

**The Best Salesperson is not Always the Best Manager: Implications of Leadership Group Composition on Team Performance**

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**Management/leadership**

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**20-minute oral presentation  
(including questions)  
(Room 404)**

**Abstract 2013-309**

**4:30 PM**

A primary objective of organizational behavior research is dedicated to the perception of how individuals behave on the job and understanding how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of employees. Research has discovered the significance of leadership behaviors in enabling subordinates to perform more effectively and efficiently (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). This study investigates leadership characteristic implications on team performance. This multiphase study developed a scale to measure leadership characterizations and examined team performance through experimental design. Each phase of this study contributes significant findings to leadership providing insight to increasing effectiveness in sport organizations.

It was the primary purpose of this research to compare the effects of a heterogeneous management team to that of a homogeneous management team on overall performance. Rath (2008) suggests that leadership team composition can impact overall performance and that a diverse leadership team will outperform a leadership team assembled with individuals with similar talents. Based on this line of research the following hypothesis was tested.

H1: Team performance will be influenced by leadership team composition; heterogeneous leadership teams will perform better than homogeneous leadership teams.

In addition, members in decidedly cohesive groups often share a social identity, empowering them to be more enthusiastic to support and be dedicated to the group. Further, meta-analysis has shown a significant circular relationship between cohesion and performance in team sports (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002). Provided this relationship discovered in team sports, there is a need to investigate this relationship and if higher levels of cohesion can predict higher levels of performance.

H2: Team cohesion will be influenced by leadership team composition; heterogeneous teams will report higher levels of team cohesion than homogeneous teams.

Past research in sport management has not examined these relationships through experimental design. A secondary purpose of this study examined team cohesion considering the reciprocal relationship between cohesion and performance (Carron et al., 2002).

This research partners participants together as a leadership team assembled by their individual leadership characteristics to complete a common task. An online leadership characterization assessment was developed (Leadership Characterization Index) and pretested for reliability to classify participant's leadership individualities. The development of this scale was needed as similar assessment methods are utilized more as consultation and marketing tools, rather than a measure for academic research.

A convenient sample of undergraduate students studying sport management was selected for the primary study as they are reflective of the pool of candidates preparing to enter the sport industry. Exploratory factor analysis was utilized to determine the number of leadership characterizations from the pretest and ANOVA tested the difference in performance.

In order to ensure the Leadership Characterization Index could be employed more universally, the dataset (N = 123) consisted of individuals between the ages of 19-81. The participants for the pretest completed an online assessment consisting of 170 items used to describe 34 unique leadership attributes, as determined from preexisting personality assessments, utilizing a 7-point Likert scale. The coefficient alphas ranged from .45-.89. Only 30 of the 34 items obtained reliability according to standards for psychometric data achieving coefficient alphas above .50 (Harvey, 1996). A factor analysis was conducted using the remaining 30 items to determine how many leadership factors existed from the data. The exploratory factor analysis, utilizing promax rotation, returned four factors of leadership characterizations. The data supported promax rotation as factor correlations exceeded .32. Overall, the factors explain 64% of the variance.

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Phase 1 of this study recruited participants from sport management courses at a large Midwestern University. For the first phase of this study, participants (N = 113) responded to the LCI which allowed the PI to place each individual into a group based on their leadership characterization. The groups included homogeneous (similar leadership styles) and Heterogeneous teams (one individual from each leadership characterization). Study participants were placed on teams and were instructed to design a program for college football fans from a fantasy sport perspective. The fantasy to reality programs were independently judged based on creativity, actual benefits, feasibility, implementation plan, clarity, and time management. This task provided a quantifiable way to measure team performance. The fantasy to reality task was pre-tested to ensure the activity was measurable by six criteria and executable based on the given instructions. Team performance was measured as a sum of team cohesion, task scores, and completion time.

The final sample of participants (N = 71) reflected individuals preparing for or currently working in the sport industry. The gender composition of this study consisted of 45 males and 26 females. To control for individuals who intend to work within the sport industry, the sample mean range in response to work intentions was 3.0 to 5.0, with M = 4.56 overall indicating that all participants intend to work within the sport industry in the next ten years. In support of Hypothesis 1, analysis conducted on the group comparisons indicated a significant difference in task performance ( $F(70) = 14.98, p < .001$ ) and overall group performance ( $F(70) = 8.08, p < .01$ ). Considering cohesion has been suggested to be an important aspect to team performance (Carron et al., 2002), it was the purpose of this study to determine if leadership composition would impact overall cohesion within the different groups. Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The difference between the reported means of cohesion was minimal and statistical analysis failed to show support for a significant difference between the two groups, ( $F(70) = 1.52, p = .22$ ).

Through this study, we were able to identify if diversified leadership groups performed a given task more effectively than groups whose leadership styles are similar in nature. This experimentally designed study was needed because there has been debate on which type of leader behaviors an organization should employ to enhance effectiveness (Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas, & Halpin, 2006). This experimental design study is important because it will help organizations understand the importance of choosing the person who strategically enhances their leadership rather than choosing an individual who is well-rounded to fill a leadership position. To this point, experimentation in group composition on leadership in sport is non-existent, so this study provides a solid foundation to build from.

### References

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