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Lack of authority, failure of leadership –Burden of not being led

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Abstract. The purpose of this research is to scrutinize the difference between autocratic leadership and absence of leadership. We utilized simple division between autocratic leader and laissez-faire leader in order to find out how these stereotypical leaders' are affecting the followers. Typically, autocratic leadership is situated to be bad leadership approach and follower's freedom is emphasized. Cognitive constructivism and empowerment of followers are embracing the freedom and followers own responsibility. However, the question for best approach for leadership is too complex to be answered with easy solutions. Real world cases rarely fit to ideal models. In this article, we analyze how these two types of extreme ends in leadership behavior affect the followers' feeling of certainty. We show how these approaches affect to followers by analyzing open answers with a mix method design with both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Keywords: leadership · organizational behavior · role · management · NLP · machine learning

1 Literature

In the early parts of leadership research, the superior characteristic of the behavior is also set to explain leadership as the behavioral theories. The division that Lewin made to authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire- leadership is probably one of the most recognized.[1][2] Later, very broad review research showed that leadership styles can be set in to dimension between autocratic-authoritarian and democratic-egalitarian so that it builds up a very consistent factor[3].

The autocratic leader keeps the decision making him/herself and exerts more control over subordinates' behavior and performance than democratic leader. Autocratic leaders also prioritize task completion over human relationships.[3] Classic example from Lewin showed that autocratic leaders were less cooperative, constructive, cohesive and stable but more aggressive and apathetic than democratic leaders.[4][1] Dominance is related to autocratic leaders. It also can be related to ability to persuade others this skill is not merely enough for successful leadership if technical abilities are lacking [5]. Dominance is related to a more autocratic than egalitarian leadership [6]. Typically, autocratic leadership is identified to style that is not taking care of the team's socio-emotional dimensions such as maintaining group cohesion and promoting the group as a viable social entity [7][8][9]. When leaders is absent autocratic teams perform badly

and are prone to explosive aggression after situations where frustration is pent-up [1]. These teams also suffer from attrition and scapegoating behavior [10] and unhealthy rivalry inside group [1][10].

Opposite for autocratic leadership is laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leadership is the avoidance or absence of leadership i.e. non-leadership. Laissez faire leaders avoid decision making, are absent and hesitate to take action [11][12], ignoring problems and subordinate needs, in essence showing indifference about the task and subordinates [13]. Researches shows that laissez-faire leadership is seen ineffective [11][14] and it is highly dissatisfying for followers [11]. Leaders with laissez-faire profile possess low intelligence, dedication and tyranny, but average sensitivity [15]. Empirical evidence shows that autocratic leaders negatively influence group effectiveness and stability [16]. It is suggested, that clarity in the chain of command and authority levels allows team members to have relatively uniform expectations towards roles and behavior [17][18], which reduces uncertainty [19]. Moreover, even on top to that autocratic leadership has shown to reduce uncertainty in some situations [20].

2 Research

2.1 Initial sample

At first phase of the research, we gathered the information regarding different experiences of leaders. Gathering was done by exercise included in students' (respondents) leadership and communication courses. At the exercise students task was to analyze their experiences from their work places, or if work experience was lacking, from hobbies, where they have been in their past. We gave a short introduction lesson towards four distinctive and stereotypical leadership characters and how these may be recognized for students. After introduction lesson respondents got task that, they should analyze three different leader from their past and place them under one of certain stereotypical character. Respondents' task was to describe and analyze leaders and reason why they'd position certain leader to certain stereotypical character. This was done by open answers. In the task, we diminished leader characteristics to four distinctively different ones: 1) "One of the team" (OTL), 2) "Autocratic leader", (AL) 3) "Servant leader" and 4) "Leader who has in and out role in team". OTL was representing stereotypic of leader who possesses the official management status, but not charismatic leadership status and who have not taken the leadership responsibility. We chose OTL to represent laissez-faire leadership. AL is the leader whose style is autocratic and represents autocratic leader.

