

**The Moderating Role of Trust in the Relationship Between Shared Leadership and
Performance**

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Abstract

This study investigates fundamental aspects of team dynamics by examining the relationship between shared leadership, trust, and team performance. Drawing upon concepts from leadership theory and organizational behaviour, we recruited leaders and corresponding employees and matched them into respective dyads, hypothesizing a positive correlation between shared leadership, trust, and team performance. However, our findings challenge these preliminary assumptions, uncovering different outcomes. In contrast to widespread beliefs, the results indicated a negative correlation between shared leadership and team performance. This finding contradicts previous studies suggesting shared leadership is a universally positive influence on team performance. Meanwhile, trust remained positively and significantly linked to team performance, affirming existing research. The role of trust as a moderator between shared leadership and team performance, despite not being statistically significant, painted an intriguing pattern. The pattern suggested that shared leadership could enhance performance in high-trust teams but could be detrimental in low-trust scenarios. These findings highlight the necessity for a context-specific approach to leadership and trust-building by illuminating the complex relationships between shared leadership, trust, and performance. Future research is needed to explore the interplay of shared leadership, trust, and team performance.

Keywords: Shared Leadership, Trust, Performance, Team Dynamics, Dyads, Leadership Styles

The Moderating Role of Trust in the Relationship Between Shared Leadership and Performance

Performance at work, particularly within team settings, is a crucial factor that directly impacts the prosperity of an organization. The study of teams, specifically the dynamics between leaders and followers within these teams, is an area of focus that continues to gain relevance (Kozlowski et al., 2006; Salas et al., 2015). In contemporary organizations, teams often span across multiple departments and even countries, undertaking increasingly complex tasks. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms that drive team performance is important for academic advancement and bears practical implications for managers and leaders striving to enhance the productivity and cohesiveness of their teams. Our knowledge of the ideal leadership style that best predicts employee performance is still limited, despite substantial studies on leadership and its implications on organizational performance. The notion of shared leadership, which emphasizes the value of including multiple team members or organization members in decision-making processes, makes this gap in the literature even more obvious (Hoch, 2013; D'Innocenzo et al., 2016).

Recent academic research has focused on shared leadership, which highlights the value of including several team members or organization members in decision-making processes (Drescher et al., 2014). However, there are ongoing debates about whether the relationship between shared leadership and employee performance is negative (Pearce & Sims, 2002) or positive (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The role of trust, a key catalyst for cooperation and creativity among leaders and followers, is frequently underexamined in these debates (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006; Braun et al., 2013). Trust, as highlighted by Dirks and Ferrin (2002), is indeed a crucial factor that can impact multiple team outcomes such as performance. This underscores the theoretical relevance of further investigating the interplay between shared leadership and trust.

In response to these identified gaps, this study focuses on a crucial unit of analysis often overlooked: the leader-follower dyad. This dyadic perspective allows us to delve deeper into the interpersonal dynamics that shape the shared leadership context. We aim to explore the complex relationships among shared leadership, trust, and performance within this dyadic construct. Furthermore, we will probe the role of trust as a moderator in the shared leadership-performance dynamic.

The decision to examine trust as a moderator is informed by its unique ability to potentially shape and regulate the influence of shared leadership on team outcomes. Trust can act as a facilitator or barrier, magnifying or diminishing the impact of shared leadership on performance (Lee et al., 2010). As a facilitator, trust may enhance the effect of shared leadership by fostering an environment of security, where all members feel valued and therefore contribute more effectively (Serva et al., 2005). Conversely, when trust is low, even strong shared leadership may not translate into improved performance, as team members may be hesitant to fully engage, thereby reducing the positive impacts of shared leadership (Bligh et al., 2006).

Investigating trust as a moderator will provide insights into its crucial function in optimizing or curtailing the effectiveness of shared leadership on performance. To shed light on these interactions, we will examine leader-follower dyads using an online questionnaire. This approach aims to offer empirical evidence on how these factors interact, with a particular focus on the moderating role of trust in shared leadership contexts. Subsequent sections will develop our hypotheses, outlining how shared leadership and trust might influence team performance, and whether trust can moderate the relationship between shared leadership and performance. Our research model aims to shed light on these complex relationships, contributing to the theoretical understanding and practical application of shared leadership and trust in enhancing team performance.

