



How Team Members' Transformational Leadership and Effective Followership Work During Team Interactions

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How Team Members' Transformational Leadership and Effective Followership Work During Team Interactions

ABSTRACT

In the current study, a mixed-method research design was used to explore how team members' transformational leadership and effective followership relate to teamwork quality. Data were collected from 10 student project teams (N [team] = 10; N [individual] = 84 team members) in a leadership class at a large-sized public university in the United States. As a follow-up, focus group interviews were conducted with two teams (n = 13 team members) to explore how team members' transformational leadership and effective followership work during team interactions. Correlation results showed that team members' transformational leadership was positively related to teamwork quality ($r(82) = .84, p < .01$). In the qualitative phase, findings showed that the team exhibiting centralized transformational leadership also exhibited passive team followership and low-quality teamwork. Low-quality teamwork was described as social loafing and polarization. In contrast, the team exhibiting shared transformational leadership also exhibited proactive team followership and high-quality teamwork. High-quality teamwork was described as conflict resolution and team synergy. The findings have important implications for leaders, followers, leadership educators, teams, organizations, and researchers.

Introduction

The societal challenges of today are becoming increasingly complex (Turner et al., 2018). Addressing complex problems such as climate change, food security, and more recently—COVID-19, require individuals who are able to work collaboratively with others in teams. According to the Job Outlook 2021 survey of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2021), employers ranked the *ability to work in a team* as their most desired competency in college graduates, moving up from fifth to first place between 2014 and 2021. The upward trend in the desirability of teamwork competency underlines the significance of working effectively as a team (McIntyre & Foti, 2013). As a result, leadership scholars have explored team leadership as a predictor of teamwork (Boies et al., 2015; Cha et al., 2015; Dionne et al., 2004).

Effective team leadership is often conceptualized as team transformational leadership (Cha et al., 2015; Dionne et al., 2004). Team studies scholars have traditionally theorized team leadership as the domain of the team leader, and many studies have examined the relationship between team leaders' transformational leadership and teamwork (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2011). While the research on the relationship between team leaders' transformational leadership and teamwork is abundant in the literature, there

is a dearth of research regarding the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. However, with the increasing popularity of self-managed teams (i.e., teams with no organizationally assigned team leaders) in today's organizations (Carte et al., 2006), where team members are expected to be responsible for their own leadership, there is a need to explore the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork.

Teamwork requires team members to switch between both leadership and followership roles—that is, knowing when to lead and when to take a step back and follow (Carson et al., 2007; Ford & Harding, 2018). However, traditional leadership approaches have focused too much on the role of leaders with little attention on the role of followers (Kellerman, 2013). Leadership scholars have argued that leader-centered approaches are not adequate in providing the interdependent and collaborative environment that is required to address complex and adaptive problems (Turner et al., 2018; Western, 2010). Consequently, there is a need to prepare a workforce and/or citizens equipped with the requisite skills for effective leadership as well as followership in teams (DeRue, 2011; Epitropaki et al., 2017). As a result, it is important to explore how team members' effective leadership (i.e., team members' transformational leadership) and followership behaviors relate to teamwork.

Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

To effectively conceptualize the current study, previous literature was reviewed on key variables: (a) teamwork quality, (b) team transformational leadership, and (c) team effective followership.

Teamwork Quality

Teamwork, although well studied in the literature, seems to lack a conventional definition (Salas et al., 2005). Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001) conceptualized teamwork quality as consisting of six components: communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion. To successfully engage in teamwork, teams need to engage in coordinating mechanisms, which include: shared mental model, mutual trust, and closed-loop communication (Salas et al., 2005). The value of teamwork lies in the ability of a team to create creative synergy, where a team's creativity is greater than the sum of its members' creative abilities (Kurtzberg & Amabile 2001). Such creative synergy occurs when a team, through high-quality teamwork processes (i.e., coordination, communication, balance of members' contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion), has achieved a gain in performance by working together (Franz, 2012). To achieve a gain in performance, known as process gains, teams must minimize the potential losses of working together, while

maximizing the potential gains of working together (Franz, 2012). Previous quantitative studies have shown a positive relationship between teamwork quality and superior team outcomes (Cha et al., 2015; Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001; Salas et al., 2005). However, such quantitative evidence lacks a deep and rich description, and there is a need to explore more deeply how team members perceive teamwork quality in their teams (Kozlowski, 2015). Thus, in the hope of supplementing limited qualitative research, team members' perception of teamwork quality in their teams was explored (*Research Question (RQ) 1: How do team members perceive their overall teamwork quality?*).

Team Transformational Leadership

Effective leadership is often conceptualized as transformational leadership (Alegbeleye & Kaufman, 2020). According to the model of transformational leadership, transformational leaders influence followers to perform above and beyond their job descriptions (Bass, 1999). As is the case with transformational leadership at the individual level, team transformational leadership (TTL) consists of four behaviors—inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio et al., 1999).

At the team level, transformational leadership has been conceptualized primarily in two ways: either as the behavior of the team leader or that of the team. For example, Wang and Howell (2010) conceptualized TTL as the team-focused transformational leadership of team leaders, which consists of three transformational leadership behaviors for team development: (a) emphasizing group identity (derived from idealized influence), (b) communicating a group vision (derived from inspirational motivation), and (c) team-building. Conversely, Sivasubramaniam et al. (2002) conceptualized TTL as the shared transformational leadership of team members, which refers to the “collective influence of members in a team on each other” (p. 68). Consequently, team members, through team transformational leadership, would collectively inspire, influence, stimulate, and consider one another.

