

Big Five Personality and Shared Team Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Since last three decades, the business organizations across the globe have radically shifted their formal structures into autonomous work teams. Scholars, in this domain, have also given a considerable amount of attention on teams and groups. In the meantime, the deep roots of dyadic form of leadership have recently been reviewed and an alternative form of leadership, termed as shared team leadership, has been proposed. Our paper aims at identifying the relationship between Big Five personality traits and shared team leadership. In this theoretical paper, we have provided several propositions linking the different personality traits with shared team leadership, and also proposed a mediating role of collective efficacy in shared team leadership-team performance relationship. It is also proposed that future research should test these findings in order to provide some evidence on how different personality traits are related to shared leadership in teams and how collective efficacy predicts team performance in context of shared team leadership.

Key words: Shared Team Leadership, Big Five Traits, Collective Efficacy

INTRODUCTION

Today the organizational structures are being flattered and shifted towards autonomous self-managing work teams (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995, Lawler, Mohrman, & Benson, 2001; Manz & Sims, 1987; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Organizations have now low hierarchies and are continuously using teams to perform different tasks (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1995). This fast growing shift of organizations from formal hierarchical entities to informal autonomous work teams has alerted researchers to study various phenomenon regarding teams and groups.

Extensive research has been conducted on teams and effectiveness (for a recent review see: Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, Gilson, 2008). However, very little is known about how individuals should be selected in team-based settings (Morgeson, Reider, and Campion, 2005)

Although research has thrown light on the importance of leadership that may emerge from within teams (see Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; for a review) However, despite various call by researchers, the area of team leadership has not gained considerable attention among the scholars (Ziegert, 2005) Unfortunately, little is known about leadership and team effectiveness (Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks, 2001). Research has measured the personality below FFM level and found that about 59% of variance in leadership emergence was trait-based (Zaccaro, Foti, Kenny, 1991). Taggar, Hackew, & Saha, (1999) found 39% of variance in leadership emergence was trait based, measuring personality at FFM level.

Early research on trait theories failed to establish any link between the important characteristics that will distinguish leaders from non leaders (e.g. Mann, 1959). These inconsistent results disappointed trait theorist, however, a meta-analytic study conducted by Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, (1986) found that few traits such as dominance, intelligence, and masculinity-femininity strongly predicted leadership emergence. Although few studies have attempted to find the relationship between Personality traits and emergent leadership with somewhat varying results (e.g. Tagger et al, 1999; Judge et al, 2002). It is argued that shared leadership differs from emergent leadership in a way that shared leadership can be either formal or informal, can occur with or without a designated leader. This type of leadership emphasizes sharing and distribution of leadership among all team members as compared to only one or two leaders in case of emergent leadership (Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone, 2007). No research up to our best knowledge has been conducted to investigate the relationship between personality and shared team leadership. Recently, Carson et al (2007) calls future research to investigate the relationship between personality traits and shared team leadership.

In the first part of the study, we have tried to synthesize previous work on shared team leadership and discussed its measures. Secondly, we have investigated the Five Big personality model and proposed the relationships between Big Five traits and shared leadership. In the

third part, mediating effect of collective efficacy on the relationship between shared team leadership and team performance has been proposed.

SHARED TEAM LEADERSHIP

Leadership is very important to develop and maintain team effectiveness (Kozlowski, Gully, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1996). The idea of shared leadership was first suggested by Gibbs (1954), who identified two forms of team leadership: distributed (two or more individuals share the responsibilities and roles of leader) and focused (single individual as a leader).

Although there is no specific definition of shared team leadership available in the literature. Different scholars have used different definitions of shared team leadership and used different measures but there is a general consensus on the specific nature of shared team leadership (see: Carson et al, 2007; Pearce & Sims, 2002; for an overview).

In general, shared team leadership can be defined as “emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members,” (Carson et al, 2007, p; 1218) where by team members simultaneously lead and follow each other to achieve team goals (Pearce and Sims, 2002).

