

Exploring Shared Leadership : Mediating Roles of Spirit at Work and Team Trust

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Abstract

This paper aimed to develop a model of serial mediation in team effectiveness. We adopted the theory-building approach to identify the gaps in the relationship among relevant variables of the study to build a serial mediation model. We conceptualized a serial mediation model in which the constructs of 'spirit at work' and 'team trust' were posited as mediators in the relationship between shared transformational leadership and team effectiveness. This paper provided theoretical premises among the study constructs by drawing on robust theories such as symbolic interactionist theories of identity, comprehensive workplace spirituality facilitation model, and individuation theory. This paper calls for the conceptualization of multidimensional constructs such as shared transformational leadership and spirit at work as reflective – formative constructs, instead of their conceptualization as reflective – reflective constructs, as the scholars theorize the direction of causality to flow from dimensions to the latent construct.

Keywords : shared transformational leadership, spirit at work, workplace spirituality, team trust

JEL Classification Codes : M12, M14, M53, M54

Paper Submission Date : April 15, 2021 ; **Paper sent back for Revision :** December 20, 2021 ; **Paper Acceptance Date :** January 15, 2022 ; **Paper Published Online :** February 15, 2022

The spiritual development of individual employees is facilitated through an inner transformation of employees to induce a change in employee behaviors. This is expected, in the aggregate, to bring a change outside employees in terms of organizational functioning, says Pawar (2008) while discussing the performance-related outcomes of workplace spirituality. By implications, there are two perspectives concerning workplace spirituality outcomes: outside-in perspective and inside-out perspective. This paper articulates the inside-out perspective of variables like workplace spirituality and team trust on team effectiveness. Transformational leadership behaviors inspire self-interest transcendence – an inside-out perspective – among its followers (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017), akin to workplace spirituality (Milliman et al., 2017).

Scholarly research has viewed team effectiveness from a diagnostic perspective. Besides, it has also situated team effectiveness within the input-process – output frameworks (West & Lyubovnikova, 2013). Team processes capture the effort exerted by team members, reflexivity among team members, and the complete application of their knowledge and skills. We can view all these processes as originating from outside if the perceived causal factors belong to the organizational structure or systems. For instance, scholars argue that the effort is a function of the organizational reward system, reflexivity is a function of the organizational information system, and the

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.17010/pijom/2022/v15i2/168333>

complete application of team members' talents is considered a function of the organizational education system (Hackman & Wageman, 2009).

Though prior research on team processes has examined the effect of a few team processes that belong to the 'inside-out' perspectives (Bishop et al., 2021), there is a paucity of research on the inside-out perspective of team process constructs such as workplace spirituality and team trust. Workplace spirituality is essential because it captures meaning at work and a sense of community. Besides, trust within team members is crucial for ensuring network commitment (Kurt et al., 2016), team performance (Prabhu et al., 2021), team satisfaction, and team commitment (Buvik & Tvedt, 2016). As 'trust' is an internal variable, the study of its impact on team effectiveness enables us to go beyond the utilitarian perspective (Merriman et al., 2012) and thus adopt the 'inside-out' perspective (Prabhu et al., 2019b) to assess its effect on team effectiveness. Therefore, this paper has developed a model of team effectiveness by positing workplace spirituality and team trust as the representative variables of the 'inside-out' perspective of team effectiveness.

Against this background, this paper addresses the following research questions:

- ✧ What theoretical premises capture the relationships among shared transformational leadership, workplace spirituality, trust, and team effectiveness?
- ✧ What are the theoretical and managerial implications of the inside-out perspective of team processes?

This paper has contributed to research on the shared leadership – team effectiveness relationship in two areas. First, this paper delineates the theoretical premises of the shared transformational leadership – workplace spirituality – team trust – team effectiveness relationship. Second, this paper provides theoretical and research implications for conceptualizing the constructs of shared transformational leadership, spirit at work or workplace spirituality, and team trust in empirical research.