Team Transformational Leadership and Teamwork Quality

Dionne and colleagues (2004) proposed a theoretical model whereby team transformational leadership (TTL) of team leaders would predict teamwork processes, which would, in turn, predict team performance outcomes. Dionne et al. (2004) hypothesized a relationship between the four I's (i.e., inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) of transformational leadership and teamwork processes of cohesion, communication, and conflict management. First, it was hypothesized that inspirational motivation/idealized influence would foster a shared vision, which would in turn positively predict team cohesion (Dionne et al., 2004). Second, it was hypothesized that individualized consideration would

positively predict team communication (Dionne et al., 2004). Lastly, it was hypothesized that intellectual stimulation would generate functional team conflict, which will in turn positively predict team conflict management (Dionne et al., 2004). Based on the model of Dionne et al., Boies, Fiset, and Gill (2015) found the transformational leadership behaviors of team leaders (i.e., intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation) to positively relate to teamwork components such as team communication and team trust (Boies et al., 2015). Similarly, many empirical studies suggest that the transformational leadership of team leaders predicts teamwork quality. For example, Yang, Huang, and Wu (2011) observed that project managers' transformational leadership styles predicted teamwork quality (as measured by a composite scale of team communication, team collaboration, and team cohesiveness), which in turn predicted team performance. Cha, Kim, Lee, and Bachrach (2015) found a positive relationship between team leaders' transformational leadership and inter-team collaboration. Lehmann-Willenbrock, Meinecke, Rowold, and Kauffeld (2015) observed that team leaders' transformational leadership has an indirect relationship with a team's communication style.

Although studies examining the relationship between team leaders' transformational leadership and teamwork are abundant in the literature, the research on the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork is scarce. However, many organizations today increasingly rely on self-managed teams (Carte et al., 2006), where team members are provided with little to no supervision, and are expected to lead themselves. Therefore, there is a need to explore the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. Nonetheless, few studies have explored the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and other variables such as team effectiveness (Pearce & Sims, 2002), team performance (Ensley et al., 2006; Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002), team trust (Boies et al., 2010), and team potency (Boies et al., 2010; Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002). Pearce and Sims (2002) found a positive relationship between team members' transformational leadership and team effectiveness. Ensley et al. (2006) observed team members' transformational leadership to be a significant predictor of new venture performance. Boies et al. (2010) found team members' transformational leadership to be a positive predictor of team trust and potency. However, a significant relationship between team members' transformational leadership and team performance did not obtain for Boies et al. (2010).

While the evidence on the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and team performance is mixed, the preponderance of evidence suggests that team members' transformational leadership predicts superior team performance outcomes (i.e., effectiveness, performance, team trust, and team potency).

Moreover, researchers have suggested that teamwork is an intermediate process between team leaders' transformational leadership and team performance outcomes (Boies et al., 2015; Cha et al., 2015; Dionne et al., 2004; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015). Consequently, it was proposed in the current study that *team members' transformational leadership was positively related to teamwork quality* (Hypothesis 1). To probe further, team members were asked how they perceived TTL influenced overall teamwork quality (Research Question (RQ) 2: *How do team members perceive team transformational leadership influences overall teamwork quality?*)

Team Effective Followership

Follower-centric leadership scholars have argued that leadership effectiveness does not occur without followers (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2018; Kellerman, 2013; Kelley, 2008). That is, leadership effectiveness is not the exclusive domain of leaders, and it is contingent upon both the followers' effectiveness as well as the leader's effectiveness. While there are many followership theories in the literature, the central premise of followership theories entails increased follower participation in decision-making (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). In general, effective followers possess eight main qualities: self-management, commitment/engagement, competence, intelligent disobedience, dependability, cooperativeness, supportiveness, and courage (Agho, 2009; Chaleff, 2015; Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Kelley, 1992).

Although some studies have suggested that followership is not possible in teams with shared leadership (since team members should have equal standing and influence; see Gronn, 2002; Vanderslice, 1988), other researchers have suggested otherwise (Carson et al., 2007; Epitropaki et al., 2017; Ford & Harding, 2018). According to Carson et al. (2007), shared leadership, especially in self-managed teams, involves the exchange of influences between team members, who interchangeably act as leaders and followers. However, while the leadership literature has mostly focused on the influencer (i.e., the leading team member), the one that is influenced (i.e., the following team member) is equally important for the influencing relationship to take place. However, little is known about effective followership in teams.

Team Effective Followership and Teamwork

While many studies have explored effective followership at the individual level as an antecedent of superior organizational outcomes (Favara, 2009; Novikov, 2016), the relationship between effective followership at the team level and teamwork quality has been unexplored. Nonetheless, many theoretical studies have suggested a positive relationship between team effective followership and teamwork quality (Carson et al., 2007; Epitropaki et al., 2017; Muethel & Hoegl, 2013; Townsend, 2002). However, there are currently no

empirical studies that have explored the relationship between team effective followership and teamwork quality. Thus, the current study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by proposing Research Question (RQ) 3: *How do team members perceive team effective followership influences overall teamwork quality?*

Methods

Context

College students who were enrolled in a leadership class at a large-sized public university in the United States were sampled for the current study. Students enrolled in the course were required to work in teams of 10 people to design and complete a semester-long service-learning project in partnership with an approved organization, institute, or community. As part of the service-learning project, students were required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of service. Each team self-selected three representatives from their team—two coordinators to coordinate the team and one secretary to submit the project. The teams had the autonomy to change their self-selected representatives at any point during the lifespan of the team. Moreover, all team members were required to complete the Clifton's StrengthsFinder assessment by Gallup (Louis, 2012) at the beginning of the course to identify their strengths and enable them to work better with their teammates. The Clifton's StrengthsFinder has been used as a tool for team development among college student project teams (Jackson & Magun-Jackson, 2003). The study's population was selected because the teams were self-managed and engaged in community/social change projects. Transformational leadership has been identified in the leadership literature as one of the leadership styles required for bringing about social change (Burns, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Moreover, college students enrolled in a leadership class may be in a better position to respond to the survey and interview questions in the current study, as they would have the requisite knowledge of leadership concepts.