We executed the survey among first and second year students from Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland at 2015-2017. Respondents were first and second year students from Industrial management and engineering degree program and Professional sales degree program. Respondents' age ranged between 19-25 and gender ratios was 38.6% females and 61.4% males. All together 163 students answered the survey and each completed three cases. Because of some misunderstandings, we rejected the answers from 13 students from the research. Typically, in rejected cases, students were using wrong approaches regarding task. From these 150 students, who executed the task how it was meant, 450 cases were collected. Students answered the survey, correctly

each completed three cases. In total 450 cases were collected. 39.3% (177) were females' cases, and 60.7% (273) were males' cases.

2.2 Hypotheses

Based on literature handled in chapter 1 we created our hypotheses as following. Since laissez-faire leadership is giving minimal efforts and responsibility to work leader position, we have our first hypotheses H1. One of the Team Leader (OTL) positively affects Minimal (MIN). When roles and behavior are not clear minimal efforts are causing uncertainty. From there we have our hypotheses 2. H2. Minimal (MIN) positively affects Uncertainty (UNCER). Being in the team with autocratic or laissez-faire leader seems to be something that is not easy we have our hypotheses 3 and 4. H3 One of the Team Leader negatively affects Easy (EAS) and H4. Authoritarian Leader (AL) negatively affect Easy (EAS). Authoritarian leaders have negative impacts for team atmosphere and there we have next hypotheses. H5. Authoritarian Leader (AL) negatively affect TEAM. According to references there are connections between certainty and authoritarian leader we scrutinized this with two hypotheses. H6. TEAM positively affects Certainty (CER). H7. TEAM negatively mediates the relationship between Authoritarian Leader (AL) and Certainty (CER)

2.3 Model analysis

We used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the model's goodness-of-fit [21][22]. Model fit was estimated using CFI, TLI, RMSEA, NFI, and minimum discrepancy divided by their degrees of freedom (CMIN / DF). Values of CFI and TLI close to .95 or higher are indication of good fit [23], the ratio CMIN / DF should be typically lower than 3 [24]. RMSEA should be .06 or smaller [25]. We employed a mix method design, a combination of strength, integrating qualitative and empirical analysis [26][27][38]. For mediation, we used the PROCESS tool, which is widely preferred for testing indirect or mediation effects [28].

2.4 Text analysis

Organizations' leaders continuously seeks to improve performance and profit using innovative tactics [29], and lead their employees towards the success of companies. Aural expressions and language can provide real-time assessment of a currant investigated state. We follow Eckhaus' [30][31] methodology, employing a combination of N-gram and Bag of Words (Bow) techniques, for the analysis of leadership characteristic. We employed TEXTIMUS, a text mining and analysis software [32]. TEXTIMUS enables unveiling latent themes in texts, discover hidden meanings that could not have been identified through a first reading, develop variables purely based on texts, and find relationships between them.

First, n-gram frequencies were generated. N-gram refers to a contiguous sequence of n words from a given sequence of text [33]. N-gram is often used in sentiment analysis of texts. Next, we employed BoW [34]. BoW is known as the most common method for the translation of text representation to numerical representation. According

to BoW, documents are represented as a collection of words, regardless of order. A group of keywords is explored and weighted according to the frequency of its appearance. We therefore computed the frequency of all the words, and grouped words with the highest frequency employed for the research variables. Similarly to other studies that employed BoW in leadership and top management content [35][36][37], the frequencies of each group were summed to the research variables, as follows. Uncertainty (UNCER) - words related to uncertainty, such as maybe, uncertain. Certainty (CER) - words related to certainty, such as certainly, definitely. Minimal (MIN). Easy (EAS), and Team (TEAM). One of Team Leader (OTL), and Authoritarian Leader (AL) are the categories of the cases. That is, each case was manually tagged as to which leader type it is associated. Since OTL and AL are both types of leaderships, we placed a correlation between them in the model.

3 Results

3.1 Research results

The correlations, means, and standard deviation values between the research variables are presented in Table 1. Since the two leadership types variables are dichotomous, we used Spearman correlation.