Shared Leadership and Performance

Over the past few decades, a wealth of research has been dedicated to exploring leadership, primarily focusing on individual leaders and their influence on organizational performance. Recently, a new concept of leadership, known as shared leadership, has been of interest to research (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). In this team-level phenomenon, leadership influence, accountability, and decision-making are distributed among team members. This unique approach allows for the interchangeability and cooperative use of leadership behaviours to attain team goals (Carson et al., 2007).

Shared leadership has drawn considerable interest to the literature due to its unique approach to improving performance (Carson et al., 2007; Pearce & Sims, 2002). This approach influences the collective knowledge, skills, and expertise of team members, creating a cooperative environment where each team member's contribution is valued (Wu & Cormican, 2021). Notably, studies suggest that shared leadership can serve as a catalyst for enhancing team innovation, motivation, and commitment (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). These factors are considered integral to augmenting overall team performance, thus underlining the potential effectiveness of shared leadership. To explore this concept further, we delve into the dichotomy present in the literature concerning the influence of shared leadership on performance.

However, there is a noticeable discrepancy in the literature regarding the impact of shared leadership on performance. Some research presents a positive association, highlighting the beneficial effects of shared leadership on team outcomes (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Shared leadership can foster a sense of empowerment and accountability among team members, leading to increased commitment, job satisfaction, and motivation, ultimately improving performance (Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006).

Contrastingly, other studies report a negative association between shared leadership and performance (Pearce & Sims, 2002). Shared decision-making processes, while enhancing the diversity of perspectives, may also lead to disagreements and slow decision-making, potentially hindering team performance (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012).

This study aims to further investigate the relationship between shared leadership and performance. The hypothesis is grounded on the premise that shared leadership—characterized by the active participation of team members and employees in decision-making processes—enhances team performance.

Specifically, within a leader-follower dyad, shared leadership cultivates a sense of empowerment and accountability, which can create an increased commitment, job satisfaction, and motivation in the follower (Hoch, 2013; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009). This is likely due to the collaborative nature of shared leadership, allowing followers to be involved in decision-making processes, thereby enhancing their sense of value within the team (Small & Rentsch, 2010). This collective decision-making approach can lead to more effective solutions by capitalizing on the diverse perspectives and skills inherent in the team (Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014). Such enhanced decision-making and commitment can, in turn, lead to improved performance.

Hypothesis 1: Shared leadership is positively associated with team performance.

The Relationship Between Trust and Performance

Shifting our focus to another integral aspect of workplace dynamics, trust emerges as a critical factor in organizational psychology and management literature (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Trust, in the context of the workplace, is not just a simple interpersonal attribute but a cornerstone of productive relationships and, therefore, has a profound effect on performance (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). This integral element of workplace dynamics

is investigated in this study with a focus on the dyadic relationship between the leader and their subordinate.

The impact of trust on performance remains a key area of interest among its various influences. Leadership development initiatives that emphasize building trust and strengthening relationships have been shown to enhance organizational outcomes, as highlighted in the work by Day and Dragoni (2015). Trust plays an essential role in fostering creativity and innovation, two fundamental drivers of team success, as demonstrated by studies from Ensley et al. (2002) and Carson et al. (2007). This study aims to provide a detailed examination of this aspect by specifically focusing on the relationship of trust within the leader-follower dyad.

The role of trust becomes evident in the context of a leader-follower dyad. When followers trust their leaders, they will be more likely to embrace their responsibilities, engage in innovative thinking, and commit to their tasks. This enhanced engagement and commitment subsequently should lead to improved performance. Conversely, when leaders place trust in their employees, it tends to foster a sense of autonomy and responsibility, encouraging employees to take initiative, exercise creativity, and increase their productivity (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In this study, we examine this relationship, specifically examining trust between a leader and their follower and its impact on performance. Therefore, informed by the existing literature, we propose that trust, particularly within the dyadic relationship between leader and follower, is positively associated with performance.

Hypothesis 2: Trust is positively associated with performance.

The Moderating Effect of Trust in the Relationship Between Shared Leadership and Performance

The concept of shared leadership emphasizes the collective involvement of team members in leadership roles (Pearce & Conger, 2003). While shared leadership has been

positively associated with team performance (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008), the nuanced mechanisms through which it operates remain less understood. This study proposes trust as a critical factor that may shape the influence of shared leadership on employee performance. How shared leadership between leader and follower affects employee performance depends on the level of trust existing in the dyad leader-follower. This is because trust fosters an environment conducive to open communication, collaboration, and acceptance of shared decision-making, all of which are pivotal in optimizing the potential benefits of shared leadership (Mayer et al., 1995; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). In other words, the association between shared leadership and performance is different at different levels of the moderator trust.