Review of Literature

Information technology organizations are increasingly adopting team-based flat organization structures. As a result, virtual teams and project teams are also rising. The performance of these teams depends upon how effectively they gain and share relevant knowledge to complete their projects (Pinjani & Palvia, 2013). However, people's tacit knowledge and competencies are not entirely distinct. Therefore, sharing tacit knowledge and skills is a significant determinant of team effectiveness in information technology organizations (Lee et al., 2010). However, teams face the problem of information hoarding in information technology organizations.

Research conversation on trust – knowledge sharing relationships has shown that mutually supportive relationships inspire a willingness to share one's knowledge (Holste & Fields, 2010; Wang & Noe, 2010). Mutually supportive relationships and the corresponding behaviors reinforce collective trust among team members. The challenge before information technology organizations is to inspire mutually supportive relationships among team members. The absence of mutually supportive relationships emerges because of the lack of unity (Albuquerque et al., 2014). In its turn, a sense of community does not come into being because of individualistic utilitarianism that accounts for selfish seeking from one's fellow team members and one's organization (Prabhu et al., 2019a).

Individualistic utilitarianism manifests itself in prioritizing the team members according to the 'cost-benefit' exchange or 'performance-reward' exchange paradigm. Besides, individualistic utilitarianism leads to uniformity in team members' behavior and prevents the search for meaning, which is likely to be inherent in human beings' work-life as their needs graduate to growth needs from deficiency needs. Providing space for team members' search for meaning at work enables them to transcend individualistic utilitarianism. The shared purpose at work

inspires self-interest transcendence in them. The shared sense of self-interest transcendence is likely to lead to mutually supportive relationships and, thus, engender collective trust among team members (Pawar, 2009). Thus, these processes help combat the problem of information hoarding and the resultant absence of knowledge sharing among team members.

Therefore, the key to cultivating collective trust among team members is cultivating shared purpose and the consequent sense of community, which will bring about deep connectedness (Guru et al., 2021). Besides, the emergence of self-interest transcendence can bring about solid collective trust among team members. Therefore, organizational researchers have looked at catering to the spiritual needs of human beings, that is, meaning and sense of community, to produce higher and truly authentic individual and team performance (Prabhu et al., 2021).

Scholars posit transformational leadership behaviors as the antecedent of trust (Goodwin et al., 2011). Therefore, there is a need for clarifying the nomological network among transformational leadership, trust, and the related outcomes. The extra effort the followers put forth under transformational leaders is primarily because of the respect they accord to their leaders and the trust they repose in them. Several empirical studies have shown that trust is a mediator between transformational leadership and related outcomes. However, the inside-out mediating processes between transformational leadership and trust remain unexplored or relatively unknown. In this regard, scholars have argued that trust is an outcome of workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality is likely to address individualistic utilitarianism and the consequent information hoarding tendencies. In its turn, trust is likely to inspire knowledge sharing. In the light of these theoretical arguments, this paper has attempted to develop a conceptual model that addresses these issues.

Method

This study adopts the theory-building process to develop the theory and hypotheses (Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017). We adopted the process that involves seven steps to build our theory of team effectiveness. We conducted an initial literature review in the first step of understanding the phenomenon. In the second step, we identified the articles for including them in the review process. We did a literature search in Scopus by entering keywords such as shared transformational leadership, workplace spirituality, spirit at work, and team trust. We chose about 76 articles for the review of literature. Besides, we retrieved these articles from databases, such as EBSCO and Emerald. In the third step, we analyzed the constructs and their relationships. In the fourth step, we developed an initial theory concerning the units of analysis, the laws of the relationship between the study's constructs, the boundary conditions, the system states, and the propositions advanced by prior research. In the fifth step, we gave our initial theory to a set of five scholars to evaluate the initial theory. These five scholars evaluated our initial theory. In the sixth step, we analyzed and synthesized the feedback provided by these scholars. In the seventh step, we modified the theory.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Shared Transformational Leadership

The construct of shared transformational leadership captures the within-team transformational leadership behaviors (Choudhary et al., 2016; Nielsen & Daniels, 2012). Shared transformational leadership is a team-level construct that aggregates individual responses. Transformational leaders' behavioral attributes are a personal commitment to their followers' dedicated attention to mission, risk-taking propensities, and achievement orientation. Transformational leaders facilitate the efforts to continually improve people's capabilities to meet and elevate people's needs through individualized consideration. Looking at issues from new perspectives and

revisiting strategies are the behaviors that transformational leaders adopt even as they provide intellectual stimulation to their followers. Transformational leaders become focal points of idealized influence by their willingness to get beyond obstacles, continued demonstration of transcendence of self-interests, and hard work.