Shared leadership differs from the formal leadership, in which the former is the process through which more than one team members influence the team consisting of downward, upward, and lateral influence, whereas the later consists of just downward influence i.e. vertical leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002). According to Carson et al. (2007) two antecedent conditions are important for shared team leadership. First is internal team environment that consists of shared purpose (extent to which team members have similar understandings and shared ness of their team’s goals), social support (team members’ efforts to provide emotional and psychological strength to one another) and voice (the degree to which a team’s members have input into how the team carries out its purpose). The second condition was external team coaching. Carson and colleagues found that internal team environment predict higher levels of shared team leadership but in the absence of internal team environment, external coaching was successfully maintained high level of shared team leadership. Research has demonstrated and found that higher levels of shared leadership predict higher performance in teams (Carson et al, 2007, Pearce and Sims, 2002; Pearce, Yoo, and Alavi, 2004).

In recent times, Avolio, Jung, Murray, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) found that transformational leadership behaviors at the group levels predict team performance.

Pearce and Ensley (2000) proposed a model where three antecedents group, task and environmental characteristics influence several types of shared leadership behaviors, which then affect team processes and effectiveness. Shared team leadership has predicted performance in various team context including teams of undergraduate student (Avolio et al, 1996), change management team (Pearce and Sims, 2002), virtual teams engaged in social work

projects (Pearce, Yoo, and Alavi, 2004), top management teams in new venture (Ensley, Hmielski, and Pearce, 2006) financial services sales teams, (Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006) and student teams engaged in consulting projects (Carson et al, 2007). All these studies have found shared team leadership to predict team performance over and above the dyadic form of leadership (also termed as vertical leadership by Pearce and Sims, 2002).

PERSONALITY BIG FIVE TRAITS

The Big Five traits model is being growingly used to measure personality characteristics of individuals because the constructs and scales used are valid, stable, reliable and they captures the most prominent aspects of personality (see, Barrick & Mount, 1991) across different cultures (see; Pulver, Allik, Pulkkinen, & Hamalainen, 1995). Since late 1980s, there has been consensus among personality research that Big Five Model can predict performance in work context.

These five factors are Extraversion, Emotional stability, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience. A conscientious individual is likely to be dependable, dutiful, prepared, careful, responsible, organized, achievement-oriented, and detail-oriented (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Extroverted individuals would be described as sociable, energetic, assertive, talkative, outgoing, and cheerful in outlook (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Neurotic individuals would be characterized as emotionally unstable, unable to adjust, pessimistic, self-conscious, anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, insecure, and moody (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Agreeable individuals are considered courteous, flexible, cooperative, forgiving, trusting, good-natured, and tolerant (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Moreover, individuals high on openness to experience are considered would be imaginative, curious, artistic, creative, and open-minded (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

BIG FIVE TRAITS AND SHARED LEADERSHIP IN TEAMS

As the objective of this paper is to investigate those traits in Big Five that will most likely to predict influencing behaviors in teams. Meta analysis by Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt (2002) found that Big Five traits predicted leader emergence slightly better than they predicted leadership effectiveness (p, 774). Carson et al (2007) predicts that personality characteristics may play a role in development of shared leadership.

People perceive verbal communication and interaction to be a quality of emergent leadership (Morris & Hackman, 1969; Lord, 1977). Emergent leaders performing their responsibilities in leaderless groups (Bass, 1990), have been characterized as individuals striving towards achievement of goals and objectives and creating a cohesive environment within the team (Bass, 1990). Early research has found that providing task related advice (Carter, Haythorn,

Shriver, and Lanzetta, 1951) and support (Hamblin, 1958) predicts leadership emergence in team context.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND SHARED TEAM LEADERSHIP

Research has found positive relationship between Conscientiousness and performance across all jobs and tasks (Barrick & Mount, 1991), conscientious is related to the willingness to perform any role within the team that contribute to team performance regardless of their specific roles assigned to the individual (Barrick et al., 1998; Neuman & Wright, 1999).

Conscientious individuals are task focused (LePine, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, & Hedlund, 1997). They due to their self discipline and dependability are likely to avoid and counter social loafing and free riding within the team (Neumann & Wright, 1999). Porter, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, Ellis, West, and Moon (2003) found that Conscientiousness was positively related to back up behavior (providing help and support to others). In a meta-analysis of 11 studies that focused on jobs involving interpersonal interactions. Morgeson, Reider, and Campion (2005) found that Conscientiousness was positively related to contextual performance in teams (activities that support organizational, social, and psychological environments) that is relevant to the social support dimension of shared leadership identified by (Carson et al, 2007).

