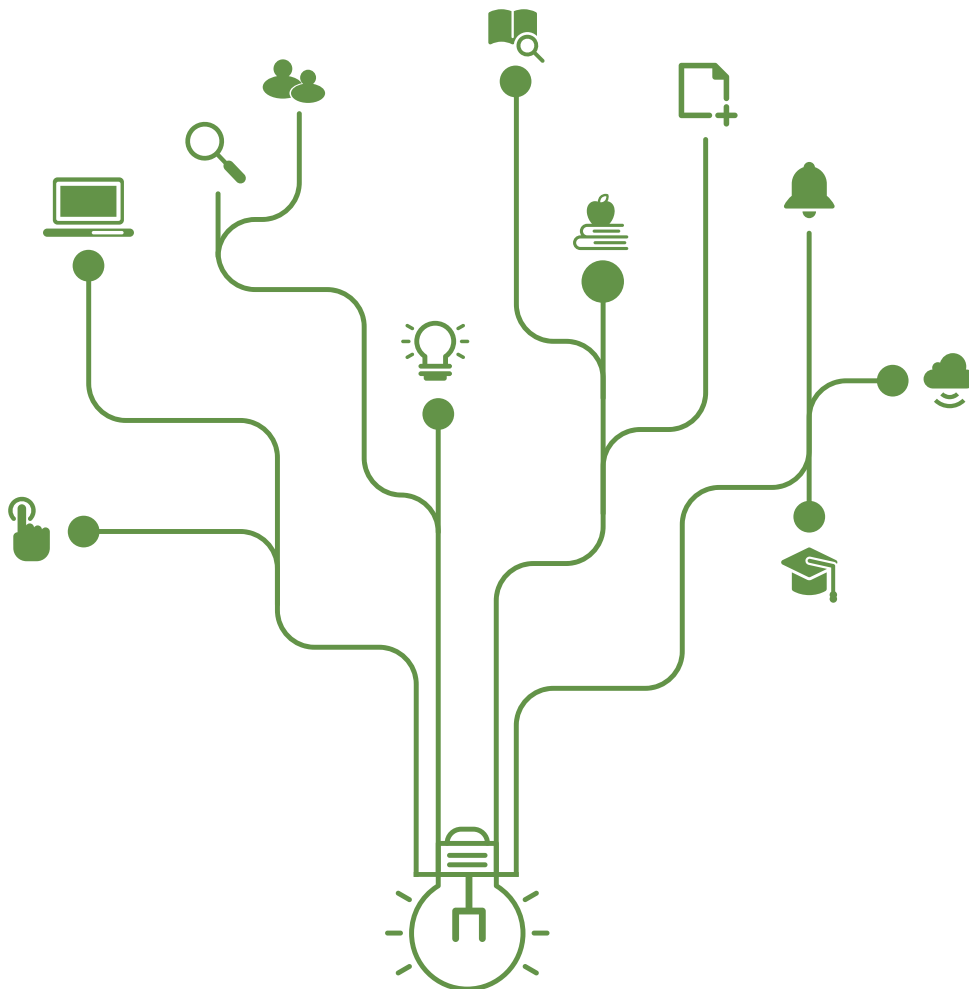# Leaders Need to Be Led: Complementary Followership through Interchangeable Roles among Leader-Follower Positions

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Situational effectiveness of the match of leadership and followership in international development programs


Final report title:
**Leaders Need to Be Led:**
**Complementary Followership through Interchangeable Roles among Leader-Follower Positions**

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## Abstract (short version)

Leadership has been often recognized as a major driver for successful team effectiveness. However, even weak leadership may lead to good team performance, and it is worth studying how weak leadership can be helped and complemented by followership. To investigate paradoxical mechanism behind leadership-followership practices, we examined (1) multi-dimensional figures of leadership and followership using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and (2) the impacts of the combinations of leadership and followership on team performances both during and after a community-driven development (CDD) program. To that end, this study examined a rural CDD case implemented by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MOALI). The analyses present some common patterns of how weak leadership and strong followership can lead to better performance than other combinations of leadership and followership. We conclude with a theoretical and practical conditions of "complementary followership", i.e., the complementary combinations of leadership and followership in group performance.

## Abstract (full version)

Leadership is often recognized as a major driver for successful team effectiveness. However, even weak leadership may show good team performance, and it is worth studying how weak leadership can be helped and complemented by followership. To investigate this paradoxical mechanism behind leadership-followership practices, we examined (1) multi-dimensional figures of leadership and followership using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ), and (2) the impacts of the combinations of leadership and followership on team performances both during and after a community-driven development (CDD) program. To that end, this study examined a rural CDD case implemented by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MOALI). The CDD leaders of 100 villages (and randomly selected residents of each village) were surveyed. And the collected data were analyzed using regression analysis method. The analyses present some common patterns of how weak leadership and strong followership can lead to better performance than other combinations of leadership and followership. First, the W-S state (Weak leadership and Strong followership) could be better for CDD performances than S-S (Strong leadership and Strong followership) and S-W (Strong leadership and Weak followership). This means that W-S is a necessary condition for successful group performance, which implies that having weak leadership can be an opportunity for strengthening followership. In detail, from the followers' perspective, strong followership in some factors (*intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration,* and *contingent reward*) may best complement weak leadership in the same factors during CDD program. For the sustainability of community development, followership in *idealized influence* (i.e., trustful dedication) can help complement weak leadership so as to sustain community development even after the CDD program completed. Second, strong leadership could be detrimental to CDD performances because there were some negative impacts of S-S (Strong leadership and Strong followership) and S-W (Strong leadership and Weak followership). We conclude with theoretical and practical conditions of "complementary followership" i.e., the complementary combinations of leadership and followership in group performance.