Spirit at Work

'Spirit at work' or workplace spirituality (Prabhu et al., 2016) is measured along its four dimensions: cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical. Engaging work is the cognitive dimension of 'spirit at work' that expresses itself as finding a fit between personal and workplace values and behaviors, finding meaning at work, being passionate about one's work, fulfilling one's calling, integrating life-mission and work, and feeling grateful for one's involvement. The sense of community is the inter-personal dimension that expresses itself in the feelings of being connected to the community at work, that is, experiencing connectedness. The dimension of spiritual connection manifests itself in terms of spiritual beliefs that influence decision-making at work, feeling the inspiration for work. The mystical dimension refers to experiencing joy, bliss, and energy at work. The construct of workplace spirituality does not measure employees' attitudes towards spirituality at the workplace. Nor does it endeavor to capture the characteristics of a spiritual workplace. Its focus is on capturing individuals' experiences of workplace spirituality in their workplaces.

Team Trust

Scholarly research on trust states it is a multidimensional construct (Costa et al., 2017). Combining the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, scholars define the construct of team trust as :

Trust is a psychological state that manifests itself in the behaviors towards others, is based on the expectations made upon behaviors of these others, and on the perceived motives and intentions in situations entailing risk for the relationship with those others (Costa, 2003, p.608).

This definition integrates both attitudes and behaviors in the conceptualization of trust.

Team Effectiveness

This paper conceptualizes team effectiveness as a function of teams' ability to serve their customers through products and services acceptable to them, team's function as a 'performing unit' over time, and team learning and fulfillment which result from the teams' work (Hackman & Wageman, 2009). Therefore, team effectiveness is a multidimensional construct comprising of three dimensions, that is, team performance, team growth, and individual learning. The dimensions of team effectiveness, such as the team's growth and perceived individual well-being, constitute the 'inside-out' aspects embedded in the construct itself. Performance assessment of teams cannot be subjected to mere 'objective' assessments of numerical sources but should capture delivering products and services acceptable to clients. Therefore, knowing, meeting, and exceeding clients' expectations make up the accurate measuring rod of team performance. Team performance in meeting clients' expectations is the first dimension of team effectiveness. The second dimension of team effectiveness is social processes, such as shared commitment and collective skills. Thus, an effective team acts as a performing unit by being productive concerning errors and opportunities throughout its work. Third, team effectiveness should measure team members' learning and personal well-being (Cavanaugh et al., 2021), which revolves around interpersonal relationships, besides personal learning. Team members' learning and well-being would cause the satisfaction of team members with their team. Team satisfaction is thus the third dimension of team effectiveness.

Shared Transformational Leadership and Team Effectiveness

Shared transformational leadership induces a greater degree of inspirational motivation for attaining a higher internal motivation to serve its clients (Prabhu et al., 2019a). The resulting exchange of ideas and mutual intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, would enable the team's growth to facilitate the team to function as a performing unit. Individualized consideration of each team member's knowledge and skills will enable them to achieve uniqueness and identity (Farmer et al., 2015). Shared transformational leadership is likely to influence the cooperative approach to conflict management, which improves team coordination and individual learning and well-being of team members and, thus, the team effectiveness. Therefore, we frame the following hypothesis :

⇒ **H1:** Shared transformational leadership is positively related to team effectiveness.

Shared Transformational Leadership and Spirit at Work

Workplace spirituality is an outcome of leadership, primarily spiritual and transformational leadership (Prabhu & Koodamara, 2021). Leaders who are open to learning discern their spirituality and its impact on organizations and society. The literature that links leadership with spirituality argues that spirituality provides direction to leaders. As a result, they can also bring about spirituality in their organizations (Pawar, 2009). Therefore, prior research has endeavored to situate workplace spirituality as an outcome of spiritual and transformational leadership. Thus, we posit the following hypothesis:

⇒ **H2 :** Shared transformational leadership is positively related to spirit at work.