The beneficial association between shared leadership and performance may be amplified in settings with high levels of trust. The effectiveness of shared decision-making is increased by trust, which creates a favourable climate for open communication and collaboration (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008; Mayer et al., 1995). Team members are more at ease discussing ideas, taking calculated risks, and participating in decision-making in such an environment (Edmondson, 2004). Team performance is often improved because of the enhanced collaboration and open communication that frequently leads to more thorough and well-thought-out judgments. Furthermore, when trust is high, shared leadership can stimulate innovation and creativity, given that team members are likely to feel more secure in expressing their unique perspectives (Lee, Edmondson, Thomke, & Worline, 2004).

Conversely, at lower levels of trust, the positive relationship between shared leadership and performance may be weakened. In the absence of trust, shared decision-making may become a source of conflict and misunderstanding, thereby hindering performance (Langfred, 2004; De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016). In such scenarios, team members may be hesitant to contribute their perspectives or may second-guess the contributions of their colleagues (McAllister, 1995). This could result in less effective

decision-making processes and ultimately, diminished performance. Trust is therefore critical in maximizing the benefits of shared leadership.

Though shared leadership and trust have been examined independently, their interaction in relation to team effectiveness is underexplored. Our study aims to deepen the understanding of how trust modulates the shared leadership-performance relationship.

Hypothesis 3: Trust moderates the relationship between shared leadership and performance: this positive relationship is stronger when trust is high as compared to when it is low.

Method

Participants

For our study, data was collected via an online survey (Qualtrics) from a total of $N=166$ participants, consisting of 79 employees and 87 leaders. Participants were recruited via personal networks and inclusion criteria included fluency in Dutch and employment to be able to closely investigate the effects of a certain leadership style. Participants were recruited in dyads, one being the leader and the other one the employee. We excluded cases because participants did not completely fill in the questionnaire or did not fit our inclusion criteria in terms of working hours. Finally, we matched the leader and their employee using codes which left us with a total of $N=26$ dyads. We will continue to have a closer look at the employees and leaders from these dyads. Only 34.6% of employees were male ($N_{male\ employees}=9$, $N_{female\ employees}=17$), whereas 57.7% of leaders were male ($N_{male\ leaders}=15$, $N_{female\ leaders}=11$). The employees had a mean age of 33 ($M=32.81$, $SD=11.17$) and the leaders were on average 42 years old ($M=41.81$, $SD=13.75$). The average employee worked 30 hours per week ($M=30.15$, $SD=8.22$) and the average leader a bit more with a mean of 37 hours per week ($M=36.8$, $SD=8.37$). In terms of organization size, 34.6% of the dyads were from small organizations, employing fewer than 50 people. Another 30.8% were from medium-sized organizations with

50-250 employees, and the remaining 34.6% were from large organizations that employed more than 250 people. Considering the frequency of meetings with their leader, the majority (65.4%, $N=17$) of the employees reported meeting their supervisor several times per week. Around 19.2% ($N=5$) met their leader daily, while a small percentage reported meeting a few times a month or less (15.4%, $N=4$). Nearly one-fifth (19.2%) of the dyads worked within the hospitality industry, while just over a fifth (23.1%) were employed in education or at a university. From the perspective of the leaders, 65.4% ($N=17$) reported meeting with their employees several times a week, while 15.4% ($N=4$) met every day. Around 19.2% ($N=5$) mentioned meeting a couple of times a month or less. When asked about the size of the team they oversaw, leaders indicated supervising an average of 20 individuals ($M=20.04$), with the size of the team varying widely ($SD=25.587$), from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 90 team members. Finally, most leaders (80.8%, $N=21$) reported having a supervisor themselves, indicating a hierarchical structure within their organizations.