Keywords: leadership; followership; community-driven development

## Introduction

Leadership is often recognized as a major driver for successful team effectiveness, and followership is also regarded as another condition for a good team. Considering the mutuality of leadership and followership, if weak leadership shows a good team performance, then it might be worth studying how weak leadership can be helped and complemented by followership. To look into such paradoxical aspects behind leadership-followership practices, we examined (1) multi-dimensional figures of leadership and followership using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and (2) the impacts of the combinations of leadership and followership on team performances both during and after a community development program (i.e., community-driven development, CDD).

To that end, this study examined a CDD case implemented by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MOALI). The CDD leaders of 100 villages (and 20 randomly selected residents) of each village were surveyed. Based on the regression analysis results, we conclude with theoretical and practical conditions of the complementary combinations of leadership and followership in group performance. In the next section, the existing arguments and theories on leadership-followership as drivers of team effectiveness are revisited from which the research questions are then driven and presented.

## Theories and Research Questions

**Team effectiveness**

A team is a group of those who share a sense of membership, interdependent roles, and common goals (Northouse, 2016). However, the exact definition of team is far from being fixed as the organizational environment surrounding the characteristics of team is ever changing (Wageman, Gardner, & Mortensen, 2012). Besides the variations of team definitions, team effectiveness is another composite of various concepts. For instance, team effectiveness is often a collection of performance (task accomplishment) and development (team maintenance and cohesiveness) (Northouse, 2016).

As for the focus of this study, team effectiveness in terms of community development has a very diverse definition with at least four criteria. The first criterion of community development's effectiveness is "inputs" such as financial and technical support to the community (Wong, 2012). Second, the "outputs" of community development are contribution and communication among the people (Nguyen & Rieger, 2017) as well as ownership and emotional connection among residents (Chase & Woolcock, 2005; Cloutier, Ehlenz & Afinowich, 2019). Third, "outcomes" of team efforts in community development include access to basic services such as water, health, and nutrition (Arcand & Wagner, 2016; Wong, 2012); income generation (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Baird, Mcintosh, & Ozler, 2013; Nkonya, Phillip, Moques, Pender, & Kato, 2012); social capital (Yalegama, Chileshe, & Ma, 2016); and conflict resolution (Khwaja, 2009). Finally, "longer-term outcomes" of community development imply the community's capacity for self-sustainable community development (Platteau, 2004; Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013) such as inclusive governance (Arcand & Wagner, 2016) through distributed information and power (Chase & Christensen, 2014).

**Drivers of team effectiveness**

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The modifiers of team effectiveness have been studied by many scholars and practitioners. For instance, Larson and LaFasto (1989) argued that team effectiveness is a result of various factors: clear and elevating goals, results-driven structure, competent team members, unified commitment, collaborative climate, standards of excellence, external support and recognition, and principled leadership. Hackman (2012) also suggested a comprehensive list of factors behind team effectiveness such as compelling purpose, right people, clear norms of conduct, supportive organizational context, and team-focused coaching. In addition to the drivers, team type and situation are argued as moderating variables for team performances (Burke et al., 2006; Hulsheger, Anderson, & Salgado, 2009).

When it comes to community development, team performances are influenced by several things. First, there are external factors for community development program design: sustainable and timely financial support (Wong, 2012); coordination and collaboration among the supporting stakeholders and organizations (Bowen, 2005; Platteau, 2004; Wong, 2012); and the design of participation and evaluation mechanism (Grossman & Hanlon, 2014; Khwaja, 2009). Second, the community's external environment is another factor to consider including natural environment (Brinkerhoff, Wetterberg, & Wibbels, 2018; Wong, 2012) as well as local economy and education (Baird, Mcintosh, & Ozler, 2013l; Nkonya, Phillip, Mogues, Pender, & Kato, 2012). Finally, and most importantly in this study, the community's internal environment is an indispensable condition for community development: governance, participation, capacity development, and leadership (Bassoli, 2010).

**Leadership and followership as drivers of team effectiveness**

Leadership can be an internal driver for team effectiveness, and leadership can be defined by two roles—monitor and take action—in two environments—internal affairs (i.e., task and intra-relations) and external relationships (Hackman & Walton, 1986). More specifically, leaders are expected to promote the setting and sharing of vision, inform people of the progress and impacts of the change, encourage innovation and learning, and reward exemplary behaviors (Yukl, 2013). Building a coalition to support and guide the organizational change is another role of leaders (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001).

Focusing on the empowering (or participative) leadership, good leaders are believed to involve and empower competent people to formulate and implement the change (Bisoux, 2006) for the various benefits of participation such as realistic decision, compliance, and capacity building (Yukl, 2013). When empowered people are considered, followership (i.e., followers' initiative, skill, and sense of ownership) is known to be an important condition for successful empowerment (Yukl, 2013).

Situational leadership is often studied as a type of leadership that also considers followership (Northouse, 2016). It suggests a nonlinear pattern of desirable leadership styles between directive and supportive leadership according to the competence and commitment of followers across time (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Nelson, 1993; Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 2013). Similarly, team leadership (Yukl, 2013)—also referred to as shared leadership (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004) and similar to distributed leadership (Oborn, Barrett, & Dawson, 2013) )—concerns leadership that considers followership more actively. Team leadership is the case where leadership behaviors and influences are shared and distributed among members unlike a leadership in a hierarchical structure (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012). In practice, teams

with shared leadership exhibit more trust and cohesion than other teams without shared leadership (Bergman et al., 2012; Northouse, 2016).