Shared Transformational Leadership and Team Trust

The theory of symbolic interactionism of trust argues that trust results from value congruence, attitude similarity, and unity of affect (Konecki, 2019). Values provide the standard of judgment, whereas attitudes are indicators of others' trustworthiness. Moods and emotions signify intensity and trust. Scholars conceptualize trust integrating attitudes and behaviors while combining cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Costa et al., 2017). Besides, trust-related behaviors such as cooperative behavior and monitoring behavior are considered the components of trust rather than the effects of trust.

Congruence of each other's perceptions of a social situation leads to trust (Greer et al., 2018). The possibility of mutual congruence depends on the parties' values, attitudes, moods, and emotions, which is, in fact, the result of the matching of identities in particular and the salience of their identities (Caza et al., 2018). Transformational leadership facilitates this congruence by creating collective identity in groups (Hackett et al., 2018).

As identity theories argue, the value systems of individuals match when what they value in life matches with their salient identities. Similarly, change in attitudes will also lead to a change in one's values (Stouten et al., 2018), the indispensable aspects of mutual trust. It is noteworthy here that transformational leaders consider the values of their followers by evoking salient identities (Lisak & Harush, 2021).

Besides, organizations have chosen flat and flexible structures for better team functioning (Stoverink et al., 2020). Therefore, the need for collaborative work among team members has increased, which naturally calls for higher degrees of interpersonal trust among team members (Hornung et al., 2018; Pavez et al., 2021). The theory of symbolic interactionist of trust argues that evolution of trust happens when each party to a social interaction understands the perspective of the other (De Visser et al., 2020), which is what happens when team members themselves manifest transformative behaviors towards their fellow team members

(Wulandari et al., 2021). Therefore, trust is an integral aspect of teamwork, facilitated by transformative leadership behaviors. Thus, we present the following hypothesis:

✎ **H3** : Shared transformational leadership is positively related to team trust.

Spirit at Work and Team Trust

Prior research conceptualizes the association between workplace spirituality and team trust (Daniel, 2019). Workplace spirituality is a collective construct in which there are possibilities for individual experiences of spirituality. Therefore, trust epitomizes the workplace (Hassan et al., 2016). In addition, connectedness is a dimension of workplace spirituality associated with trust (Zhang, 2020).

Similarly, trust is a component of the value framework that suggests spirituality in organizations (Burgess & Martin - Jones, 2019). Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) proposed a spiritual freedom model, which incorporates trust as a feature of companies enriched by workplace spirituality. The need for the practice of spirituality can be felt through connectedness with one's colleagues as an expression of empathy, which would thus contribute to elevated trust and the consequent team performance (Rathee & Rajain, 2020). Scholars have identified trust as an outcome of workplace spirituality (Terzi et al., 2020). Prior research on the beneficial organizational outcomes of workplace spirituality has thus pointed out the positive influence of spirituality in the workplace on creating trust (Kurt et al., 2016). Therefore, these prior studies show evidence for the relationship between 'spirit at work' or workplace spirituality and team trust (Prabhu et al., 2021). Thus, we posit the following hypothesis:

✎ **H4** : Spirit at work is positively related to team trust.

Spirit at Work and Team Effectiveness

The individuation process (Jung, 2019) leads to ramifications relating to spirit at work and team effectiveness. People who are conscious of their projections will be less prone to blaming others by understanding their repressed characteristics (Boag, 2020). They understand the source of their interpersonal conflicts and thus become prepared for teamwork (Lacerenza et al., 2018). As people become free of their projections, they no longer project their needs onto their coworkers (Longacre et al., 2019). Thus, they become capable of independent functioning. This capability manifests itself as tolerance, personal responsibility for one's behavior, and lack of fear of possession of their personality by others. As a result, this fearlessness enables them to delegate work and empower others (Alhosani et al., 2018), which will thus facilitate connectedness or the sense of community, a vital dimension of the construct of spirit at work (Prabhu et al., 2016; Prabhu et al., 2019). Thus, the process of individuation facilitates team effectiveness by contributing to the strength of spirit at work. Therefore, we present the following hypothesis:

✎ **H5** : Spirit at work is positively related to team effectiveness.