Moreover, conscientiousness people being careful, responsible, self-disciplined, self control and organized have been found to related with several important elements of leadership such as goals orientation, and motivating other members, (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991) that is relevant to the shared purpose (defined as facilitating goals orientation and work-directive leadership behaviors) dimension of shared leadership identified by (Carson et al, 2007).

Lepine et al (1997) found that leader conscientiousness predicted accuracy of team decisions. According to Taggar, Hackew, & Saha (1999) Conscientiousness is important antecedent of leadership emergence in teams. Meta analysis by Judge et al (2002) found that conscientiousness was the strongly correlated with leadership... being more strongly related to leader emergence than to leader Effectiveness (judge et al, 2002; p, 773). Consequently, we propose that

Proposition 1: Teams with high conscientious individuals will predict higher level of shared leadership than teams with low conscientious individuals.

EXTRAVERSION AND SHARED TEAM LEADERSHIP

Extraversion is another important personality characteristic of individuals working in team settings. Extraverts are more likely to have desire to work with others (Barrick et al., 1998) and due to their social skills and talkative behavior and are more likely to be confident in their ability to work effectively within teams (Thoms, Moore, & Scott, 1996). They are more likely to communicate within the team (Morgeson, Reider, and Campion; 2005). Morgeson and colleagues (2005) found that extraversion was positively related to contextual performance in teams (activities that support organizational, social, and psychological environments) that is relevant to the social support dimension of shared leadership identified by (Carson et al, 2007). According to Swickert, Rosentreter, Hittner, & Mushrush(2000) extraversion predicted structural support and functional social support. Research has also shown that extraverts had larger social networks than introverts and they keep more contacts with individuals in their networks and had more contact with individuals in their networks (Russell, Booth, Reed, & Laughlin, 1997).

Extraverts being outgoing, sociable, active, confident, and having strong social skills may be important for leadership in situations that require high social interactions (Lord et al. 1986; Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1974) that is relevant to the voice (interaction facilitation/participative behavior) dimension of shared team leadership identified by (Carson et al, 2007). People who speak most are likely to be perceived as leader (Morris & Hackman, 1969). Extraversion is important antecedent of initiating structure leadership emergence in teams (Taggar et al, 1999). Judge et al (2002) found that extraversion was the most consistently correlated with leadership... was more strongly related to leader emergence than to leader Effectiveness (judge et al, 2002; p, 773). Therefore, it is proposed that

Proposition 2: Teams with high extravert individuals will predict higher level of shared leadership than teams with low extravert individuals.

OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE AND SHARED TEAM LEADERSHIP

Those open to experience are sensitive, imaginative, and polished (Mount et al, 1998). Taggar et al (1999) found weak relationship between openness to experience and leadership emergence in teams. However, these individuals are willing to listen to others' and explore new ideas, willingness to share ideas and information freely, that may be associated with participative leadership styles ((Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Leathers, 1969; Zaccaro et al. 1991). These facets should be consistent with the share purpose, social support and voice (internal team environment) identified by Carson et al (2007). Hence, we propose that

Proposition 3: Teams with high openness individuals will predict higher level of shared leadership than teams with low openness individuals.

NEUROTICISM AND SHARED TEAM LEADERSHIP

Another personality trait is neuroticism. Individuals high on neuroticism are stressful, low tempered, and lack self-confidence (Mount, Barrick, Laffitte, & Callans, 1999). They are unable to tolerate stress and lack ability to manage in ambiguous situations that are more likely to occur in autonomous work teams (Mount et al, 1998). These individuals are less likely to cooperate and will tend to have low quality interactions with their team members (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Morgeson, Reider, and Campion, (2005) found that neuroticism had marginally negative relationship with contextual performance in teams (activities that support organizational, social, and psychological environments).

Neurotic people are excitable, angry, insecure, and depressed (Mount et al, 1998) and are less likely to be perceived as leaders (Hogen, Curphy, and Hogen, 1994). Neurotic individuals being anxious have found to be negatively related to effective leadership within teams (Tagger et al, 1999). Recent meta analysis by Judge et al, (2002) found that neuroticism was negatively correlated to leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness. Consequently, we propose that

Proposition 4: Teams with high Neurotic individuals will predict low level of shared leadership than teams with low neurotic individuals.