Design and Procedure

This cross-sectional, multi-source field study employed the help of third-year bachelor students from the University of Groningen who were involved in this project as part of the bachelor thesis. As a group, the students reached out to their personal networks to recruit participants for this study. Participating in this study was voluntary. The survey questionnaires were completed online on the platform Qualtrics. The survey was only available in Dutch, which required participants to be fluent in Dutch and the scales, originally in English, were translated to Dutch by high-proficiency speakers and translated back to English to ensure good quality of the translation. The study was approved by the ethical committee of the University of Groningen and adhered to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Participants were recruited in dyads, meaning that the students recruited a leader and an employee and provided them with a link to the online questionnaire. After the recruitment, participants were asked to fill in online questionnaires based on their role in the dyad. The provided link led the leader and employee to an online platform where the survey was taken. Participants were given an overview of the study before the survey began and were prompted to give informed consent. To grant anonymity but still provide the possibility of matching the data from the leader and their corresponding follower a code was generated by both consisting of the last 2 letters of the leader's last name, the last 2 letters of the follower's last name, and the first 2 letters of the organization/company where they work.

Measurements

The survey included scales that assessed shared leadership, trust, and performance.

Shared Leadership: To measure shared leadership, we used a scale developed by Hoch (2013) and combines questions spanning the topics of transformational leadership (A), individual empowering leadership (B), team empowering leadership (C), and participative leadership (D) with a total of 18 items. An example item for (A) was “My colleagues provide a clear vision of whom and what our team is,” whereas an example item for (B) was “My colleagues encourage me to search for solutions to my problems without supervision.” Further, an item of (C) used in the survey was, for example, “My colleagues encourage me to work together with other individuals who are part of the team” and an example for (D) was “My colleagues decide on my performance goals together with me.” The scale was measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1= *completely disagree*, 7= *completely agree*). The Cronbach's alpha value of the original scale was .91, whereas the reliability of the scale in our sample was .76.

Trust: To measure trust we employed the measure of trust by De Jong & Elfring (2010). It employs five items, and a seven-point Likert-type scale (1= *completely disagree*, 7=

completely agree). Sample items were for example “I am able to count on my team members for help if I have difficulties with my job” or “I can rely on my team members to keep their word.” This results in higher scores indicating higher levels of trust. The Cronbach’s alpha value for employees was .83.

Performance: Performance was measured using a scale by Van Der Vegt & Bunderson (2005). The leader rated the teams on six items, for example, “How does this team score on achieving team goals?” or “How does this team score on working speed?” A 7-point Likert scale, with a range of 1 (extremely poor performance) to 7 (very good performance), was used to evaluate their performance. As a result, low scores represented poor team performance while high scores represented excellent team performance. This scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of .93 in our sample. Further, performance was measured using the performance measure by Williams & Anderson (1991). This included 21 items in three different areas, namely Performance of In-Role Behaviour (IRB), Performance of organizational citizenship behaviours that have a specific individual as target (OCBI), and Performance of organizational citizenship behaviours that focus on primarily benefiting the organization (OCBO). An example of an IRB item was “My employee adequately completes assigned duties.” A scale example of OCBI was “My employee helps others who have been absent” and an example of OCBO was “My employee gives advance notice when unable to come to work.” These items were also scored using a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*), hence higher results indicated higher performance. The scale had a reliability of .87 in our sample. It was decided to use the scale by Van der Vegt & Bunderson (2005) for further analyses since it had a higher Cronbach’s alpha value.

Data analysis

The statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Version 29). Regression analyses were used to explore the data.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

A total of $N=26$ dyads were included in this analysis. The descriptive statistics and correlations for the key variables of the study are presented in Table 1. A total of $N=26$ dyads were included in this analysis. The average score for shared leadership across the 26 dyads was 5.368 ($M=5.368$, $SD=0.581$), indicating a moderate to high level of shared leadership in the teams. Leader trust had a mean score of 6.45 ($M=6.464$, $SD=0.573$), also denoting a high trust level among leaders in their employees. Finally, the performance variable had an average score of 5.9 ($M=5.9$, $SD=0.952$), suggesting high team performance across the teams.

Preliminary correlation analyses were conducted to determine the associations between shared leadership, leader trust, and performance. As depicted in Table 1, shared leadership showed a significant negative correlation with the trust of leaders in employees ($r=-.713$, $p<.01$), implying that higher levels of shared leadership were associated with lower levels of trust in the employee. Similarly, shared leadership also showed a significant negative correlation with performance ($r=-.518$, $p<.01$), indicating that higher levels of shared leadership are associated with lower performance. On the other hand, trust that leaders had in their employees showed a significant positive correlation with performance ($r=.697$, $p<.01$). This indicates that higher levels of trust that a leader has in an employee correspond with higher levels of performance.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Key Variables*

Variable	Mean	SD	1.	2.
1. Shared Leadership	5.368	0.581	–	
2. Trust of Leader in Employee	6.45	0.573	-.713*	–
3. Performance	5.9	0.952	-.518*	0.697*

Note. *N Dyads* = 26. * Significant at $p < .01$.