Team Trust and Team Effectiveness

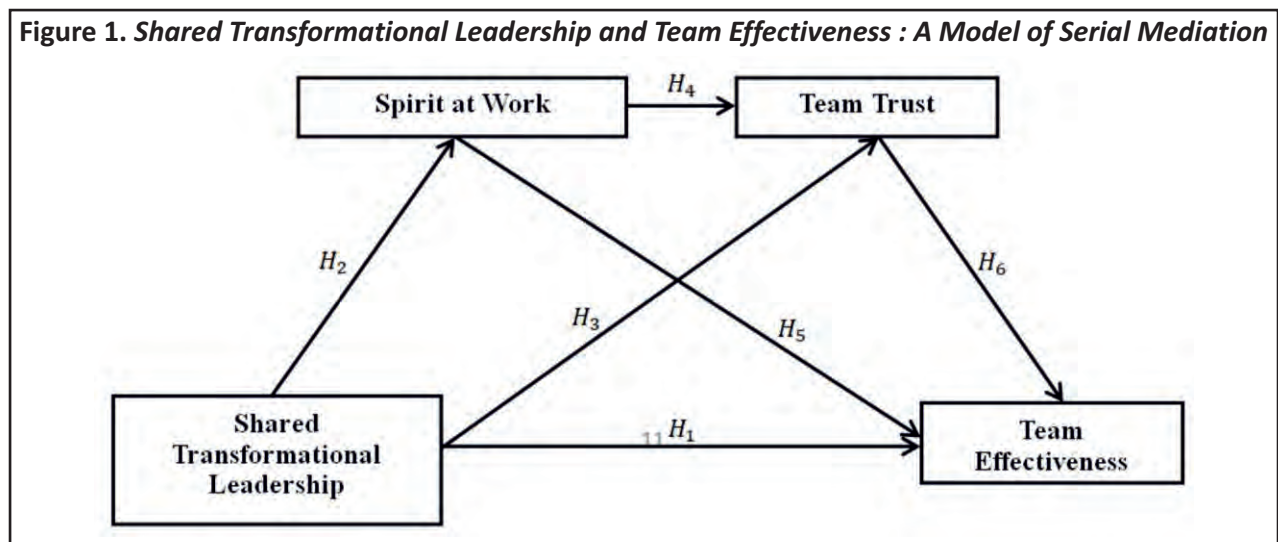
Prior research has shown the positive influence of trust on team performance (Ghazinejad et al., 2018). Impact of levels of trust upon constructs such as group creative problem-solving (Bligh, 2017), team planning, problem-solving and continuous improvement in quality, and task performance (Costa et al., 2017) have established the impact of trust on various aspects of team performance (McNeese et al., 2021). Thus, these studies have shown a positive relationship between trust and perceived task performance (Hughes et al., 2018).

The positive influence of trust in increasing cooperation, reducing conflicts, increasing organizational commitment, and reducing the intention to quit is well-documented (Olaisen & Revang, 2017). Therefore, team trust is likely to result in team commitment. Empirical studies have shown how trust affects perceived task performance, team satisfaction, and team commitment (Costa et al., 2017).

Scholarly research has found enough empirical evidence of the association between trust and team satisfaction (Robert Jr. & You, 2018). Prior research validates the links between intragroup processes, satisfaction, trust behaviors of open communication, and forbearance from opportunism and team satisfaction (Liu et al., 2020). The usefulness of trust and participation in decision-making (Alsharo et al., 2017), dimensions of trust and team satisfaction (Costa et al., 2017), the impact of open communication and forbearance from opportunism on team satisfaction (Vermeir et al., 2018) are the various studies and the relevant variables that have tested the impact of trust on team satisfaction. All these studies have asserted the significant relationship between trust and team satisfaction. Thus, we present the following hypothesis:

⇒ **H6:** Team trust is positively related to team effectiveness.

There is thus enough theoretical and empirical evidence to show the relationship among shared transformational leadership, workplace spirituality or spirit at work, team trust, and team effectiveness which is conceptualized as comprising dimensions, such as team performance, commitment, and satisfaction. The following model results from the theory advanced in this paper (Figure 1).