Research Design

An explanatory sequential mixed method design was used in the current study to explore the relationship between team members' transformational leadership, team members' effective followership, and teamwork quality. The explanatory sequential design consists of two phases: first quantitative, and then qualitative (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative phase of the study involved a survey design to investigate the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork quality.

As is customary with explanatory sequential designs, the findings from the quantitative phase were used to design the qualitative phase of the study (Creswell, 2014). Particularly, the teamwork quality score from the

quantitative phase was used to select teams for the qualitative phase. In the qualitative phase, focus group interviews were conducted to explore team members' perceptions of their overall teamwork quality, as well as how team members' transformational leadership and effective followership related to teamwork. At the integration phase, the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases were mixed and analyzed.

Quantitative Phase

Sampling Procedure

Quantitative data were collected through survey instruments that were completed via Qualtrics. The population consisted of 97 college students enrolled in a leadership class at a large-sized public university in the United States, forming 10 project teams with an average team size of 10. Of the 97 students enrolled in the leadership class, 86 students (88.6%) agreed to participate in the study. Two participants' data were deleted due to incompleteness. The final sample consisted of 84 students (N = 84 team members), forming 10 project teams (N = 10 teams). The respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old; 48.8% of the respondents identified as females while 51.2% identified as males. Although four major races were reported (i.e., Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, White American, Black or African American, and Asian American), White Americans (54.3%) made up the majority of the respondents, followed by Black or African Americans (20.2%).

Measures

Team Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (TMLQ). A team-level questionnaire developed by Bass and Avolio (1996) was used to measure the team members' transformational leadership. Twenty-five items representing four scales (i.e., Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration) were used from the TMLQ (which consists of 12 scales and 50 items) to measure team members' transformational leadership behaviors. A sample item rated by participants was: "Members of my team emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission." The TMLQ instrument uses a five-point scale ranging from 1 for 'not at all' to 5 for 'frequently, if not always.' The portion of the TMLQ used in the current study yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96.

Teamwork Quality (TWQ). Hoegl and Gemuenden's (2001) teamwork quality instrument (TWQ) was used to measure teamwork quality. The instrument measures teamwork quality along six sub-constructs: communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001). The TWQ is a 38-item questionnaire that uses a five-point scale ranging from 1 for 'strongly disagree' to 5 for 'strongly agree.' Sample item rated by participants was: "The team members communicated

mostly directly and personally with each other.” The TWQ used in the current study yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94.

Control Variables

While leadership researchers have often controlled for the effect of individual-level variables such as age, gender, race, and organizational tenure on leadership outcomes (Boatwright & Forrest, 2000; Boies et al., 2015; Eagly et al., 2003), such variables mostly lose their meaning at the team level of analysis. Therefore, since the current study's analysis was conducted at the team level, variables that lose their meaning at the team level (e.g., gender and race) were excluded from further analysis. Team-level variables such as team size and team tenure have been controlled for among team researchers (see Boies et al., 2015; Cha et al., 2015; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015). However, in the current study, team size and tenure were not statistically controlled for, but were controlled for during the design phase of the study, as team size was mostly homogenous ($M = 9.7$, $SD = 0.48$) and team tenure was consistent across teams.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, SD) of team members' transformational leadership (i.e., TMLQ) and teamwork quality (i.e., TWQ) were reported. Pearson product-moment correlation and Cronbach's alpha test of TMLQ and TWQ were also conducted to test the hypothesis; the significance level was set at the 0.05 level. Inter-rater reliability (i.e., R_{wg}) was also reported to justify data aggregation. SPSS 26 was utilized for data analyses.

Qualitative Phase

Sampling Procedure

Based on the findings from the quantitative phase, three teams were selected from a leadership class [at a large-sized public university in the United States] to participate in three separate focus group interviews based on their teamwork quality scores (TWQ)—that is, high versus medium versus low teamwork quality. However, only two teams agreed to participate in the focus groups, which included one high-quality teamwork team and one low-quality teamwork team. Research has shown that two to three focus groups are adequate for focus group research (Guest et al., 2017).

As shown in Table 1, the TWQ score for the high-quality teamwork team was 4.25 while the TWQ score for the low-quality teamwork team was 3.32. Team J (i.e., the high-quality teamwork team) had 10 members. In Team J, 80% ($n=8$) participated in the focus group. Similarly, Team A (i.e., the low-quality teamwork team) had

10 members. In Team A, 50% (n=5) participated in the focus group. In total, the focus groups comprised 2 teams with 13 members (n [team] = 2, n [individual] = 13).

Teams	TTL	TWQ
A	3.55	3.32
B	3.38	3.45
C	3.81	3.54
D	4.06	3.59
E	3.68	3.76
F	3.94	3.79
G	3.94	3.92
H	4.23	4.19
I	4.18	4.23
J	4.21	4.25

Table 1

TTL and TWQ

Scores for all Teams

Note. TTL = Team transformational leadership; TTL ratings ranged from 1 for ‘not at all’ to 5 for ‘frequently, if not always.’ TWQ = Teamwork quality. TWQ ratings ranged from 1 for ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 for ‘strongly agree.’ Teams are arranged in ascending order based on TWQ score.