**Complementary followership**

Team leadership (or shared leadership) implies the importance of followership that comprises the other side of leadership. Like leaders, followers also assess and judge their leaders' intentions and competence (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004). Followers can also considerably contribute to effective leadership (Baker, 2007). Thus, leadership and followership work together so as to enhance team effectiveness. Table 1 shows several conceivable scenarios considering the impacts of leadership and followership on team effectiveness. In detail, a team can either have strong or weak leadership and followership. The combinations of leadership and followership can beget beneficial or harmful impacts on team effectiveness.

Table 1. Ambivalent Impacts of the Combinations of Leadership and Followership on CDD Performances.

| Combinations of leadership & followership | | Impact on team effectiveness | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Beneficial | Harmful |
| Similar | S-S state: Strong leadership, Strong followership | *Reinforcing* | *Monolithic* |
| | W-W state: Weak leadership, Weak followership | | |
| Different | S-W state: Strong leadership, Weak followership | *Complementary, balancing* | *Competing, contradictory* |
| | W-S state: Weak leadership, Strong followership | | |

Note: The highlighted cells represent the focus of this study.

Despite the significant role of followers, existing arguments on followership are usually based on the naïve assumption that leaders are good and suitably capable of empowering their followers. However, other scenarios in which the existence of weak leadership can be better helped by strong followership (as shown in the highlighted cells in the table) have not been extensively

studied. With this in mind, this study examines when and how strong followership can complement weak leadership.
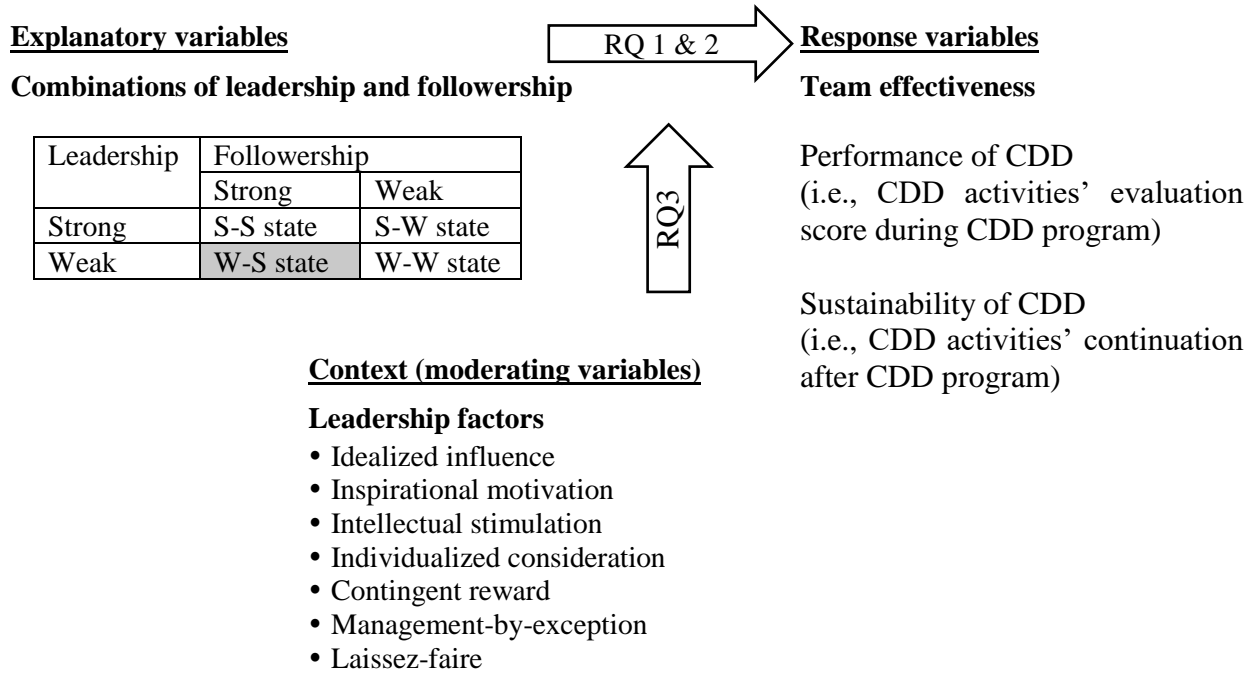
Managerial curiosity leads to the formation of our research questions. Figure 1 shows that research model of this study contains three parts. First, the dependent variable is team effectiveness in the context of community-driven development (CDD): CDD performance during the program and CDD sustainability after the program. The second part is the independent variable, which is team leadership (or shared leadership), i.e., the combination of leadership and followership where we focus more on weak leadership and strong followership (i.e., W-S state) where followers are expected to better complement and contribute to weak leaders. The third part involves multi-dimensional factors of leadership as moderating variable in which leadership and followership can be defined in many different combinations. The leadership factors are constructed by Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which will be specified in the next section. In summary, the research model and the corresponding exploratory research questions are presented below.

RQ1. Can a W-S state (i.e., a combination of weak leadership and strong followership in terms of the MLQ leadership factors) lead to a higher CDD performance (i.e., CDD evaluation score during CDD program) than other combinations of leadership and followership?

