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Managing Leader and Member Influence in Organizations: The Impact of Exploring a Team Influence Experience Scale (TIES)

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Abstract:
Based on results of previous studies surfacing an expanded view of influence as encapsulating two domains rather than the traditional view of one distinct domain originating with leaders, a scale to measure influence is systematically developed and evaluated quantitatively. The scale is developed based on previous qualitative data from team members' experience of influence in the team environment that surfaced characteristics of influence experienced and distributed between leader and members. The scales impact is measured with job satisfaction (JS), psychological job control (PJC) and satisfaction with life (SWL). Based on analysis from a sample of 524 respondents, results demonstrate that the impact on dependent variables is strongest when both leader and member influence constructs are combined. The significance of this study from a managerial perspective is that incorporating assessment of leader, member, and combined influence could be effective as an intervention tool for coaching both leaders and members of teams to improve their effectiveness and experience of working in teams.

Keywords: Leader, member, influence, teamwork, team coaching

1. Introduction

In today's work environment, members of an organization are occasionally put into multiple teams incorporating both physical and virtual modes – some of which can run simultaneously and where a member of one team could be a leader in another. The ability to influence a team is usually considered to reside with the team leader. As organizations become more complex, subordinates may feel a sense of powerlessness as tasks become more prescriptive. Leaders, whether managers by assignment or reverence, may feel a need to have more power in order to manage the many roles required to address the growing number of responsibilities and constituencies. This creates a power-gap between managers and subordinates (Rudolph and Peluchette 1993). Pfeffer's (1993) view that actions are interdependent imply that both leaders and members are interacting constantly making influence a concept that does not only reside with the leader. Lingham (2005, 2009) found that the power and influence dimension of team interaction (or their quality of engagement) has the greatest impact on a team's development and success. Rudolph (1993) considered it likely that a shift toward shared responsibility related to managerial tasks was effective when developing member skills and led to organizational effectiveness. The following study is an extension of these findings aimed at systematically and psychometrically arriving at a framework that will measure how employees experience influence in an organizational, departmental or team setting – to explore this notion of influence as experienced by both team leaders and members.

1.1. A Lens of Influence

Leadership and power have been considered one and the same in conventional research, but studies have evolved to understanding the divergence of the two (Tost, Gino et al. 2012). Influence has always been associated with the leader and power treated as one construct residing with the leader. Bass (1981) further cautioned leadership researchers that power and influence are not synonymous and should not be confused as such (Frost & Moussavi, 1992). The use and perception of power determines the resultant influence it will have. It is clear that while the understanding of influence has been as one dimension and resident with the leader, a shift is occurring that would suggest that influence is a two-dimensional construct comprised of both leadership and membership aspects that interact (Haeger 2016). The two domains function interdependently to make up influence as a whole.

Research continues to develop an understanding of businesses as complex systems of people and resources (Anderson 1999, Anderson, Issel et al. 2003, Colbert 2004). Influence has been studied in terms of top management teams and conflict (Finkelstein 1992, Jehn 1995, Amason 1996), as well as in terms of leader-member decision influence (Scandura, Graen et al. 1986, Gerstner and Day 1997). There have been influence studies related to personality and performance (Nahrgang, Morgeson et al. 2009) and improving followership by looking at the impact of mutual influence within the leader-member dyad (Hollander and Offermann 1990, Howell and Hall-Merenda 1999). The power process has also been explored through observation of workgroups (Fiorelli 1988) suggesting that 'power and restrictive participation are often identified as primary issues which can retard the productivity of work groups.' The emphasis on understanding influence is supported by the July 2013 issue of The Harvard Business Review devoted to influence. Articles in this issue provided a wealth of insight focused on leader influence and the research takes many forms and explores a broad range and evolution of perspectives in order to understand the impact that influence has on individual, dyadic and group outcomes and gravitates toward the leader as the influencer. Two common threads exist among the very diverse works: 1) Each study seems to treat influence as a solitary construct and dimension; and 2) It is not evident that such studies of influence have truly captured results rich in participant reports that are experiential in nature. In fact, most assessments use methods that do not include critical experiential elements. Additionally, the treatment of influence is synonymous with power in many cases.