Before conducting the primary analysis, the fundamental assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were assessed and affirmed. To confirm linearity and homoscedasticity, scatterplots were generated and visually examined. These plots displayed an evident linear pattern, indicating a linear relationship. Additionally, the scatterplots illustrated equal variances around the regression line, which confirmed the assumption of homoscedasticity. The check for multicollinearity was achieved by inspecting the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for shared leadership ($VIF=1$) and employee trust ($VIF=1$). The VIF for both variables was exactly 1, well within acceptable ranges, suggesting no issue of multicollinearity. It can therefore be assumed that all assumptions for the analyses were met.

Hypothesis Testing

Upon the verification of the primary assumptions - linearity, homoscedasticity, and the absence of multicollinearity, the next phase involved testing the three proposed hypotheses through regression analysis and moderation analysis. For this model, shared leadership was the predictor, team performance served as the outcome variable, and trust functioned as the moderating variable.

Hypothesis 1 stated that shared leadership is positively associated with team performance. A simple linear regression was conducted with shared leadership as the predictor and team performance as the outcome. However, the analysis did not support this hypothesis. The coefficient for shared leadership was negative ($\beta = -.0714, p > 0.05$), suggesting that shared leadership is not positively associated with performance. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that trust is positively associated with performance. The predictor for this model was trust, specifically, the trust of the leader in their employee. The regression analysis provided support for this hypothesis. The coefficient for leader trust was positive and significant ($\beta = 1.007, p < .05$), indicating a positive relationship between leader trust and performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that trust moderates the relationship between shared leadership and performance such that the relationship is stronger when trust is high compared to when it is low. The interaction term (Shared Leadership x Trust) was not statistically significant ($\beta = .25, p > .05$), suggesting that trust does not significantly moderate the relationship between shared leadership and performance. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The overall model accounted for 49.13% of the variance in performance ($F = 7.083, p < .01$), which was a significant amount.

Table 2

Moderation Analysis

Model	Coefficient	SE	95% CI		p
			LL	UL	
Intercept	5.961	.186	5.575	6.347	.000
Shared Leadership	-.071	.356	-.809	0.666	.843
Leader Trust	1.007	.419	.139	1.875	.025
Interaction	.25	.526	-.842	1.341	.64

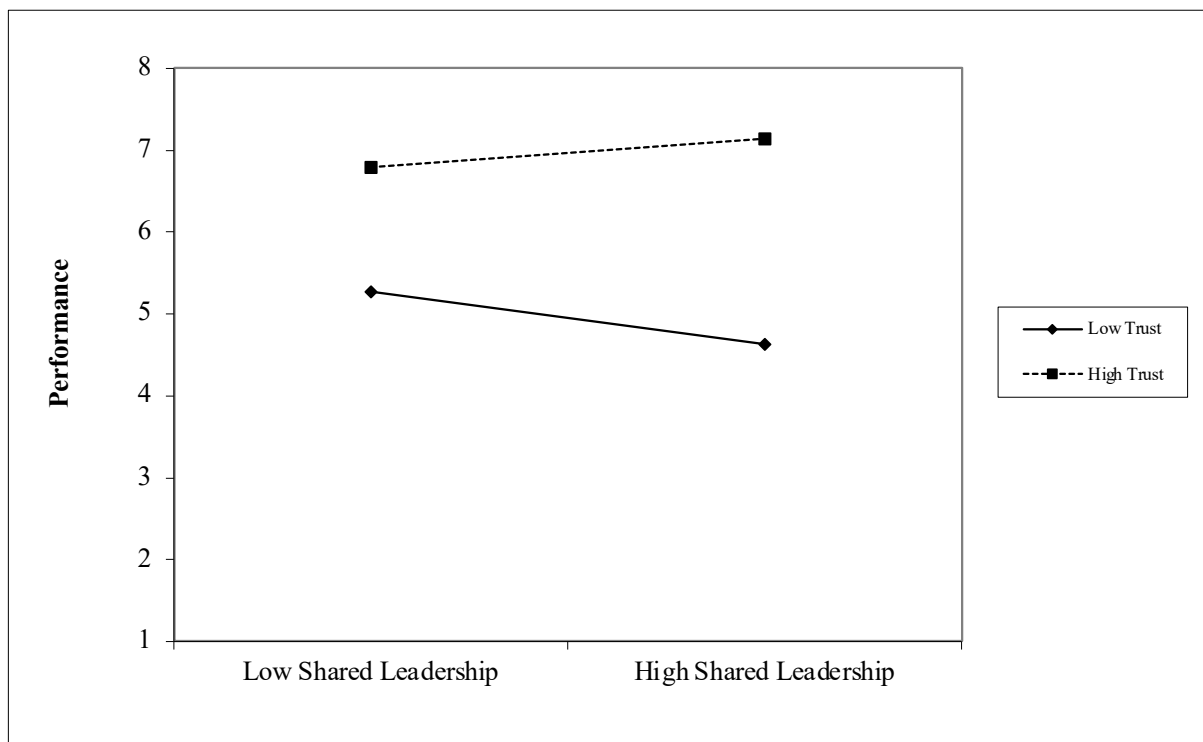
Note. Number of dyads = 26. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Figure 1 shows the interaction effect between shared leadership and trust on team performance. The x-axis represents shared leadership while the y-axis denotes team performance. The figure includes two lines that illustrate the interaction under high and low trust conditions. For high trust conditions, the line shows an upward slope, indicating that as shared leadership increases, so does team performance. This demonstrates a positive relationship between shared leadership and performance when trust is high. However, for low trust conditions, the line exhibits a downward slope. This suggests that as shared leadership increases, team performance decreases. This signifies a negative relationship between shared leadership and performance under conditions of low trust.