RQ2. Can a W-S state (i.e., a combination of weak leadership and strong followership in terms of the MLQ leadership factors) lead to a higher CDD sustainability (i.e., CDD activities' continuation after CDD program) than other combinations of leadership and followership?

RQ3. If so, in which MLQ leadership factors does the W-S state work best for CDD performances? (i.e., in which MLQ leadership factors does a strong followership most complement a weak leadership?)

Figure 1. Research Questions at a Glance.

**Explanatory variables**

**Combinations of leadership and followership**

| Leadership | Followership | |
|---|---|---|
| | Strong | Weak |
| Strong | S-S state | S-W state |
| Weak | W-S state | W-W state |

RQ 1 & 2

RQ3

**Response variables**

**Team effectiveness**

Performance of CDD
(i.e., CDD activities' evaluation score during CDD program)

Sustainability of CDD
(i.e., CDD activities' continuation after CDD program)

**Context (moderating variables)**

**Leadership factors**
- Idealized influence
- Inspirational motivation
- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualized consideration
- Contingent reward
- Management-by-exception
- Laissez-faire

## Methods

**Case**

We examine a rural CDD program in Myanmar implemented by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI). Myanmar is one of the least developed countries in Southeast Asia with a GDP per capita of US $1,407 in 2019 (World Bank) and 32.1% of the population living below the national poverty line in 2015 (Asian Development Bank) with much higher poverty rates in rural areas. Rural development is critical to the country's economic development with the country's large rural population and its dependence on natural resources and agriculture. In this context, KOICA and

MOALI have implemented a three-year rural CDD program in 100 villages across nine regions[1] between 2015 and 2019.

Table 2. The CDD Activities in Myanmar.

| Objectives | Weight (%) | | | Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of CDD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | |
| Capacity building | 10 | 10 | 10 | Number of meeting |
| | | | | Number of technical/educational training |
| | | | | Number of trainees |
| | | | | Number of villagers visit to other advanced villages |
| | | | | Number of public information on project movement |
| Living environment improvement | 55 | 40 | 30 | % of project work completed in a year based on the original plan |
| | | | | Villagers' fund contribution |
| | | | | Villagers' labor contribution |
| | | | | Number of participant households |
| | | | | Villagers' land/ materials contribution |
| Income generation | 35 | 50 | 60 | Fund increment by means of interest |
| | | | | Number of microfinance participant households |
| | | | | Adoption of new business and technologies |

The CDD program has three main objectives: 1) capacity building, 2) improving living environment, and 3) income generation under which the various key performance indicators (KPIs) presented in Table 2 were measured and evaluated by the end of each program year. The CDD program in Myanmar differs from existing rural CDD programs such that participating villages compete with each other and receive different amounts of financial incentive based on their annual KPI ranking. During the first year (January 2016 - January 2017), USD 20,000 was provided equally to the 100 villages where the CDD program was implemented. However, during the second (January 2017 - January 2018) and third year (January 2018 - January 2019),

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[1] Nine regions/states include 1) Ayarwaddy, 2) Bago, 3) Mandalay, 4) Mon, 5) Nay Phi Taw, 6) Sagaing, 7) Shan, 8) Tanintharyi, and 9) Yangon.

the top-ranking 30% and the next 40% of the villages received USD 40,000 and USD 30,000, respectively. The bottom 30% of the villages received USD 20,000. This differential incentive scheme based on the inter-village competition makes the Myanmar CDD program unique from other CDD approaches.

**Data collection**

The final (third year) evaluation of this CDD program was completed in January 2019, and we conducted a follow-up survey in August 2020 focusing on the CDD program leader and 20 randomly selected village residents from each of the 100 villages. We used 'Survey Solutions'—a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) program developed by the World Bank Group to improve data quality and to initiate faster data collection. Professional survey enumerators from Myanmar Survey Research (a leading survey company in Myanmar) interviewed 100 CDD program leaders as well as 1,996 villagers (either household head or another family member who knows the best about their household) face-to-face while strictly following the Myanmar government's regulations on COVID-19 epidemic.

Appendix Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the sample in this study. The CDD program leaders (in Panel A) are on average 52.4 years old, 99% are male, and 91% are married, respectively. Their education level and annual income are much higher than those of the village residents. The randomly selected village residents (in Panel B) are on average 48 years old and half of them are female. Only 4.3% of them graduated from high school and their annual income level (503,546 kyat) is approximately half of that of the CDD program leaders (1,053,301 kyat).

**Measurement and analysis**

We are interested in two main response variables: performance and sustainability of the CDD program. We took the three-year average ranking (percentile) to measure the overall CDD performance per village and ask whether the CDD committee and three sub-division activities continue to run even after the end of the CDD program with five-point Likert scale (1. not at all any more, 2. rarely, 3. sometimes, 4. actively, and 5. very actively). The sustainability score is then determined by adding these four questions in the range of 4 to 20.

We next use the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-6S) developed by Bass and Avolio (1992). The MLQ-6S consists of 21 five-point Likert scale questions to evaluate seven leadership factors—*idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception*, and *laissez-faire*. Three questions for each factor are presented in Table 3 and the interpretations of these seven factors are summarized in Table 4.