Discussion

This research endeavor has resulted in several implications for team effectiveness, which comprises team interpersonal processes and team members' learning and well-being. First, this paper has examined the role of shared transformational leadership culture on team members by examining its positive influence on team effectiveness. Second, this research endeavor has integrated workplace spirituality research discourse with team effectiveness research endeavors. Third, this research endeavor has contributed to advancing the team effectiveness research discourse by positing workplace spirituality and team trust as mediators between shared transformational leadership and team effectiveness in a serial mediation model.

Theoretical Implications

Several theoretical implications emerge from the theoretical evidence that this paper provides. First, transformational leadership behaviors augment team members' identities (Shamir et al., 2018). Identities are of two types : social identity and individual identity. Social identity emerges when individuals objectify themselves and associate themselves with 'social categories and classifications' (Stets & Burke, 2014), which will cause depersonalization, culminating in team identification.

Second, group identity attains salience, or the activated identity with the group, if group members perceive psychological significance. However, the salience of identity depends upon commitment to the social identity they are pursuing (Brenner et al., 2018). Commitment to an identity depends upon factors such as positive evaluation of one's identity by others and cultural definitions, the degree of congruent expectations of others and the extensiveness of a network of others, and the number of persons within a network of others whose verification is sought to assert one's identity. Thus, the commitment to the group identity will inspire a higher team-member exchange process among team members (Farmer et al., 2015).

Third, team-member exchange processes make up the quality of relationships among team members. While the operationalized team-member exchange score of the entire group reflects the strength of a group's collective identity, the individual team-exchange score of individual team members represents a group identity that individual team members possess. Shared transformational leadership behaviors increase the quality of team-exchange processes and help team members achieve uniqueness in within-group relationships. Thus, shared transformational leadership behaviors are likely to positively influence group scores and individual team-member exchange processes, which is likely to influence the dimensions of team effectiveness, that is, team growth, shared social processes, and individual well-being of team members.

Fourth, though the idea that social identity is a function of cultural definitions and social structure (Brenner et al., 2018) is an idea that McCall et al. (2020) theoretically accept, they look at identity as a function of roles that individuals enact in social structures. Similarly, Stets and Burke (2014) argued that individual identity captures role identity and personal identity. McCall et al. (2020) argued that individuals idealize individuals' social positions or roles, and thus, they form the notion of the idealized self. As a result, individuals seek verification of this idealized self from others by enacting social or organizational roles. However, there will always be a gap between what is idealized and verified by others. The theory argues further that it is support for identity that individuals primarily seek through the exchange dynamic, which inherently exists in this process of verification of identity. Thus, individuals aspire to assert their identity by establishing their uniqueness within their group.

Fifth, as we can interpret individual identity as either role identity or personal identity (Stets & Burke, 2014), the role identity connotes a designated position in a social structure that invests 'meanings as expectations.' Invoking an individual identity through individualized consideration, compatible with team role-performance, can lead to collective identity, individual self-efficacy, and collective self-efficacy, which results in team connectedness and the consequent team effectiveness by enhancing team performance, commitment, and satisfaction.

Sixth, the shared transformational leadership initiates motivation processes in teams. As a result, team members experience workplace spirituality or spirit at work. This will, in its turn, strengthen team effectiveness. Transformational leadership behaviors verify the salient identities of team members through inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, which will create suitable team-level situations to facilitate individuals to enact their salient identities in team functioning. As a result, the shared social processes within the team will increase, which will enable team performance that exceeds customer expectations.

Seventh, the symbolic interactionism theory of trust argues that value congruence is inevitable for trust to

sustain longer. However, people trust each other initially by making assumptions regarding value congruence (Dietz, 2011). Trust develops through its stages of conditional trust and unconditional trust, which implies that distrust need not be the starting point of human interaction as people are likely to suspend their beliefs regarding the absence of distrust of the other party in their initial interactions. Workplace spirituality would naturally lead to mutual trust among team members.