Measures

The focus group protocol included questions developed *a priori* using relevant literature (Creswell et al., 2003). However, the interview protocol was modified based on the findings from the quantitative phase, as is the case with explanatory sequential designs (Creswell et al., 2003). Participants were asked open-ended questions relating to their perceptions of their teamwork quality, as well as how team members’ transformational leadership (TTL) and team followership (TF) influence teamwork. While the questions asked were mostly primary questions, there were some probing follow-up questions asked as well, to gain an in-depth understanding of participants’ perceptions. TTL was conceptualized as the ability to collectively influence and

motivate each other (Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002). TTL interview questions included: (1) “Have team members engaged in ‘influencing and motivating’ other members? How so?” (2) “What effects (if any) did ‘influencing and motivating’ other members have on working together as a team? TF was conceptualized as the ability to collectively support and improve other teammates’ work (Chaleff, 2015). TF interview questions included: (1) “What was your experience of team members ‘supporting and improving’ other members’ ideas?” (2) “What effects (if any) did ‘supporting and improving’ other members' ideas have on working together as a team?”

Data Analysis

Each focus group was audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. The professional transcription service, Temi, was used to transcribe the data. Focus group transcripts were coded using a line-by-line analysis of transcripts to excerpt data that forms a complete thought (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Microsoft Excel was used to organize the coded excerpts; two or more similar codes were grouped into themes for discussion and interpretation. The emergent themes were used to answer the research questions in the study. For confidentiality, participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms. Excerpts were denoted with 'E.'

Validity procedures employed in the current study included triangulation and peer debriefing. The explanatory mixed methods design used in the study allowed for triangulation of findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases. Moreover, the emergent themes were carefully reviewed with a peer who is an expert in qualitative research. The process of triangulation and peer debriefing helped increase the accuracy and credibility of the qualitative findings in the study.

Integration Phase

Finally, in the integration phase, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases were mixed. The emergent themes from the qualitative phase were used to examine the differences or similarities that existed between teams (i.e., the high-quality teamwork team versus the low-quality teamwork team) in the perception of *teamwork quality*, *team transformational leadership*, and *team followership*. Moreover, in the integration phase, the qualitative findings were used to explain the findings from the quantitative phase.

Results

The results are organized into two sections: (a) Quantitative results, and (b) Qualitative results.

Quantitative Results

Data aggregation. Data collected at the individual level with team-level constructs (i.e., TMLQ and TWQ) were aggregated to the team level before further analysis. To justify aggregation, R_{wg} (i.e., inter-rater

reliability) was conducted within each of the 10 teams (Demaree & Wolf, 1984). Mean R_{wg} for each of the three scales met the recommended cut-off point of 0.7 (Demaree & Wolf, 1984). The mean R_{wg} for the *team members' transformational leadership* scale (TMLQ) was 0.81, with 80% of the teams having an R_{wg} of at least 0.70; and the mean R_{wg} for the *teamwork quality* scale (TWQ) was 0.88, with all of the teams having an R_{wg} of at least 0.70. Besides, all median R_{wg} values were above the recommended cut-off value of 0.70, justifying aggregation.

Result of the hypothesis test. In hypothesis 1, it was predicted that team members' transformational leadership would be positively related to teamwork quality. As shown in Table 2, there was a significant positive relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork quality ($r(82) = .84, p < .01$), providing support for hypothesis 1.

Table 2

Summary of Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach's Alpha of Variables

	VAR	TMLQ	TWQ
1.	TMLQ	1.00	.84**
2.	TWQ	.84**	1.00
	Mean	3.90	3.80
	SD	0.29	0.34
		0.96	0.94

Note. Variables are aggregated to team-level. $n(\text{team}) = 10$, $n(\text{individual}) = 84$. VAR = variables; TMLQ = team members' transformational leadership behavior measured with the Team Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire; TWQ = teamwork quality; Mean = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; Cronbach's alpha.

* $p < .05$ level

** $p < .01$ level.

Qualitative Results

RQ 1: How do team members perceive their overall teamwork quality? To address research question 1, four themes emerged (see Table 3), which included two themes from the low-quality teamwork team (i.e., exhibiting social loafing and polarizing in-group versus out-group) and two themes from the high-quality teamwork team (i.e., resolving minor conflicts and establishing team synergy).

Table 3

Team Perceptions of Teamwork Quality

Themes and Categories

Theme 1: Exhibiting social loafing

Imbalance of members' contributions

Competing priorities

Lack of friendship

Theme 2: Polarizing in-group versus out-group lines

Dissonance in task delegation

Dissonance in communication
Dissonance in task coordination

Theme 3: Resolving Minor conflicts quickly

Uncooperative teammate
Scheduling conflict

Theme 4: Establishing team synergy

Task identity
Friendship
Tasks delegation
Tasks coordination
Balance of members' contributions

Low-quality teamwork team. The team reported exhibiting social loafing. Team members reported an imbalance of members' contributions toward team tasks. of friendship among team members was also highlighted. Team members believed the lack of friendship was partly responsible for social loafing. Many also ascribed the social loafing to the competing priorities of team members—the team reported the presence of two members who did not contribute their fair share of the team task because of other non-academic commitments. The lack of friendship and imbalance of members' contributions made task work cumbersome. Additionally, team members identified the large team size as an important factor that encouraged social loafing and conflict.