We asked the MLQ-6S questions to both the CDD program leaders and the village residents and defined the program leaders' and village residents' scores in each MLQ factor as *leadership* and *followership*, respectively. In each MLQ factor, we calculated the village-level average for *leadership* and *followership*. A strong *leadership* (*followership*) is then defined if the village-level MLQ score for the CDD program leaders (the village residents) in each factor is above that average value for a total of 100 villages. Therefore, we should generate one of four possible combinations (strong leadership-strong followership (S-S); strong leadership-weak followership (S-W); weak leadership-strong followership (W-S); and weak leadership-weak followership (W-W)) in each MLQ factor per village. We examine these leadership-followership combinations not only in the

same MLQ factor but also across different MLQ factors between the leaders and the followers, which generated a 7x7 matrix.

While omitting the W-W state as the reference, we regress the S-S state ($MLQ_v^{SS}$), S-W state ($MLQ_v^{SW}$), and W-S state ($MLQ_v^{WS}$) as dummy variables on our response variables of interest, $Y_v$, according to the equation (1). Among these three explanatory variables, we are especially interested in the W-S state where weak leadership is combined with strong followership. Thus, our main coefficient of interest is $\delta$. Finally, we further controlled village-level characteristics, $X_v$, in the regression equation such as village size (number of households), average age, female ratio, education level, and average annual income.

$$(1) \quad Y_v = \alpha + \beta MLQ_v^{SS} + \gamma MLQ_v^{SW} + \delta MLQ_v^{WS} + \theta X_v + \varepsilon_v$$

Table 3. Variables and Measures.

| Variables in the models | Measures (unit: village) |
|---|---|
| **Response variables** | |
| *- Performance of CDD (i.e., CDD activities' score during CDD program)* | 3-year average ranking (percentile) |
| *- Sustainability of CDD (i.e., CDD activities' continuation after CDD program)* | "How much actively does each of the following CDD activities continue after the end of CDD program?" |
| | Sum of the 5-point Likert scale for each of the following CDD activities |
| | • CDD Committee |
| | • Capacity building sub-division |
| | • Living environment improvement sub-division |
| | • Income generation sub-division |
| **Moderating variables** | |
| Seven factors of leadership based on MLQ-6S measures with 5-point Likert scale of each | |
| Factor 1- *Idealized influence* | 1. I make others feel good to be around me. |
| | 8. Others have complete faith in me. |
| | 15. Others are proud to be associated with me. |
| Factor 2- *Inspirational motivation* | 2. I express with a few simple words what we could and should do. |
| | 9. I provide appealing images about what we can do. |
| | 16. I help others find meaning in their work. |
| Factor 3- *Intellectual stimulation* | 3. I enable others to think about old problems in new ways. |
| | 10. I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things. |
| | 17. I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before. |
| Factor 4- *Individual consideration* | 4. I help others develop themselves. |
| | 11. I let others know how I think they are doing. |
| | 18. I give personal attention to others who seem rejected. |
| Factor 5- *Contingent reward* | 5. I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work. |
| | 12. I provide recognition/rewards when others reach their goals. |

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|  | 19. I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish. |
| Factor 6- *Management-by-exception* | 6. I am satisfied when others meet agreed-upon standards. |
|  | 13. As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything. |
|  | 20. I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work. |
| Factor 7- *Laissez-faire leadership* | 7. I am content to let others continue working in the same ways always. |
|  | 14. Whatever others want to do is OK with me. |
|  | 21. I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential. |

**Explanatory variables**

| *Combinations of leadership and followership* | Leadership (SMU Chair of each village) and followership (20 villagers randomly chosen from each village) values based on MLQ measures <br> • Strong: above the overall mean value <br> • Weak: below the overall mean value <br> 2 by 2 combinations of leadership and followership <br> • S-S: Strong leadership and Strong followership <br> • S-W: Strong leadership and Weak followership <br> • W-S: Weak leadership and Strong followership <br> • W-W: Weak leadership and Weak followership (reference in the regression analysis) |
| --- | --- |

**Control variables**

| *- Number of households* | Statistics (average) of the village administrative data |
| --- | --- |
| *- Average age* | Statistics (average) of the randomly selected 20 village residents |
| *- Percentage of female people* | Same as above |
| *- Education level of village* | Same as above (% of household where head of household is educated beyond primary school level) |
| *- Average monthly income* | Same as above |

Table 4. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Scoring Interpretation.

| Factor 1. *Idealized influence* | Indicates whether you hold subordinate' trust, maintain their faith and respect, show dedication to them, appeal to their hopes and dreams, and act as their role model. |
| --- | --- |
| Factor 2. *Inspirational motivation* | Measures the degree to which you provide a vision, use appropriate symbols and images to help others focus on their work, and try to make others feel their work is significant. |
| Factor 3. *Intellectual stimulation* | Shows the degree to which you encourage others to be creative in looking at old problems in new ways, create an environment that is tolerant of seemingly extreme positions, and nurture people to question their own values and beliefs of those of the organization. |
| Factor 4. *Individual consideration* | Indicates the degree to which you show interest in others' well-being, assign projects individually, and pay attention to those who seem less involved in the group. |
| Factor 5. *Contingent reward* | Shows the degree to which you tell others what to do in order to be rewarded, emphasize what you expect from them, and recognize their accomplishments. |
| Factor 6. *Management-by-exception* | Assesses whether you tell others the job requirements, are content with standard performance, and are a believer in "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." |
| Factor 7. *Laissez-faire leadership* | Measures whether you require little of others, are content to let things ride, and let others do their own thing. |

Sources: Bass and Avolio (1992)

## Findings and Discussion

A comprehensive summary of the findings is presented in Table 5 (see Appendix Table 2 and Appendix Table 3 for the regression results in detail). Table 5 shows how the combinations of weak leadership and strong followership (i.e., W-S state) in the seven leadership factors are associated with team effectiveness both during and after CDD program. In the table, the star symbol (★) represents the case where the CDD KPI score (during CDD program) was highest in the W-S state among the four types (S-S, S-W, W-S, W-W) and also statistically significant. The arrow symbol (⇨) represents the case where the CDD activities continued (after CDD program) most actively in the W-S state among the four combinations (S-S, S-W, W-S, W-W); this was also statistically significant.