Table 1. Correlation matrix, means, and SD

	<i>UNCER</i>	<i>CER</i>	<i>MIN</i>	<i>EAS</i>	<i>TEAM</i>	<i>OTL</i>	<i>AL</i>
<i>UNCER</i>	-						
<i>CER</i>	.06	-					
<i>MIN</i>	.08	.03	-				
<i>EAS</i>	-.06	.16**	.07	-			
<i>TEAM</i>	.13**	.08	-.09	.02	-		
<i>OTL</i>	.12*	-.11*	.11*	-.02	.03	-	
<i>AL</i>	.02	.03	.05	-.11*	-.10*	-.42***	-
Mean	.62	.74	.21	.35	.80	.25	.35
SD	1.29	1.12	.54	.81	1.41	.43	.48

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The hypothesized model showed a good fit: CMIN/DF = 0.83 ($p > .05$), CFI = 1, NFI = 0.97, TLI = 1.03, RMSEA = 0. All hypotheses were supported. OTL positively affects MIN (H1) and negatively affects EAS (H3). MIN positively affects UNCER (H2). AL negatively affect EAS (H4) and TEAM (H5). TEAM positively affects CER (H6). Figure 1 illustrates the model and results.

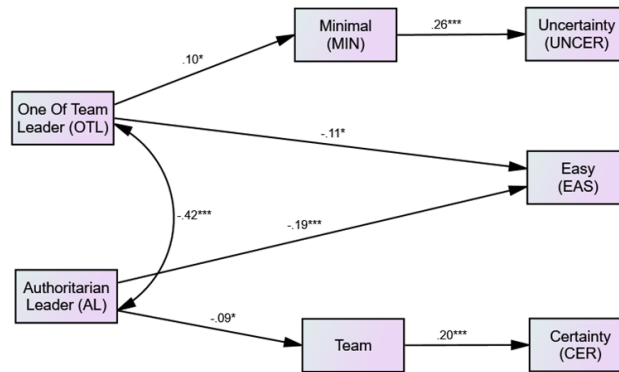


Fig. 1. Model results and standardized coefficients. * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

From mediation point of view H7, the hypothesis that TEAM mediates the relationship between AL and CER was supported. In the first step, AL shows a statistical significant effect on TEAM ($B = -.28$, $p < .05$). Step 2 showed that the linear regression of AL on CER, a direct effect, was not significant ($p > .05$). Step 3 of the mediation process demonstrated that the mediator (TEAM), controlling for AL, was significant in its effect on CER ($B = .16$, $p < .001$). The bootstrapped Confidence Interval (CI) for the indirect effect ranged from $-.11$ to $-.001$. This result indicates that the indirect effect of the mediator was significant. It was therefore found that TEAM negatively mediates the relationship between AL and CER.

3.2 Conclusions and discussion

The purpose of this research was to compare autocratic leadership and absence of leadership. Regarding the literature there is quite a lot research done from both and typically, the results are that democratic leadership, where both, the leader and the followers have decision-making power with some ratio is better when compared to either of the extremes. Our results support these. We found significant negative correlation between the autocratic and laissez-faire leaders as expected. We also found that both approaches are setting the followers to uneasy position. Cause for this might be different and it should further researched. Probably the most interesting result from our research was the correlations between leadership approach and certainty/uncertainty. Laissez-faire leadership approach caused uncertainty and it supported former researches. Autocratic leadership approach is negatively correlating with team, which also was supporting former researches. Autocratic leadership produces certainty via negative affect to the team. This result is interesting and deserves further investigation. Our results show that being part of the team is crucial for leader, but leader still should give boundaries and expectations as well as support the team in order to ease uncertainty. Limitations for our research results are remarkable. Our sample group is not representing the working life even when the gender ratio was equal enough. Sample group consisted young people born after between 1990 and 1998 and were university students. Respondents were only from Finland, Nordic, rich, free and democratic country with long history of equality between all people.

Our results are giving interesting future research suggestions. Can some level of the autocratic leadership approach enhance the performance of the organization and still enhance the team integrity? To which level autocratic leadership behavior should be extended, for boundaries and objectives or to measures and working processes in order to achieve best possible organizational performance? Which kind of follower profiles are suitable for this kind of approach?

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