The team shared that they were polarized into in-group versus out-group. Team members expressed discordant experiences regarding task delegation, task communication, and task coordination. Regarding task delegation, members of the in-group described task delegation as efficient, while members of the out-group believed that tasks were not well delegated, and they did not have a role:

I wasn't part of it. . . and like I said, people thought that I wasn't participating when I wanted to. Like, I really wanted to participate. I really only felt that [I was part of the group] when we were doing our presentation slides or our case studies that I was there in the group. It just made me feel like a bad group member. But it's just because I felt like I didn't have a role. (Leslie, E48)

There was also dissonance in the perception of communication. Members of the in-group expressed that there was good communication in the team, while members of the out-group felt the communication was poor: **“I would say that there were a couple of people that I talked to in our group who did not feel like we were very communicative and were lost” (Leslie, E5).** Similarly, there was dissonance in the perception of task coordination. Members of the in-group suggested that the team meetings were effectively coordinated, while members of the out-group expressed that some team members would have started team meetings before the specified time, and they felt alienated:

The only problem with that was a lot of people got [to team meeting venues] early. I feel like because I did not have a class before, I always was able to get there early and kind of start working on it. So, those people that were maybe coming from across campus, I feel like probably felt left out or had a tough time. Like getting plugged in and figuring out what they were supposed to do. (Anthony, E12)

High-quality teamwork team. The team shared that they resolved minor conflicts quickly. Team members expressed they had some minor conflicts in their team. Conflicts included an uncooperative teammate who did not work with the rest of the group and gave a separate presentation. Team members also expressed that they experienced conflicts with scheduling their service-learning project. However, scheduling conflicts were quickly resolved:

Everyone was willing to work around it [i.e., the scheduling conflict]. Once everyone initially said “okay this is what we're doing,” if people had work normally, then they got it switched and everyone kind of worked around it. (Kimberly, E10)

The team reported that they established team synergy. Team members established synergy through task identity, friendship, task delegation, task coordination, and balance of members' contributions. First, team members expressed that they all had a passion for their project: “Well, I think what made this group successful, we all had a passion or a love for animals. Like we all enjoy working with animals, so that made our group easier (Angelique, E19). Second, team members considered themselves as friends, and they reported having personal relationships outside of the classroom. Sarah also echoed this point: “It wasn't like weird for people to share things about their job or their exams that they have going on or like personal relationships” (E103). Third, team members expressed that tasks were delegated based on their strengths. Task delegation was voluntary and team members were always willing to step up to the task. Also, team members expressed that they were able to coordinate their respective sub-tasks closely. One way they coordinated tasks was to communicate through the messaging app GroupMe. Lastly, team members reported that their teammates were equally committed to team tasks, and tasks were equitably distributed. According to Sarah, “I don't think we had any like freeloaders. It wasn't like it's that one person [doing all the work]” (E3). Lizzie echoed this point: “Usually in a group project, there's at least one person that's not doing much. But it wasn't that way. This group, we were all doing stuff” (E4).

RQ 2: How do team members perceive team transformational leadership influences overall teamwork quality? To address research question 2, two themes emerged (see Table 4), which included one theme from the low-quality teamwork team (i.e., exhibiting centralized transformational leadership), and one theme from the high-quality teamwork team (i.e., exhibiting shared transformational leadership).

Table 4

Perceptions of Team Leadership

Themes and Categories

Theme 1: Exhibiting centralized transformational leadership

Individuals not stepping up to leadership roles

Emergent-centralized leadership

Theme 2: Exhibiting shared transformational leadership

Emergent-distributed leadership

Centralized transformational leadership not needed

Low-quality teamwork team. The team shared that they exhibited centralized transformational leadership. Team members expressed that many of their teammates did not step up to leadership roles within the team, which was attributed to a lack of self-motivation. Team members also identified the large team size as contributing to individuals not stepping up to leadership roles: “Yeah, I think definitely taking on roles as well would be way easier in a group of five, I think with 10, a lot of people get lost in that” (Stephanie, E51). Team members highlighted that two team members were not stepping up to leadership roles because of their competing non-academic commitments. Although each team had three self-selected leaders—two coordinators to lead the team and one secretary to submit the project—there seemed to be a leadership void. Nonetheless, team members expressed that few individuals stepped up to take leadership roles: “I think some people just decided to take those roles and the others didn’t” (Stephanie, E42). Team members explained that the emergent-centralized leaders were sources of motivation: “I would say that they definitely motivated me just by working hard and leading by example to motivate me as a team member to work harder” (Anthony, E30).

High-quality teamwork team. The team reported that they exhibited shared transformational leadership. Team members expressed that, although they had coordinators, the leadership in their team was distributed, such that the roles of leading and following were shared. One of the coordinators echoed such a sentiment:

I was the secretary, but I don’t feel like I did any more work than anybody else. There was not much that I did that everybody else didn’t do. So, I feel like the title was not really necessary. We all ended up kind of doing it. (Megan, E47)

Team members expressed that leadership was distributed based on strengths. Team members maintained that a centralized transformational leader was not needed because of the self-motivation of members: “I don’t think that we really had any issues with the motivating portion just because everyone has a passion for animals. Everyone cares about their grade. So, no one really like wanted to slack” (Melissa, E28). Team members also revealed that they collectively influenced and motivated themselves, as opposed to relying on an individual (or set of individuals) to influence the rest of the team.

RQ 3: How do team members perceive team effective followership influences overall teamwork quality? To answer research question 3, two themes emerged (see Table 5), which included one theme from the low-quality teamwork team (i.e., exhibiting passive team followership), and one theme from the high-quality teamwork team (i.e., exhibiting proactive team followership).

