Shared Leadership Advances Task Performance?
The Roles of Work Attitudes

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Abstract
The issue of shared leadership is attracting more attention in recent years, but empirical study in shared leadership and employees’ task performance is still scarce. Drawing on the perspective of cognition and basing on participants, this article highlights the roles of employees’ work attitudes (job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment) between shard leadership and task performance. The findings extended previous researches in shared leadership which directly and indirectly relates to employees’ task performance. Shard leadership increases employees’ job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and then, effectively enhances their task performance.

Key Words: Shared leadership, job satisfaction, job involvement, affective organizational commitment
1. Introduction

Shared leadership has drawn scholars’ attention in team leadership recent years. Compared with vertical leadership which is formed by individual or formal leadership, shared leadership gives weight to leadership dispersed on team members. Day, Gronn and Salas (2004) pointed out that shared leadership is a reciprocal and mutual influence through interaction of team members, which could obviously enhance the performance of teams and organizations. Besides, Carson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007) stated some terms which are similar to the concept of shared leadership but still do not reach to the core point. For example, self-management, team autonomy, and team empowerment. Summarizing the analysis of Carson et al. (2007), the concept of “self-management” and “team autonomy” which emphasizes on self-monitoring and self-decision making, does not necessarily lead to the diffusion of influence. Regarding team empowerment, there may be some reciprocal relationship with shared leadership but it does not necessarily exist. Therefore, it is not very appropriate to see these terms similar to the concept of shared leadership.

From the studies of other scholars, Pearce and Sims (2002) found out that instead of discussing the possible leadership by team members, most research about team leadership still focus on a specific leader appointed or elected by the team. In addition, Carson et al. (2007) also pointed out that even though leadership has been transformed from a formal manager to team members, there is only a small number of researches exploring and addressing the development of this shift to internal distribution. As a result, the effectiveness of shared leadership (the relationship between shared leadership and its outcome) is still worth further study.

Echoing with the above scholars, Bligh, Pearce and Kohles (2006) argue that the theoretical and empirical evidences about the antecedents and consequences of shared leadership are still at initial stage. Since there are many factors leading to the effectiveness of leadership, it is difficult to highlight the effectiveness of shared leadership if empirical study on the process and casual relationship of shared leadership is absent. Besides, Kramer (2006) also indicated that the gradual shift to viewing leadership as more participatory and shared but little is known about the communication process by which this sharing actually occurs. In addition, apart from team performance, the study about the relationship between shared leadership and individual performance is still scarce. Therefore, this study aims at filling the gaps and exploring the black box of shared leadership and task performance on individual level. In addition, it provides practitioner and researcher more understanding on this issue.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Shared Leadership and Task Performance

Some studies demonstrate the significant relationship between shared leadership and team performance. For instance, Hoch (2014) indicated that shared leadership was positively associated with team performance. In addition, there are other studies indicate the
predictability of shared leadership on team performance. For instance, shared leadership is a strong predictor for management effectiveness no matter to manager, customer, team self-ratings, reforming, problem-solving or top management teams (e.g. Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006). Besides, shared leadership has been confirmed to result in performance in various team settings (Vandewaerde, Voordeckers, Lambrechts, & Bammens, 2011). Moreover, shared leadership positively influences R&D team performance (Ishikawa, 2012). In addition, Houghton, Pearce, Manz, Courtright and Stewart (2015) also indicated that shared leadership proactively increases group performance.

Although there are some studies explored the relationship between shared leadership and individual task performance, for instance, shared leadership can foster sustainable performance (Manz, Manz, Adams, & Shipper, 2011) or distributed leadership can advance performance and safety (Rydenfalt, Johansson, Odenrick, Akerman, & Larsson, 2015), the studies which explore the relationship between shared leadership and individual performance is still limited. It is no doubt that analysis on individual level is important as team is composed by individuals whose cognition and behavior to a large extent would influence the team performance. Consequently, it is still worth noting to explore the relationship between shared leadership and individual task performance. Therefore, here is a hypothesis of this study:

Hypothesis 1. Shared leadership relates positively to employees' task performance.

2.2 The Role of Work Attitudes in Shared Leadership

As pointed out by studies about the individual level of leadership, it is argued that better relationship with the manager helps one to develop positive perception which enhances work performance. For instance, Ensley, Pearson and Pearce (2003) has pointed out that leadership would affect team members' attitude, religion and behavior. In addition, Grille, Schulte and Kauffeld (2015) also suggested that employees' psychological empowerment perceptions could be viewed as an intrinsic factor associated with shared leadership.