The analysis results can also help answer the research questions. In the first and second research question, i.e., impact of W-S state on team effectiveness during and after CDD program, it turned out that W-S can be even better for CDD performances than S-S and S-W. Table 5 shows that there are many cells filled with star and arrow symbols, which means that there are many cases where weak leadership was significantly complemented by strong followership both during and after CDD program. The answers to RQ1 and RQ2 can be better specified by answering RQ3, which is about the conditions through which weak leadership can be better complemented by strong followership. The findings in Table 5 can be interpreted more deeply by separating the perspective of the followers and the leaders.

Table 5. Impacts of Combination of Weak Leadership and Strong Followership on Team Effectiveness.

| Weak leadership in … | Strong followership in … | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 | Factor 6 | Factor 7 |
| Factor 1: Idealized influence | | ⇨ | | ★ | ★ | | |
| Factor 2: Inspirational motivation | ⇨ | ⇨ | ⇨ | ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | | |
| Factor 3: Intellectual stimulation | ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | | |
| Factor 4: Individualized consideration | | ★ ⇨ | ★ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | | |
| Factor 5: Contingent reward | ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ ⇨ | ★ | |
| Factor 6: Management-by-exception | | | | ★ | | | |
| Factor 7: Laissez-faire | | ⇨ | ⇨ | | | | |

Notes. Star symbol (★) represents the case where the CDD KPI score was highest in W-S state among the four ones (S-S, S-W, W-S, W-W) and also statistically significant. Arrow symbol (⇨) represents the case where the CDD activities continued most actively in W-S state among the four ones (S-S, S-W, W-S, W-W) and also statistically significant. Highlighted cells represent the diagonal where weak leadership and strong followership of the same factors meet

Among the followers' perspective, there are positive and negative points according to each of the seven leadership factors. First, strong followership in some factors (*inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration*, and *contingent reward*) may best complement weak leadership in the same factors (except for *inspirational motivation*) for CDD performances both during and after CDD program. Second, strong followership in an *idealized influence* can complement weak leadership for CDD sustainability (i.e., continual community development activities after CDD program) even though it is not so helpful during CDD program, which may mean that trustful dedication of followers is a necessary condition for sustainable development. Third, the negative point in the findings is that even strong followership in

*management-by-exception* and *laissez-faire* alone can hardly complement weak leaderships both during and after CDD program.

When it comes to leaders' perspective, there are also positive and negative aspects. First, weak leadership in some factors (*intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration,* and *contingent reward*) may be best complemented by strong followership in the same factors for CDD performances both during and after CDD program. Second, when a leader lacks *inspirational motivation* as a negative point, there is only a slight complement during the CDD program. This suggests that setting and sharing visions by leaders cannot be replaced by even strong followership during CDD program. Third, weak leadership in *management-by-exception* and *laissez-faire* can hardly be complemented by strong followership during and after CDD program.

The findings provide several points for discussion. First, the W-S state seems to be one of the necessary (even if not sufficient) conditions for successful team effectiveness. This implies that weak leadership "can" be an opportunity for manifesting and strengthening "complementary followership" which will become the future leadership. The fact that empowering leadership can help followers learn and develop (Lorinkova, Pearsall, & Sims Jr., 2013) is widely known. Under a weak leadership where empowerment can be done unintentionally, it would be better to say that weak leadership is complemented by strong followership. The characteristics of CDD should be conducted on a "followers-driven" basis, and it might be natural to observe such complementary relationships between leaders and followers.

In that sense, weak leaders' message to strong followers is not only "Thank you for successfully following me (i.e., being led)" but also "Thank you for successfully leading me (i.e., becoming a complementary follower)." On the other hand, strong followers' message to weak

leaders might be "Thank you for providing us an opportunity to grow into leaders by helping you."
A leader's humility can influence followers' collective behavior beneficially (Owens, & Hekman, 2015; Rego et al., 2017), and thus followers can learn and grow by helping leaders (Yukl, 2013). In short, weak leaders can foster the followers' leadership by being led by them intentionally and unintentionally.

Second, leadership-followership fit matters as argued in existing literature (Tepper et al., 2018): Authentic leadership accompanied by authentic followership can lead to followers' better performance (Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, & Sels, 2012). Beyond just passively helping leaders, followers can lead and help the leader in trouble through their initiative behaviors (Wee, Liao, Liu, & Liu, 2017). More generally speaking, the findings of this study imply interchangeable roles among leader-follower positions.

A team consists of official and formal positions: leader and subordinates. Each position usually holds a (predetermined or emerging) role as a leader or follower, respectively. However, the substantive or actual roles of leadership can be (and sometimes should be) shared among leaders and followers especially when the leadership is weak in certain leadership factors. Such interchangeable roles between leadership and followership are more noticeable in such factors as *intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration*, and *contingent reward*, which means that strong followership—in terms of creative innovation, inclusive relationships and incentivizing members—are better at helping weak leadership in the same factors. Still, it is noteworthy that weak leadership in *idealized influence* is not replaceable even by strong followership while implementing a CDD program, which means that setting/sharing vision is a unique and non-transferable role of leader position.