Low-quality teamwork team. The team shared that they exhibited passive team followership. While some team members were instrumental in achieving the team’s goals, many were passive followers. Team members expressed that they had more followers than leaders in the team. According to Anthony, “We had more followers than leaders in the team” (E40). Members were satisfied with being followers in the team:

I don’t think if you have a group of 10 people, having 10 people try and be leaders is probably not the most effective thing in the world. So, I don’t think it’s a bad thing that we’ve had three or four leaders and six followers (Brianna, E45).

Some team members even self-identified as followers: “I definitely wouldn’t say I was a leader of this group necessarily. I was definitely one of the followers” (Anthony, E29). The followers were happy to passively support the emergent leaders in the team. Team members also expressed that they would rather support than challenge: “Yeah, I would definitely say we supported more than we challenged” (Anthony, E36). Brianna also echoed this point: “There were a lot of supporting people” (E58).

Table 5

Perceptions of Team Followership

Themes and Categories

Theme 1: Exhibiting passive team followership

Passive followership

Limited challenging behaviors

Theme 2: Exhibiting proactive team followership

Distributed followership

Team followership behavior of improving and supporting

Team followership behavior of challenging

Team followership more prevalent than team transformational leadership

High-quality teamwork team. The team reported that they exhibited proactive team followership. Team members expressed that they collectively displayed distributed followership. They described the followership in the team as a team effort, where individuals are ready to step back and follow when others are taking up leadership roles:

For example, when certain people wanted to do certain slides, we'll just step back and let them work on that. Like just stepping back and being a follower. Like for me, even though I was a core coordinator, if anybody was stepping up to take leadership, I would just let them do it. I wasn't like, "oh no, this is my job," So, I guess that's effective [followership]. (Abigail, E49)

Team members described themselves as supportive and always willing to review and improve their teammates' sub-tasks: "Reviewing and correcting or adding ideas was what I think worked really well because all of us were like receptive to it and open to that" (Melissa, E92). Team members explained that they were not passive followers and offered constructive criticism when necessary. The ability to amicably address each other's concerns was attributed to team members' openness to criticism. The effective followership behavior of improving teammates' work was said to have improved the overall quality of the team task.

Team members expressed that they displayed effective followership behaviors than transformational leadership behaviors. When asked which pair of behaviors they experienced more, 'support and improve' (i.e., effective followership behaviors) or 'influence and motivate' (transformational leadership behaviors), everyone chorused "support and improve." Team members claimed that everyone had the psychological safety to voice their opinions.

Discussion/Integration Phase

Quantitative Results

In hypothesis 1, it was predicted that team members' transformational leadership would be positively related to teamwork quality. Pearson correlation result showed that team members' transformational leadership was positively related to teamwork quality ($r(82) = .84, p < .01$), providing support for hypothesis 1. The finding fills a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork quality. **Qualitative Results**

As is to be expected, in the qualitative phase, the themes from teams with high- and low-quality teamwork were sometimes contradictory. To make sense of and discuss the findings, in the integration phase,

emergent themes in teamwork quality, team leadership, and team followership were compared and contrasted between teams (see Table 6).

Table 6

Comparison of Teamwork Quality, Transformational Leadership, and Followership Between Teams

Themes	Teamwork Quality Score (TWQ)	
	High	Low
Teamwork Quality		
Exhibiting social loafing		X
Polarizing in-group versus out-group		X
Resolving minor conflicts quickly	X	
Establishing team synergy	X	
Team Transformational Leadership		
Exhibiting centralized transformational leadership		X
Exhibiting shared transformational leadership	X	
Team Followership		
Exhibiting passive team followership		X
Exhibiting proactive team followership	X	

RQ 1: How do team members perceive their overall teamwork quality? Qualitative findings showed a distinction in the quality of teamwork between teams. The low-quality teamwork team exhibited social loafing, which was attributed to an imbalance of members' contribution, lack of friendship, and competing priorities among team members. However, the high-quality teamwork team resolved minor conflicts quickly and established team synergy.

Findings suggest that the lackadaisical attitude displayed by some of the team members of the low-quality teamwork team might have caused others to contribute less than they were capable, which is in line with research by Singh et al. (2017), suggesting 'contribution conflict' as the main predictor of social loafing. Singh et al. (2017) maintained that the perception of unequal contribution to task work might push team members to the fringes. Moreover, the findings showed that a lack of friendship among team members caused negative emotions, which resulted in social loafing and polarization along in-group versus out-group lines. The findings corroborate the finding by Singh et al. (2017) that 'relationship conflict' predicts social loafing by causing negative emotions in teams.

Findings also suggest that the high-quality teamwork team resolved minor conflicts quickly and established team synergy, which is in consonance with the study by Kurtzberg and Amabile (2001). According to Kurtzberg and Amabile (2001), the value of teamwork lies in the ability of a team to create creative synergy, where a team's creativity is greater than the sum of its members' creative abilities (Kurtzberg & Amabile, 2001). Such creative synergy occurs when a team, through high-quality teamwork processes (e.g., high-quality

communication) has achieved a gain in performance by working together (Franz, 2012). To achieve a gain in performance, known as process gains, teams must minimize the potential losses of working together (e.g., resolving minor conflicts quickly), while maximizing the potential gains of working together (Franz, 2012).

RQ 2: How do team members perceive team transformational leadership influences overall teamwork quality? Qualitative findings showed a distinction in the perception of team transformational leadership (TTL) between teams. The low-quality teamwork team exhibited centralized transformational leadership, while the high-quality teamwork team exhibited shared transformational leadership. The findings suggest a negative relationship between centralized transformational leadership and teamwork quality, while conversely suggesting a positive relationship between shared transformational leadership and teamwork quality. The finding is in line with previous research that suggested a positive relationship between other forms of shared leadership and teamwork. For example, Guenter et al. (2017) found team coordination, an important component of teamwork, to mediate the relationship between shared authentic leadership and perceived team performance of research teams.