AGREEABLENESS AND SHARED TEAM LEADERSHIP

Another personality characteristic that is important for team settings is agreeableness. Agreeable individuals are selfless, cooperative, helpful, and flexible (Digman, 1990). These individuals are more likely to work cooperatively (as opposed to competitively) with others (Hogan & Holland, 2003; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Neumann & Wright, 1999). Although research has found no relationship between agreeableness and leadership emergence (Tagger et al, 1999) and a weak relationship between agreeableness and leadership effectiveness (Judge et al , 2002). Agreeable individuals are better able to resolve conflicts among team members and maintain team cohesion (Barrick et al., 1998) that is an essential aspect for team success (Stevens & Campion, 1994).

Morgeson and colleagues (2005) found that agreeableness was positively related to contextual performance in teams (activities that support organizational, social, and psychological environments) and important in team settings where collaboration and joint action is necessary to accomplish team tasks (Witt, Burke, Barrick, & Mount, 2002). We expect

all these facets to be consistent with the share purpose, social support and voice (i.e. internal team environment) identified by Carson et al (2007). Hence, we propose that

Proposition 5: Teams with high agreeable individuals will predict high level of shared leadership than teams with low agreeable individuals.

SHARED LEADERSHIP, COLLECTIVE EFFICACY AND TEAM PERFORMANCE

Individuals who see their teammates providing leadership simultaneously in their team environment should learn more and try to exhibit the same behaviors. Efficacy is a motivational term that can be defined as an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform job duties with skill (Gist, 1987). Efficacy within a team is referred to as collective efficacy and reflects team members' confidence that the team can perform well (Zaccaro, Blair, Peterson, & Zazanis, 1995; Solansky, 2008). Zaccaro et al. (2001) argues that as the confidence among team members increases, their motivation also increases. According to Zaccaro et al, (2001) efficacy may be leader's most important motivational task that may emerge from teams. Moreover, Solansky (2008) argues that such collective efficacy is likely to be more powerful when most (if not all) of the team members pursue it, rather than a single individual. It is found that informal leaders in teams influenced team efficacy (Pescosolido, 2001). In teams with shared leadership, team members are active in motivating each other and creating a team climate of interdependent reinforcement (Ensley et al, 2003). In a recent study, Solansky (2008) found strong relationship between shared team leadership and collective efficacy. Teams that share the leadership roles enjoy motivational, social, and cognitive advantages over the teams where a single individual is leader (Solansky, 2008).

Shared team leadership has predicted performance in various teams (Avolio et al, 1996, Pearce and Sims, 2002; Pearce et al, 2004; Ensley, Hmielski, and Pearce, 2006; Mehra et al, 2006; Carson et al; 2007). However, Taggar et al (1999) found indirect effects of shared leadership on performance. Tagger et al (1999) found that team performance was high when other team members (along with the emergent leader) demonstrate shared leadership. Even, failure of a single member to exhibit leadership had detrimental effects on team performance. A recent study by Ziegert (2005) also found mixing results for relationship between various measures of shared team leadership and team performance. Moreover, it is suggested to make inquiry into the conditions that might influence the relationship between shared leadership and performance (Pearce and Sims, 2002). According to Barsade, (2002) team efficacy affect team performance. A recent study by Gibson and Vermeulen, (2003) found support for this argument.

Although relationship between shared team leadership and team performance has been found but it is mixing. Also the links between (1) shared team leadership and collective efficacy

and (2) collective efficacy and team performance is available. Hence, on the basis of this deep literature we expect that collective efficacy will mediate the relationship between shared team leadership and team performance. Consequently, we propose...

Proposition 6: Collective efficacy will mediate the relationship between shared team leadership and team performance such that higher the shared team leadership, higher will be team efficacy and as a result higher will be the team performance.

CONCLUSION

With the increased shift of organizations from formal hierarchies to autonomous work teams, research on teams and groups has been dramatically increased since last three decades. Meanwhile, the deep roots of dyadic form of leadership have been criticized and an alternative form of leadership i.e. shared team leadership has been identified which has deep roots in earlier studies by Gibbs (1954). Shared team leadership occurs when more (if not all) members of a team exhibit leadership behaviors in teams, simultaneously influencing team processes and outcomes. A couple of studies have been conducted to investigate this leadership phenomenon, however, there is much more to investigate about shared team leadership and its relation with team processes. Our paper aimed at identifying the relationship between Big Five personality traits and shared team leadership. Future research should test these propositions in order to provide empirical evidence on how Big Five traits relate to shared leadership.

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