1.2. Influence in a Team Context

Traditional models like the Team Development Model (forming, storming, norming and performing) as well as those placing emphasis on promotion of clear procedures, responsibilities and deadlines have proven more confounding than insightful and in certain instances have shown that team learning can actually be reduced when such frameworks are applied (Druskat and Kayes 2000). Researchers O'Connor and Yballe (2007) recognized the importance of team members participating on a team such that each would leave with leadership skills having developed (O'Connor and Yballe 2007). The idea was that the intricate process of team participation requires utilization of interconnected skills of members with success depending on all of the pieces working together (O'Connor and Yballe 2007).

Organizations do not have the luxury of frequent assessments while solving problems due to the fast paced competitive environment, however, the notion of capturing a team's quality of engagement (Lingham 2005) for members is an excellent one no matter the context. Additionally, functional team research tends to place pressure on leaders as being responsible for team outcomes through measures that compare leader behaviour and team performance outcomes (Burke, Stagl et al. 2006). A holistic and more experiential approach could be taken in order to understand how leaders and members experience influence in teams. Team interaction models achieve this by emphasizing the study of teams as a whole through comparison of actual and desired interaction measures (Lingham 2005). For example, the power and influence dimension developed by Lingham (2005) measures a team's need for dependence on a leader versus distributed power and influence. This and other measured dimensions of the Team Learning Inventory or TLI (Lingham, 2005) are not only excellent tools with which to investigate the complex world of team interaction but also to further understand that team development is based on emergent states and not as a linear or linear-dynamic approach. In fact, Lingham and Richley (2018) suggest that as team interaction is by nature a complex phenomenon, team development should be understood in newer scientific theories of change such as chaos and complexity as well as the Principle of Computational Equivalence. Hence, in essence, the question driving this study is to understand the dual nature of influence and if these two dimensions affect work related experiences such as Job Satisfaction (JS), Psychological Job Control (PJC), and Satisfaction in Work and Life (SWL). As such, this study has two phases: 1. the development of a scale capturing both dimensions of influence; and 2. How the two dimensions of influence (leader and member) affect the three dependent variables mentioned above, and does the combination of both dimensions of influence affect the three dependent variables more strongly than when considered separately. After completing Phase One of the study, Phase Two will focus on the hypotheses related to the dimensions of influence on the three dependent variables.

The goal of our two-phase study is to delve deeply into influence experienced by employees in organizations while also exploring how these experiences affect Job Satisfaction, Satisfaction with Life and Psychological Job Control.

2. The Two Phases of Our Study

2.1. Phase One of Our Study

Power and influence have been treated as one construct and this construct has been viewed as unidirectional moving from leader to member in an organization. For this reason, development and coaching has been mostly isolated to leadership roles. This excludes the experiences and treatment of the vast majority of people contributing to productivity within organizations. This research is intended to complement existing models by exploring potential methods by which to include all business participants in the process of influencing business outcomes and productivity through maximizing related satisfaction levels. For the intent of scale development in this phase, we used measurement theory to establish the validity and reliability of the scale to capture influence as experienced by leaders (whether assigned or emergent) and team members.

2.2. Phase Two of Our Study

Once our scale is validated and tested using measurement theory, in Phase Two we test the impact of the dimensions of influence that emerged from Phase One on three Dependent Variables: Job Satisfaction (Fields, 2002), Psychological Job Control (adapted from Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2005) and Satisfaction with Life (Diener, Emmons,

Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). We intend to test each dimension of influence separately on each of these three variables so as to be able to determine the strength and significance of each dimension of influence. We are expecting 2 major domains namely, leader and member influence. However, in this phase, we will also test the impact of influence when we combine both dimensions.

