) accurately reproduced the observed covariance matrix with a non-significant chi-square statistic: $\chi^2(N = 70, df = 108) = 131.66$ ($p > .05$), CFI = .97, IFI = .97, RMSEA = .06. All factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < .05$, $M = .77$). The full structural model is presented in Figure 1. Results revealed that the model fit the sample data well: $\chi^2(N = 70, df = 119) = 161.32$ ($p < .01$), CFI = .95, IFI = .95, RMSEA = .08. All structural paths were statistically significant ($p < .05$). These results provided support for all seven hypotheses.

DISCUSSION

The supportive findings enable the current study to make meaningful contributions to the team leadership literature. Each process in the model represents one perspective of team leadership and has unique implications to team effectiveness. Future research on teams would benefit by taking both levels into consideration. Over-reliance on one level leads to a partial view of the phenomenon and decreases the explanatory power on team effectiveness.

Besides theoretical contributions, findings from the current study provide important implications for managerial practices. It is critical to recognize that team leaders display multiple leadership styles directed to both individual followers (such as customized coaching and personal development) and the team as a whole (such as providing a vision and building morale). Leaders need to consider how to balance the tension between treating everyone the same (i.e., team-focused leadership) and meeting individual needs (i.e., individual-focused leadership). Leadership development also should include trainings on both leading individuals and leading teams for optimal team effectiveness.

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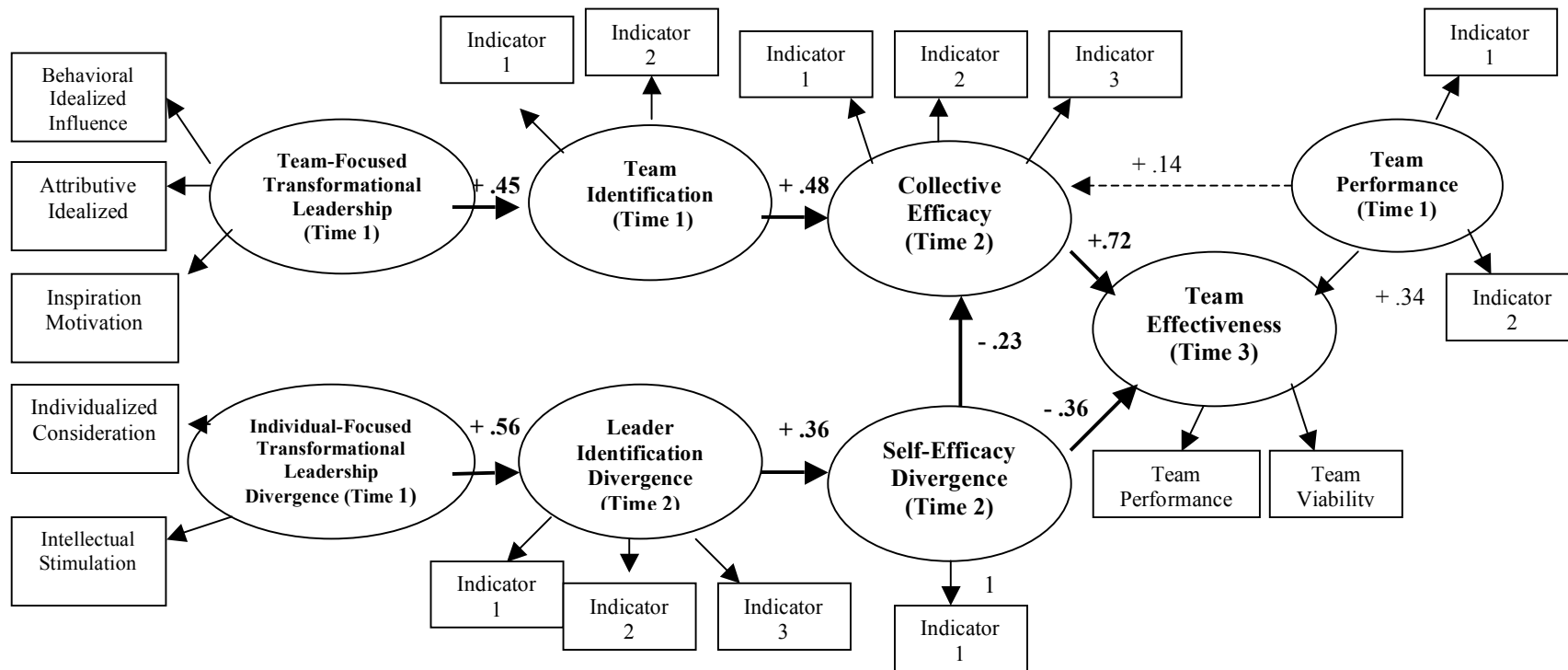
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FIGURE 1

Results of the Full Structural Model ($N = 70$)^{a, b}



^a Standardized path coefficients are presented. Structural paths with solid lines were significant at $p < .05$. The common method factor is not depicted in the diagram.

^b Descriptive statistics of team-level data are available upon request.

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