Third, being contrasted to the positive role of strong followership even strong leadership can be a detrimental to team effectiveness because there were some negative impacts of S-S state (Strong leadership and Strong followership) and S-W one (Strong leadership and Weak followership) (see appendices for the supporting statistics in detail). Here, strong leadership led to worse team effectiveness than weak leadership in some leadership factors. There are some supporting arguments behind such irony: Transformational leaders can be endangered through exhaustion (Lin, 2019); charismatic leaders can impair team performance through stressful demands on followers (Lepine, Zhang, Crawford, & Rich, 2016); and leaders' excessive self-interest can lead to an exploitative leadership (Lorinkova, Pearsall, & Sims Jr., 2013). In short, strong leadership can sometimes help (1) ignore the followers' expectations, qualifications, or preparedness and thereby (2) deepen the gap between leader and followers in terms of vision setting/sharing and mobilization of tangible/intangible resources. The result of such a gap would be a loss of cohesive teamwork and team effectiveness.

## Conclusion

Seeking the answer to the exploratory question "When and how can weak leadership be successfully complemented by strong followership?", this study examines the community-driven development case in Myanmar where team effectiveness is practiced and evaluated in the combinations of leadership and followership. This analysis showed that there are several common patterns of how weak leadership and strong followership can lead to a better performance than other combinations of leadership and followership according to (1) seven leadership factors of MLQ and (2) timing (i.e., during and after CDD program).

The analysis results can be interpreted toward some practical implications in two ways. First, from the "failure management" perspective which is the bright side of organizational adversities (Lee, & Miesing, 2017), a weak leadership can be revalued as an opportunity to make the most of followers' potentiality. Such paradoxical benefits of weak leadership might be possible only when the followers are physically and mentally prepared to take up the complementary followership role. Second, the "success management" perspective focuses on the dark side of organizational strengths (Lee, & Lee, 2018); "success management" shows a strong leadership that can be a double-edged sword because of its possible negative impact. Leader strengths should be prudently assessed and handled because it can blind him-/herself through hubris or overconfidence and eventually lead to a loss of balanced leadership (Kaplan, & Kaiser, 2013).

This study was conducted on a rural development program in an Asian context, and more studies are needed in the future for other kinds of team projects in various cultural environments. From the perspective of research themes, more research questions are worth pursuing through further studies: What other impacts do a combination of leadership and followership have? Can a strong followership be an actual requisite for a good leader? What are the similarities and differences of good leadership and good followership?

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# Appendices

Appendix Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Panel A. CDD Program Leader (n=100)** | | | | |
| Age | 52.4 | 11.4 | 22 | 73 |
| Female (=1) | 0.010 | 0.100 | 0 | 1 |
| Belong to the Bamar ethnic group (=1) | 0.850 | 0.359 | 0 | 1 |
| Buddhist (=1) | 0.960 | 0.197 | 0 | 1 |
| Married (=1) | 0.910 | 0.288 | 0 | 1 |
| >High school graduated (=1) | 0.160 | 0.368 | 0 | 1 |
| Income (Kyat, monthly) | 1,053,301 | 1,073,308 | 90,000 | 5,350,000 |
| Number of Assets | 7.9 | 1.5 | 5 | 12 |
| **Panel B. Villagers (b=1,996)** | | | | |
| Age | 48.0 | 13.4 | 18 | 86 |
| Female (=1) | 0.499 | 0.500 | 0 | 1 |
| Belong to the Bamar ethnic group (=1) | 0.848 | 0.359 | 0 | 1 |
| Buddhist (=1) | 0.970 | 0.171 | 0 | 1 |
| Married (=1) | 0.744 | 0.436 | 0 | 1 |
| >High school graduated (=1) | 0.043 | 0.203 | 0 | 1 |
| Income (Kyat, monthly) | 503,546 | 737,658 | 1,250 | 15,900,000 |
| Number of Assets | 5.9 | 2.0 | 1 | 11 |

Note: "Income" includes both regular and seasonal income. "Number of assets" is the number of assets interviewees responded he/she had in the followings: 1) Land, 2) Television, 3) Mobile phone, 4) Landline telephone, 5) Bed with a mattress, 6) Sofa set, 7) Table and chair(s), 8) Refrigerator, 9) Bicycle, 10) Motorcycle, 11) Car, 12) Boat, and 13) Electricity.

Appendix Table 2. Impacts of the Combinations of Leadership and Followership on CDD Activities' Evaluation Score during CDD Program.