3. Method

3.1. Instrument Development

The scale development procedures are based on rigorous processes outlined by Worthington and Whittaker (2006), Cabrera-Nguyen (2010), and DeVellis (2003). The following scale development will be a deductive one informed by a previous qualitative triangulation of two separate datasets (Haeger 2016). Those results suggested that the influence construct is shifting to form two fundamental domains that differ experientially between leaders and members. The items developed for the proposed scale expand on qualitative statements from the study in order to design an instrument that details and measures experiential expectations about influence in the workplace. The goal is to develop an accurate and rigorous measure. The focus is on design and validation followed by testing the psychometric properties of the scale established.

A great deal of thought and care were taken to develop the items for the survey. The items were written based on qualitative comments from the published triangulation study and were adapted and expanded to capture experiences and expectations of influence by individuals in a group setting. Each factor in the scale attempts to isolate areas of influence by leaders and by members in teams as reported by respondents' experience in teams. Results of the qualitative triangulation study surfaced clear indication that satisfying experiences and expectations related to participant influence at work were separated into specific elements that related to what leaders influence and what members influence to maximize outcome and satisfaction levels. Armed with these results, the instrument was designed with leader and member influence dimensions. The instrument design incorporates Likert items to determine behaviour relative to how influence is experienced. Face validity was established through Q-sort procedures compiled from 2 dozen volunteer employees in a variety of jobs, industries and with different levels of education before the instrument was released for data collection

3.2. Hypotheses

Once the two dimensions are tested and validated using both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), we will test three sets of hypotheses in Phase Two. Although leader-focused influence studies have been done in the past, our study would be incomplete without first exploring and isolating these results. Therefore, the first set of hypotheses is based on the impact of leader influence on the three dependent variables (i.e., Job Satisfaction (JS), Psychological Job Control (PJC), and Satisfaction with Life (SWL)).

H1a-c: Leader influence has a positive and strong impact on JS, PJC, and SWL

Our second set of hypotheses is based on our research on team experiences which indicates that team members also influence the three dependent variables in their experience of team interaction in the work environment. However, based on the strong emphasis of leaders driving project management and tasks for the team, we posit this impact is to a lesser degree.

H2a-c: Member influence has a positive impact on JS, PJC, and SWL

Finally, since our study is focused on both dimensions as well as the combination of the two dimensions of influence which we label TIES (Team Influence Experience Scale). We hypothesize that

H3a-c: TIES would have a more positive and stronger impact on JS, PJC, and SWL.
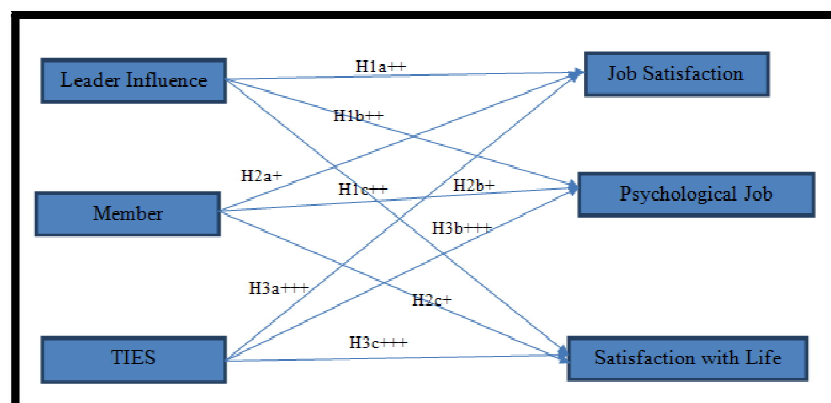
The three hypotheses are presented in the Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: The Three Sets of Hypotheses Used in the Study