The leadership field has been preoccupied with identifying the leaders' behaviors that evokes positive employee work attitudes and behaviors and maximize effectiveness (Yukl, 2002). For example, there is strong evidence that transformational leadership substantially influences the work attitudes and behaviors of followers (Castro, Perinan, & Bueno, 2008). Besides, Pawar (2009) indicated three work attitudes: job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment. Following the trend of leadership literature, this study examines the direct and indirect effect of shared leadership on employees' work behavior (task performance) via work attitudes (job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment).

Researchers indicate that leadership is positively related to job satisfaction (e.g. Choi & Ahn, 2016), job involvement (e.g. De Clercq, Bouckenooghe, Raja, & Matsyborska, 2014), and affective organizational commitment (e.g. Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2016).
Besides, studies also show that work attitudes (job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment) are related to work behaviors (task performance). For example, job satisfaction positively affects job performance (e.g. Hsieh, 2016), job involvement could predict employees' performance (e.g. Dalal, Baysinger, Brummel, & LeBreton, 2012), and employees' commitment are positively related to performance (e.g. Allen, Ericksen, & Collins, 2013).

In addition, scholars also demonstrate the relationship of leadership-work attitudes (job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment) - work behavior (task performance). For example, Michaelis, Stegmaier and Sonntag (2009) suggest that charismatic leadership is mediated by followers' affective commitment to change. In addition, directors having leadership roles show higher levels of affective commitment, and affective commitment is positively linked to directors' performance (Stephens, Dawley, & Stephens, 2004). Besides, affective commitment mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and sales performance (Yu, Lin, Wang, Ma, Wei, Wang, Guo, & Shi, 2016).

As stated by Carson et al. (2007), shared leadership is a product of one's guidance, encouragement and support in a team which affects actions of other members. Through interaction among team members such as negotiation and sharing of leadership, a new outcome in the team is resulted. In addition, researches also reveal shared leadership positively influences groups' attitudes, cognition, behavior, and effectiveness (Pearce, Hoch, Jeppesen, & Wegge, 2010). Drawing on cognitive perspective, it is argued that a positive work attitude (high job satisfaction and job involvement, as well as high affective identity towards the organization) would be enhanced when team members perceive they have power of influence or are praised for having contribution on leading the team. Meanwhile, it is not surprising that task performance would be boosted too. Therefore, here are the next three hypotheses of this study:

Hypothesis 2. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance.

Hypothesis 3. Job involvement mediates the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance.

Hypothesis 4. Affective organizational commitment mediates the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance.

3. Methods

3.1 Sample and Procedure

The sample was obtained via the international business directory of an Employment Service Center in Taiwan. The formal illustration and questionnaire were mailed to the work teams in which the team supervisors promised to respond the questionnaire about their team members' task performance. A cover sheet is included in each questionnaire (supervisors and team members), which explained the research process and a stamped envelope was
preaddressed to the author. In addition, a coding scheme was used to ensure matched supervisors-member data.

A total of 67 work teams’ supervisors responded the leaders’ questionnaire and 308 team members finished the team members’ questionnaire. In the questionnaire, team members focused on issues about shared leadership, job satisfaction, job involvement and affective organizational commitment, while team supervisors rated team members’ task performance. This method, in which study variables were collected from different sources, could reduce the potential problem of common method variance (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

3.2 Measures

The dependent variable, task performance, was measured by four items derived from the Farh and Cheng’s (1997). In addition, the independent variable, shared leadership instrument was measured by four items derived from the definition of shared leadership. Moreover, job satisfaction instrument was measured by four items derived and extracted from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostic Survey. In addition, job involvement was measured with a reduced version (three items) of Kanungo's (1982) scale. Besides, affective organizational commitment was revised the questionnaire which was developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) six-item scale. A five-point Likert-type scale was adopted and a score of ‘5’ indicated that the respondents identified ‘definitely agree’ and a score of ‘1’ indicated ‘definitely disagree’. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) are 0.72 (task performance), 0.84 (shared leadership), 0.76 (job satisfaction), 0.70 (job involvement), and 0.87 (affective organizational commitment).

Besides, researchers suggested the possible relationship between gender (e.g. Ortiz-Walters, 2009), age (e.g. Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008), education (e.g. Ng & Feldman, 2009), and tenure (e.g. Pater, Van Vianen, Bechtoldt, & Klehe, 2009), and job performance. Therefore, this study controlled the four individual variables (gender, age, education, and tenure year) to avoid the impact of these variables on task performance. Besides, the team size, which was calculated by the total amount of employees in the team, was also controlled.