The findings from the qualitative phase align with that of the quantitative phase of the study, which showed that team members' transformational leadership was positively related to teamwork quality ($r(82) = .84, p < .01$). Moreover, the findings from the qualitative phase were used to explain the quantitative findings by specifying the type of TTL (i.e., shared transformational leadership) that positively relates to teamwork, and suggesting that some types of TTL (i.e., centralized transformational leadership) may harm teamwork. The findings fill a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork quality.

RQ 3: How do team members perceive team effective followership influences overall teamwork quality? Qualitative findings showed a distinction in the perception of team followership between teams. The low-quality teamwork team exhibited passive team followership, while the high-quality teamwork team exhibited proactive team followership. The findings suggest a positive relationship between team proactive followership and teamwork quality, thereby filling a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between team followership and teamwork quality. In the current study, team proactive followership was found to denote the team's collective ability to actively seek feedback on their respective sub-tasks.

Research Implications

The current study has implications for leadership theory, future leadership research, and leadership practice.

Theoretical Implications

Traditionally, team transformational leadership (TTL) in relation to teamwork has been studied by measuring the transformational leadership of positional team leaders or supervisors (see Boies et al., 2015; Cha et al., 2015; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2011). However, with the proliferation of self-managed teams in organizations (Carte et al., 2006), where team members are provided with little to no supervision, there is a need to explore the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. However, the research on the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork is scarce. Although few studies have explored the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and other variables such as team effectiveness (Pearce & Sims, 2002), team performance (Ensley et al., 2006; Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002), team trust (Boies et al., 2010), and team potency (Boies et al., 2010; Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002), there is a dearth of research concerning team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. The current study, therefore, adds to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence regarding the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork quality.

The current study is unique because a mixed-methods design was utilized to understand the relationship between TTL and teamwork. The follow-up qualitative phase of the study expanded the knowledge base by suggesting that not all types of TTL relate positively to teamwork quality—shared transformational leadership relate positively to teamwork quality, while centralized transformational leadership may harm teamwork quality. The current study, therefore, adds to the literature by providing qualitative evidence regarding the type of team members' transformational leadership that relate positively to teamwork quality.

Lastly, researchers have suggested a positive relationship between team effective followership and superior team outcomes (Carson et al., 2007; Epitropaki et al., 2017; Yang & Shao, 1996); however, no empirical studies have tested the relationship between team followership and teamwork quality. Findings in the current study suggest that passive team followership is negatively related to teamwork quality, while proactive team followership is positively related to teamwork quality. The current study, therefore, fills a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between team followership and teamwork quality.

Implications for Future Research

In the quantitative phase of the current study, team members' transformational leadership was positively related to teamwork quality. However, researchers have suggested that teamwork is an intermediate process between team leaders' transformational leadership and team performance outcomes (Boies et al., 2015; Cha et

al., 2015; Dionne et al., 2004; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015). It remains to be seen whether the same proposition applies to team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies examine the mediatory role of teamwork in the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and team performance outcomes.

In the qualitative phase, two types of leadership emerged: (a) shared transformational leadership in the high-quality teamwork team, and (b) centralized transformational leadership in the low-quality teamwork team. While the findings in the current study suggest that the type of leadership influenced teamwork quality, it is still unclear what influenced the type of leadership that emerged in self-managed student projects teams. In the current study, there were individuals (including, but not limited to, two team members with non-academic commitments) in the low-quality teamwork team who were not stepping up to leadership roles, thereby creating a leadership vacuum, which might have contributed to the emergence of centralized transformational leaders in the low-quality teamwork team. While the competing commitment of the team members with non-academic commitments was mentioned, there is still some ambiguity as to why other team members refused to engage in leadership roles in the low-quality teamwork team. Similarly, it remains unclear why the high-quality teamwork team engaged in shared transformational leadership. Therefore, future research should investigate the antecedents of emergent transformational leadership in teams.

Moreover, the study found shared transformational leadership and proactive followership in the high-quality teamwork team, and centralized transformational leadership and passive followership in the low-quality teamwork team. However, the relationship between shared transformational leadership and proactive followership, as well as centralized transformational leadership and passive followership remain unclear. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies provide empirical support for the relationship between shared transformational leadership and proactive followership in teams, as well as centralized transformational leadership and passive followership in teams.

While interest in followership studies has increased in recent years, limited validated instruments for measuring followership at the individual level remain a challenge (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Perhaps more salient is the need to develop validated instruments for measuring followership at the team level, allowing for a measure of shared followership. While many have suggested that shared leadership involves the exchange of influences between team members, who interchangeably act as leaders and followers (Carson et al., 2007; Epitropaki et al., 2017; Yang & Shao, 1996), there are no theories on shared followership. Also, theories and/or instruments that measure shared leadership are solely focused on leadership functions while ignoring

followership functions (Epitropaki et al., 2017; Muethel & Hoegl, 2013; Yang & Shao, 1996). Therefore, it is recommended that future studies develop theories that specifically conceptualize shared followership in teams.

Practical Implications

Transformational leadership was conceptualized in the current study as a team-level construct and was found to be positively related to teamwork. However, transformational leadership has, for a long time, been conceptualized as an individual-level construct by leadership scholars (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Consequently, students are taught transformational leadership skills to lead change in their communities as individuals. However, societal challenges today are becoming increasingly complex (Turner et al., 2018), and solving them requires individuals who are able to work collaboratively with others in a team. Moreover, the obsession with transformational leadership as an individual-level characteristic, as opposed to a team-level characteristic, may result in individuals' proclivity to dominate in teams, where one or few individuals take the center stage and others operate on the peripheral of the team. As found in the current study, centralized transformational leadership in teams may lead to polarization and harm teamwork. It is, therefore, recommended that leadership educators devote more attention to teaching college students how to share transformational leadership with others in a team (Avolio et al., 2002).