3.3. Sample and Data Collection Procedure

The final survey which included demographical data, the influence scale, and dependent variables were sent out via Qualtrix targeted to working professionals. Respondents were located in the United States using electronic communications via a survey administration service. The instrument design incorporates a 5-point Likert scale. Working

professionals were invited to participate by reposting answers. The study was employee specific rather than industry specific and attempted to a balance of many different participants. Respondents included those from numerous industries, education levels, and job titles in organizations. Education levels from high school to terminal degree were balanced between each category. At least a dozen different industries encapsulate the responses. Respondents were also asked about job, industry and firm tenure. Job and firm tenure ranged from 1 to 40 years with an average of 9 years. Industry tenure had a similar range with an average of 13 years. Responses also came from profit and non-profit, both privately and publicly held establishments. Details of the demographical data is shown in Table 1 below.

Demographical Data	
Generation	
Millennial (1980-2000)	232
Generations X (1965-1979)	123
Baby Boomer (1943-1964)	169
Gender	
Male	185
Female	339
Degree	
No Highschool	3
Highschool	242
Bachelors	214
Masters	57
Doctorate	5
Post Doctorate	3
Tenure Values	
	Job/Firm
One year or less	89/80
1+ to 5 years	189/187
5+ to 10 years	98/102
10+ to 20	92/100
20+ to 30	46/36
30+ to 40	10/19
Industry	
Business/Finance	70
Education	61
Health and Well-being	75
Manufacturing	54
Retail/Wholesale	62
Services	105
Technology	69
Government	28

Table 1: Demographical Data of Sample

4. Results

4.1. Results from Phase One

We conducted Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using SPSS with Principle Axis Factoring (PAF) and Promax rotation taking into account the sample size (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). The EFA was conducted to analyze data (n=524) for factor structure in order to form homogenous item groupings (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Acceptable loadings were observed on most factors of greater than .5 (Hair et al., 2001). The pattern matrix was considered acceptable as almost all factors load cleanly. In order to establish Discriminant Validity, cross loadings were addressed. Items were removed due to multiple cross loading issues when factor loadings were less than .3 and cross-loadings showed less than a .15 difference between the two loadings (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Removal of these items was justified as they either confounded the results or did not add value within the constructs under study. At this stage of analysis, the revised scale had better than adequate psychometric properties with which to conduct analysis.

The resulting pattern matrix was acceptable and adequate with factors loading cleanly into three existing scales, and two new constructs relating to leader and member influence which were distinct based on the correlation of $r = 0.558$. This process was smooth which was not surprising since the items were derived purposefully from qualitative comments previously thematically and theoretically coded in the qualitative triangulation (Haeger 2016). The finalized, tested and validated scale consists of three subscales or first order constructs, each of which perforates a different aspect of the overarching concept of experienced influence. The overall reliability of the scale is $\alpha = .92$

Influence Domain	Items	Factor	
		1	2
LEADER			
	AC1	0.699	
	AC2	0.771	
	AC3	0.727	
	AC4	0.738	
	AD1	0.767	
	AD2	0.748	
	AD3	0.665	
	AD4	0.741	
	ME1	0.766	
	ME2	0.459	
	ME3	0.631	
	ME4	0.707	
	NA1	0.709	
	NA2	0.722	
	NA3	0.638	0.119
	NA4	0.834	-0.107
MEMBER	DB2		0.675
	DB3		0.640
	IN1	-0.154	0.646
	IN2		0.621
	IN3	0.174	0.446
	IN4	-0.251	0.655
	IN5		0.597
	FX1		0.791
	FX2		0.578
	FX3		0.558
	FX4		0.840
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.			

Table 2: Pattern Matrix from EFA Analysis

Confimratory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS (Byrne, 2010) on the factored scale items (n=524) to establish the validity and reliability of the measurement model The CFA was conducted confidently as 524 responses provided a ratio of 10 responses per item.