Last, unconditional trust develops when there is value congruence. Transformational leadership facilitates value congruence through motivational processes (Chakraborty & Altekari, 2021; Shamir et al., 2018). As a result, a transformation of suspended belief into distrust into the willingness to trust each other comes into existence, which will, in its consequence, lead to increased cooperation among team members and higher team performance.

Managerial Implications

A crucial managerial implication of this paper is the need to demonstrate the behavior of compelling direction that transformational leadership behaviors should display (Hackman & Wageman, 2009). The compelling direction provided by team members' transformational leadership behaviors facilitates team effectiveness for three reasons: First, it energizes team members because the overall purpose that the compelling direction presents before team members is challenging, which inspires motivation. Second, it orients team members towards their performance objective and thus helps them develop appropriate performance strategies. Such direction orients the team towards its collective purpose by clarifying the same and thus helps align its performance strategy towards collaborative team purpose. The nature of work itself may provide performance orientation. If it doesn't, it becomes someone else's responsibility either within or outside the team to provide an objective that acts as a performance orientation. Third, compelling direction fully engages team members' talents, which means that every team member contributes to the team's collective purpose. Such direction becomes consequential to the team by engaging the team members fully by enabling the full utilization of their knowledge and skills. Moreover, those team members who have more excellent knowledge and skills assist others short of the same.

Transformational leadership behaviors of team members act as powerful drivers of team effectiveness if team members are aware of how they need to provide an exciting direction to their associates, significantly elevating the status of a team as a self-managing team. In this connection, the arguments of Hackman and Wageman (2009) are worth noting. They argue that providing reasonable autonomy to teams is necessary to ensure the outcome of collective internal motivation. The prime advantage of providing reasonable autonomy to teams is that they can get beyond the idea of 'one best way' of doing work dictated by standard work procedures. As transformational leadership behaviors ensure the practice of reflexivity, they help avoid the possibility of probable disadvantages of the mindless application of standardization.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to team effectiveness research by finding enough theoretical grounding for the conceptualized model of serial mediation in the theories of identity and the theory of individuation. The paper has also explored the relationships among shared transformational leadership and team effectiveness, shared transformational leadership and spirit at work, shared transformational leadership, team trust, spirit at work and team trust, spirit at work and team effectiveness, and between team trust and team effectiveness. Also, this paper has discussed the theoretical and empirical evidence for the same. Finally, this paper has developed a model of serial mediation.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions

Future research should be cautious while conceptualizing the higher-order constructs, such as shared transformational leadership and multidimensional spirit at work. Scholars such as Day (2014) proposed compelling arguments that it is incorrect to conceptualize multidimensional constructs as higher-order reflective constructs. Though there may be validated evidence that the confirmatory factor analysis may have provided to suggest an empirical justification for the second-order factors, scholars (Day, 2014) argue that this kind of theorizing may lack theoretical meaning. Some argue that causality flows from dimensions to the latent construct and not vice versa. The reason for the same, some argue, is that the latent construct does not contain the essential meaning embedded in its dimensions. Instead, the meaning emerges from the dimensions that make up the latent construct. Therefore, scholars (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2014) have argued that researchers should conceptualize the latent constructs as the reflective – formative higher-order constructs.

Following this argument, Day (2014) also makes a case for theorizing transformational leadership as the second-order reflective – formative construct. The empirical justification for this kind of conceptualization is the argument that shared variance among dimensions or factors emerges because of the common method bias. Therefore, future studies may attempt to rule out the possibility of common method variance among the dimensions of a latent construct, such as shared transformational leadership, if we theorize it as a reflective – reflective higher-order construct. If the researchers find the evidence for common method variance, they may theorize the latent constructs like shared transformational leadership as the higher-order constructs of reflective-formative type. Further, we also advise researchers to investigate the incremental importance of these second-order constructs by using dominance or usefulness analysis by following the guidelines of Johnson et al. (2011). Further, the theorized models' theoretical and empirical meaning will become robust if future studies attempt to test the alternative modeling of indicators (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2014).

Authors' Contribution

Prof. Nandan Prabhu conceptualized the paper and wrote the manuscript. Prof. Navin Kumar reviewed the literature and edited the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Funding Acknowledgment

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or for the publication of this article.

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