| Leadership | | Followership | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Factor 1 | | Factor 2 | | Factor 3 | | Factor 4 | | Factor 5 | | Factor 6 | | Factor 7 | |
| | | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak |
| Factor 1 | Strong | 6.857 | 1.632 | 9.227 | 0.648 | 10.027 | -0.931 | 12.399 | -0.731 | 11.034 | 0.860 | 5.921 | -4.323 | 3.757 | -1.144 |
| | Weak | 7.557 | | 8.648 | | 8.028 | | 12.535* | | 14.529** | | 3.100 | | 2.373 | |
| Factor 2 | Strong | 3.676 | -5.344 | 6.050 | -2.146 | 6.420 | -5.775 | 9.057 | -6.881 | 8.143 | -5.214 | 3.673 | -7.116 | 0.976 | -4.369 |
| | Weak | 3.028 | | 9.690 | | 6.353 | | 9.960 | | 12.941* | | 1.835 | | 1.114 | |
| Factor 3 | Strong | 3.333 | -1.512 | 6.055 | 1.587 | 6.900 | 0.257 | 9.592 | -0.589 | 8.449 | -0.816 | 3.415 | -2.188 | 0.661 | -1.248 |
| | Weak | 7.207 | | 13.048* | | 12.563* | | 15.779** | | 16.307** | | 7.187 | | 5.146 | |
| Factor 4 | Strong | 7.857 | 4.955 | 9.557 | 4.906 | 11.538 | 5.527 | 13.006* | 3.317 | 11.112 | 1.445 | 6.130 | 1.322 | 2.188 | -2.579 |
| | Weak | 12.951 | | 16.724** | | 17.153** | | 19.258** | | 18.117** | | 10.429 | | 1.574 | |
| Factor 5 | Strong | 4.502 | -3.083 | 7.988 | 3.480 | 9.576 | 3.515 | 12.477 | 4.604 | 11.314 | 2.036 | 6.383 | 4.698 | 2.242 | -0.903 |
| | Weak | 3.966 | | 15.695** | | 15.860* | | 21.557*** | | 17.512** | | 15.099* | | 5.000 | |
| Factor 6 | Strong | 5.275 | 2.798 | 7.281 | -7.593 | 9.073 | -3.961 | 10.825 | -3.216 | 9.323 | -6.696 | 4.894 | -1.719 | 2.489 | -0.158 |
| | Weak | 10.301 | | 2.870 | | 6.114 | | 12.120* | | 9.940 | | 7.567 | | 5.697 | |
| Factor 7 | Strong | 5.208 | -3.367 | 4.419 | -11.167 | 6.931 | -6.935 | 10.228 | -4.706 | 8.119 | -8.491 | 4.179 | -5.425 | 4.346 | 2.068 |
| | Weak | 0.756 | | -9.339 | | -1.359 | | 8.195 | | 2.246 | | -1.458 | | 7.654 | |

Note: The numbers represent the coefficients of each of the three states (S-S, S-W, W-S) in the regression analysis where the three states are dummies while W-W state is omitted as the reference. * $p<0.1$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$.

Appendix Table 3. Impacts of the Combinations of Leadership and Followership on CDD Activities' Continuation after CDD Program.

| Leadership | | Followership | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Factor 1 | | Factor 2 | | Factor 3 | | Factor 4 | | Factor 5 | | Factor 6 | | Factor 7 | |
| | | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak | Strong | Weak |
| Factor 1 | Strong | 0.132* | 0.043 | 0.125* | 0.079 | 0.120* | 0.042 | 0.139** | 0.019 | 0.115* | 0.038 | 0.083 | 0.011 | 0.087 | 0.101 |
| | Weak | 0.107 | | 0.138** | | 0.098 | | 0.107 | | 0.116 | | 0.050 | | 0.110 | |
| Factor 2 | Strong | 0.188** | 0.177** | 0.177** | 0.195** | 0.169* | 0.168** | 0.175** | 0.152** | 0.166** | 0.184** | 0.158* | 0.178** | 0.166** | 0.165** |
| | Weak | 0.202** | | 0.225*** | | 0.197** | | 0.224** | | 0.227*** | | 0.157* | | 0.122 | |
| Factor 3 | Strong | 0.194** | 0.172** | 0.176** | 0.186** | 0.166* | 0.138* | 0.176** | 0.122 | 0.154** | 0.138* | 0.142 | 0.119 | 0.121 | 0.077 |
| | Weak | 0.221** | | 0.234*** | | 0.180* | | 0.197** | | 0.198** | | 0.131 | | 0.071 | |
| Factor 4 | Strong | 0.121 | 0.050 | 0.118 | 0.086 | 0.118 | 0.069 | 0.127 | 0.049 | 0.109 | 0.063 | 0.071 | 0.032 | 0.023 | -0.050 |
| | Weak | 0.149 | | 0.213** | | 0.172 | | 0.190* | | 0.211** | | 0.115 | | -0.018 | |
| Factor 5 | Strong | 0.185* | 0.159 | 0.154 | 0.141 | 0.159 | 0.128 | 0.176* | 0.128 | 0.165* | 0.139 | 0.115 | 0.092 | 0.073 | 0.013 |
| | Weak | 0.228** | | 0.225** | | 0.199* | | 0.236** | | 0.228** | | 0.130 | | 0.013 | |
| Factor 6 | Strong | 0.145* | 0.049 | 0.131* | 0.043 | 0.145* | 0.045 | 0.153** | 0.017 | 0.125* | 0.040 | 0.099 | 0.056 | 0.071 | -0.039 |
| | Weak | 0.094 | | 0.084 | | 0.078 | | 0.084 | | 0.097 | | 0.069 | | -0.038 | |
| Factor 7 | Strong | 0.130 | 0.050 | 0.114 | 0.040 | 0.149 | 0.107 | 0.132 | 0.043 | 0.111 | 0.034 | 0.107 | 0.085 | 0.043 | -0.033 |
| | Weak | 0.130 | | 0.126 | | 0.195* | | 0.187* | | 0.154 | | 0.172 | | -0.058 | |

Note: The numbers represent the coefficients of each of the three states (S-S, S-W, W-S) in the regression analysis where the three states are dummies while W-W state is omitted as the reference. * $p<0.1$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$.