Equally important as teaching shared transformational leadership, is providing college students with the opportunities they need to practice shared transformational leadership. What better way for college students to learn how to build and share transformational leadership with team members than by completing course projects as part of a team? It is recommended that the leadership curriculum be designed in such a way that it necessitates students to complete a semester-long team project in their courses. Such projects should be problem-based, reflecting the problems in the real world. Moreover, the project should be set up as self-managed, where leadership educators provide guidance, while at the same time granting autonomy to teams, especially in matters of team leadership. Such autonomy will provide flexibility in goal setting and implementation and will enable students to learn self-management (Carte et al., 2006). Self-management is particularly important because many work teams today are self-managed. The trend in team self-management has been accelerated by the proliferation of virtual work teams, which are often self-managed (Carte et al., 2006). Moreover, graduating leadership students are more likely to secure entry-level jobs with no formal authority than leadership positions. For such entry-level positions, teamwork skills and the ability to share leadership are more valuable than centralized leadership. It is no wonder that employers have ranked teamwork skills higher than leadership skills in recent years (NACE, 2021). However, granting autonomy should not be

conflated with abandonment. While supervision is difficult in self-managed teams (Stewart & Manz, 1995), leadership educators need to be aware of the team dynamic and be ready to intervene when necessary.

Moreover, leadership programs are mainly focused on developing leadership skills, while devoting little attention to developing followership skills in college students. However, since findings suggest a positive relationship between proactive followership and teamwork quality, it is recommended that leadership programs adopt a leader-follower curriculum (Alegebeye & Kaufman, 2019; Johnson, 2009). With a leader-follower curriculum, college students can learn how to be proactive followers, especially in self-managed team settings, where team members constantly switch between the leader and follower roles (Hoegl & Muethel, 2007). To be proactive followers, students need to be supportive of their teammates on their respective sub-tasks, while at the same time challenging them when necessary. Moreover, students need to be open to feedback from their teammates and be ready to have their sub-tasks improved by their teammates.

Finally, the study has implications for how organizations carry out personnel development. One outcome that employers have prioritized is the ability of college graduates to work effectively in teams (NACE, 2021), as many organizations are increasingly reliant on project teams, where employees are required to work as part of a team (Muethel & Hoegl, 2013). Since the findings of the study showed that shared transformational leadership is germane for high-quality teamwork, employees who lack the skills to share transformational leadership with their teammates may hurt teamwork quality and team effectiveness. It is therefore recommended that organizations invest in shared transformational leadership training for employees.

Study Limitations

A potential limitation of the current study is its small sample size. Ten teams (N [team] = 10, N [individual] = 84) completed the surveys, which is relatively small in team research (Bonett & Wright, 2015). Hence, caution should be exercised when generalizing findings. Also, the study utilized a cross-sectional survey, with survey data collected at a single time point, which makes it inappropriate to infer causal relationships with the findings (Kozlowski, 2015). Because team processes are dynamic processes that are sometimes not linear, it is recommended that future studies adopt a longitudinal approach to explore the relationship between team members' transformational leadership, followership, and teamwork quality at different time points (Kozlowski, 2015).

Another potential weakness is the common source bias, since ratings of teamwork quality and TTL were self-reported (Charoensap et al., 2019). It is recommended that future studies collect data from multiple sources. Moreover, the sample in the current study is relatively homogenous, consisting of students enrolled in a

leadership class and limited to a single university. It is, therefore, recommended that future research conduct a large, multi-site study on the relationship between team members' transformational leadership, followership, and teamwork quality.

Lastly, the study's sample consisted of college students. Although the sample is appropriate because findings are generalized to college graduates, readers should exercise caution in extrapolating findings to professional work teams, since the study's sample consisted of college students who may have had minimal experience operating in work teams. Future studies should replicate the current study in professional work teams.

Conclusion

The study used a mixed-methods design to explore how team members' transformational leadership and effective followership work during team interactions. Correlation results showed that team members' transformational leadership was positively related to teamwork quality ($r(82) = .84, p < .01$). In the qualitative phase, two types of team transformational leadership (TTL) emerged: centralized transformational leadership and shared transformational leadership. Findings showed that the team exhibiting centralized transformational leadership also exhibited passive team followership and low-quality teamwork. Low-quality teamwork was described as social loafing and polarization. In contrast, the team exhibiting shared transformational leadership also exhibited proactive team followership and high-quality teamwork. High-quality teamwork was described as conflict resolution and team synergy.

The findings from the qualitative phase of the study aligned with and explained the findings from the quantitative phase of the study by identifying the type of team members' transformational leadership (i.e., shared transformational leadership) that positively relates to teamwork as well as the type of team members' transformational leadership (i.e., centralized transformational leadership) that may harm teamwork. Similarly, qualitative findings suggest the type of team followership (i.e., proactive team followership) that positively relates to teamwork quality, and the type of team followership (i.e., passive team followership) that negatively relates to teamwork quality.

Previous studies have often explored the relationship between team leaders' transformational leadership and teamwork (Boies et al., 2015; Cha et al., 2015; Dionne et al., 2004; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015). However, no studies have investigated the relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. The current study, therefore, adds to the literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the

relationship between team members' transformational leadership and teamwork. Moreover, the current study fills a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between team followership and teamwork.

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