The model was created via AMOS and run it to check path loadings on the model itself to see if any path loadings were lower than expected. The Modification Indices were reviewed for error terms that might qualify to be co-varied. Several amendments greatly improved model fit. The table represents evidence that the measurement model now shows very acceptable goodness of fit as it has met the required thresholds.

Metric	Observed	Recommended
Cmin/df	1.55	Between 1 and 3
CFI	0.975	>0.950
RMSEA	0.032	<0.060
PCLOSE	1	>0.050
SRMR	0.0393	<0.090

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Values from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

4.2. Results (Phase Two)

Having established the validity and reliability of the two dimensions of influence, we tested our three sets of hypotheses separately using linear regression and the results are shown in Table 4 below.

Hypothesis	Dimension of Influence	Dependent Variables	Regression Loading
H1a	Leader	JS	0.469***
H1b	Leader	PJC	0.335***
H1c	Leader	SWL	0.216***
H2a	Member	JS	0.392***
H2b	Member	PJC	0.306***
H2c	Member	SWL	0.180***
H3a	TIES	JS	0.493***
H3b	TIES	PJC	0.364***
H3c	TIES	SWL	0.227***

Table 4: Regression Results for the Three Sets of Hypotheses

As can be seen from Table 4, all three sets of hypotheses were supported. Our findings show that leader influence has a positive and strong impact on the Job Satisfaction (JS), Psychological Job Control (PJC), and Satisfaction with Life (SWL) with the impact on JS, PJC, and SWL as β=.469, p<.000; β=.335, p<.000; and β=.216, p<.000 respectively with the highest impact on Job Satisfaction and the least on Satisfaction with Life. When considering the influence of team members, the results are equally significant but less in terms of impact with the three dependent variables. The impact of team member influence on JS, PJC, and SWL are β=.392, p<.000; β=.306, p<.000; and β=.180, p<.000 respectively. However, the highest impact is also on Job Satisfaction and the least on Satisfaction with Life.

When we combined both dimensions of influence, the results are much stronger with the same level of significance. The impact on JS is β=.493, p<.000, PJC is β=.364, p<.000, and SWL is β=.227, p<.000 show that the highest impact is still on Job Satisfaction and the least on Satisfaction with Work and Life. Figure 2 shows the loadings and significance levels based on our three sets of hypotheses.
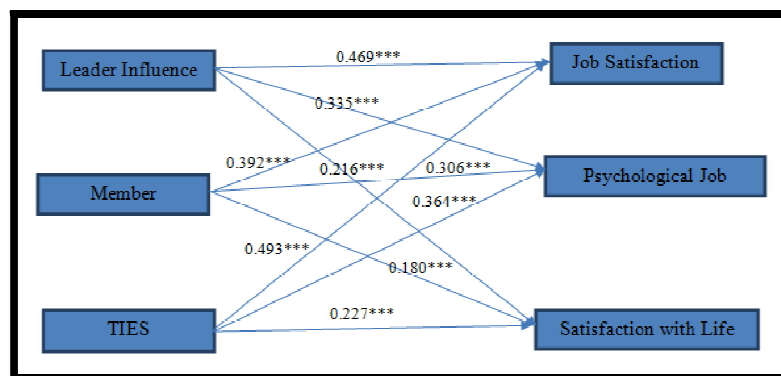

Figure 2: The Regression Loadings and Significance Levels for the
Three Sets of Hypotheses Used in the Study

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The intent of this two-phase study was to uncover what is happening in the realm of influence on the part employees when acting as or working with leaders (or heads of departments or groups) and members. The goals were: 1) to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and dimensions of influence in the current work environment and 2) to inform coaching programs aimed at making working in organizations with groups, departments and teams more effective.

A shift has occurred that suggests influence as a two-dimensional construct comprised of both leadership and membership aspects that are interdependent. Together they have the most impact on the outcomes studied. Influence manifests differently than previously thought and results suggest that influence has two separate domains that work together. Ultimately, what has surfaced is a new way to define what team leadership and team membership mean in terms of influence.