4. Results

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the discriminate validity of all major variables in the study: shared leadership, job satisfaction, job involvement, affective organizational commitment, and task performance. The hypothesized five-factor model, which the all five variables were separated to each other, provided acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2=464.469$, df=179, CFI=0.90, RMSEA=0.07, SRMR=0.06). In addition, the five-factor model fitted the data much better than two alternative models: three-factor and one-factor models. The three-factor model was composed with job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment as one factor while the other two variables as the another separated two factors (compared with five-factor model: $\Delta \chi^2$(df)=1136.86(4), p<.001).
Besides, the one-factor model with all five variables merged into a single factor (compared with five-factor model: Δχ²(df)=5735.87(10), p<.001). These results indicate that the five-factor model possessed appropriate representation of the factor structure of the items.

According to the results, there are 43.2% male and 56.8% female participants composed in the final sample. Respondents reported an average age of 39.45 (SD=7.78), an average of 13.13 education years (SD=2.33), and an average of 6.32 organizational tenure years (SD=4.59). In addition, since the average variance extracted (AVE) are larger than all zero-order correlation in the row and column (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Noble, 2012), the discriminate validity are demonstrated of these scales. Besides, the AVE values of all study variables are between 0.51 and 0.72, which indicates that the convergent validity is also confirmed. In addition, shared leadership is significantly positively related to job satisfaction (p<.001), job involvement (p<.001), affective organizational commitment (p<.001), and task performance (p<.001) as predicted. Moreover, job satisfaction (p<.001), job involvement (p<.001), and affective organizational commitment (p<.001) are also significantly positively related to task performance (p<.001) as predicted.

Table 1 reveals the hierarchical regression results. In Model 4, the relationship between shared leadership and task performance is positive (β=.483) as predicted by Hypothesis 1. Besides, in Model 6, shared leadership is no longer significantly related to task performance (β=.111) while the independent variable (shared leadership) and all mediators (job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment) are included in the model, indicating full mediation of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 4 are supported.

Table 1: Results of Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>JS</th>
<th>JI</th>
<th>AOC</th>
<th>Task Performance (TP)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>Model 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.129***</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.161**</td>
<td>.148*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure Year</td>
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<td>.055</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>-.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Size</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared leadership (SL)</td>
<td>.541***</td>
<td>.354***</td>
<td>.632***</td>
<td>.483***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction (JS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.507***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Involvement (JI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.483***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.507***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall model F</td>
<td>22.334***</td>
<td>8.939***</td>
<td>34.340***</td>
<td>17.757**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall R²</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standardized regression coefficients are shown. * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
5. Conclusion and Discussion

While limited researches demonstrate the relationship between shared leadership and team performance, study about shared leadership on individual level is also rare. This article investigates the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance with member-based response of shared leadership and work attitudes (job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment), and supervisor-based evaluation of work behavior (employees' task performance). The results indicate that shared leadership relates positively to employees' task performance. In addition, the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance is fully mediated by job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This research has three major contributions on literature of shared leadership. Firstly, this article demonstrates the relationship of shared leadership- work attitude- work behavior on individual level in work teams. This investigation approaches the field which has been the main lacunae in the existing literature on shared leadership. Secondly, this study indicates the positive relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance in work teams. The result provides an empirical study in shared leadership and its outcome. This fills the shortage of empirical study in shared leadership. Thirdly, this article confirms the full mediation of work attitudes (job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment) in the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance. The outcomes indicate possible processes of shared leadership achieving employees' work behavior (task performance) via work attitudes (job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment), and also fill the shortage of the empirical study of operation process about shared leadership in previous studies.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The findings of shared leadership relating directly and indirectly to employees' task performance, is meaningful for the management practice of shared leadership on individual level. First of all, according to the results, shared leadership relates directly to employees' task performance which proves that shared leadership is very important in work teams. In the management practice, managers should encourage team members to create a sharing leadership culture to simultaneously elicit members' willingness to share influence and willingness to accept others' useful suggestion in order to enhance members' task performance.

In addition, the results of that shared leadership relates indirectly to employees' task performance via job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, are particularly attention-getting. Based on the result of this article, in which the full mediation of work attitudes in the relationship between shared leadership and employees' task performance is found, it could be proposed that employees' work attitudes do indeed help illustrate why
shared leadership is related to members' task performance. In managerial implication, this study suggests that organizations should enhance the effects of shared leadership practices on the members' job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment in order to boost members' high task performance.

5.3 Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that the samples were not randomly picked but depend on the willingness of the companies. This would limit the inference to the results. In addition, this study did not include all possible factors which might influence employees' task performance. There are many other variables that would affect employees' work behaviors, such as the incentive implement of performance or individual difference between employees. It cannot be denied that this study could not investigate the effects of other factors excluding shared leadership, job satisfaction, job involvement, and affective organizational commitment on employees' task performance.

References