There is a strong and urgent need to understand, assess, and coach teams on influence from the team leader and team member perspective. In today's organizational world when anyone is hired into an organization, they not only become a member of that organization but are also put into multiple teams – some of which can run simultaneously. Hence this knowledge of the dual dimension of influence in a team environment is important for developing effective organizational members who would usually wear both hats – leader and member. Despite this fundamental shift to a team-oriented environment, leading, managing teams and being team members is complex with team experiences varying from rewarding to extremely frustrating. We put forward that the quality of team experience in the work context is related to the ability of a team to engage in the incorporation of both leader and member influence (i.e., TIES) effectively. We argue that since our results show strongest and most significant impact of influence (be it leader, member, or both) is on Job Satisfaction (leader at β=.469, member at β=.392, and TIES at β=.493). Although the difference between the result based on leader influence and TIES is relatively small, the experience in a team setting could have far reaching results as it helps

leaders and members to collaboratively influence their work and the organization. This result could also have implications for team success as a whole. The same applies to Psychological Job Control.

Some existing research on virtual teams that focus on team collaboration (e.g., Kahai, Carroll, & Jestice, 2007) and others that look at task and relationship behaviours of leaders in virtual teams (e.g., Liao, 2017) highlight the difference between virtual worlds and other media approaches and the importance for team leaders to facilitate balancing work and life for team members. We included the Satisfaction of Life as another dependent variable as this is an important shift in teamwork globally when both physical, virtual and life environments begin to fuse – going beyond balancing work and life. Previous research has shown that technological advancements, social media, and the Internet have created a fusion of physical and virtual environments (Haeger & Lingham, 2013). As both these domains of influence affect Satisfaction with Life at $p<.000$, organizations will need to help leaders and members develop the skill to engage and influence teamwork so as to be able to achieve work-life balance or their ability to simultaneously live in both the physical and virtual worlds of work and life contexts.

With regard to the managerial significance of this study, training that incorporates these two domains of influence can be a very effective tool to help teams. In the decades of conducting training in organizations, the focus on team leadership, membership, and team assessment, coaching and development, a common request we receive from participants whether they be organizational leaders, members, consultants, or trainers is to help them develop team leadership and membership skills so as to foster positive and effective teamwork.

Teams are everywhere. In fact, most organizations are designed with a team approach in mind. You find them across all levels in an organization from boards, top management teams, to ad hoc and work teams. As mentioned earlier, inherent in this team structure is a unique design where a team leader in one team may be a team member in a team at a higher level or a team member in one team could be a team leader in a team at a lower level. Typically, employees today find themselves in multiple teams with the strong possibility of working in physical teams, virtual teams, or both simultaneously which has further implications for navigating their lives. With this rapid advancement of technology, we now have multiple methods to engage and interact be it in the physical world, the virtual world or both simultaneously. We believe that understanding these two domains of influence (TIES) will become more significant as this fusion of physical and virtual work increases dramatically across the globe. In fact, we have seen a stark increase in the fusion of physical, virtual, social and family life happening during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2019-2020.

6. Future Research

As organizations continue to adopt virtual teams as a primary mode of structuring work (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017), we propose that our understanding of leadership should go beyond designated team leaders. In this study, the term leader includes managers, leaders by designation as well as leaders who emerge in groups. Although Nemiro (2001) dived into the environment necessary for virtual teams to be creative, we put forward that creating such an environment in virtual teams is also driven by the capacity to influence work and life. We also believe that the two domains of influence are a significant aspect in terms of promoting creativity and innovativeness in physical and virtual teams. Future studies will create an opportunity to dive further into specific job roles in leader and manager categories as well as different industries. Creating a measurement model for the proposed scale will allowed for the validation and testing of the scale, thus preparing the measure for future research. For this reason, the data gathered was from individuals who have had experiences in these contexts.

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