In summary, Figure 1 visually aligns with our analytical findings and suggests that the level of trust could potentially influence the relationship between shared leadership and performance. High trust levels appear to enhance the positive impact of shared leadership on team performance, while low trust levels might diminish this effect, turning it into a negative relationship. Therefore, the role of trust as a moderating variable in this relationship is worth further examination, as it may offer additional insights into the complexities of shared leadership dynamics within teams.

Figure 1

Relation between Low and High Levels of Shared Leadership for Low and High Levels of Trust



Discussion

Understanding the relationships between shared leadership, trust, and team performance was the aim of this study. In particular, the study aimed to clarify the role of trust in moderating the relationship between shared leadership and performance. However, the results revealed a more complex picture than initially anticipated.

Theoretical Implications

Contrary to Hypothesis 1, shared leadership was not positively associated with performance. Rather, there was a negative correlation between shared leadership and performance. This finding diverges from prior research, including works such as Hoch (2013), which have predominantly underscored the benefits of shared leadership for team performance. Our result might suggest caution to shared leadership – it could potentially have downsides, particularly in scenarios where leadership roles are unclear. Shared leadership

might lead to confusion in decision-making processes, diffusion of responsibility, or a lack of clear accountability. In line with the description of shared leadership by Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) as a dynamic, emergent, and interactive influence process, the potential drawbacks could arise from the inherent complexity of the process, which may in turn negatively impact performance. Consequently, our findings lend a nuanced perspective to the shared leadership literature, emphasizing that the construct might not always be beneficial and could have context-dependent implications.

In line with Hypothesis 2, our results showed a positive association between trust and performance. This finding is in line with past research demonstrating that trust fosters cooperative behaviours, enhances communication, and enhances overall team performance (De Jong & Elfring, 2010). These results align with the model of trust by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), which posits that trust significantly influences willingness to risk-taking behaviour such as information sharing and collaborative problem solving, thereby influencing performance. Our study reinforces this theoretical perspective, suggesting that the level of trust leaders have in their followers can significantly determine team performance. Organizations should, therefore, strive to cultivate trust among their leaders and employees, as it could substantively impact their performance outcomes.

Lastly, contrary to Hypothesis 3, trust did not statistically significantly moderate the relationship between shared leadership and performance. Although not statistically significant, the interaction effect does offer an intriguing pattern that suggests that the impact of shared leadership on performance may vary depending on the level of trust. Particularly, it appeared that shared leadership might lead to improved performance when trust is high but could be detrimental when trust is low. Despite not reaching statistical significance, this pattern aligns with theories suggesting that trust can enhance the positive effects of shared leadership (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006). It might be that trust compensates for potential

confusion or accountability issues inherent in shared leadership, thus allowing it to benefit team performance. Although trust did not statistically significantly moderate the relationship between shared leadership and performance in this study, further research with larger samples might be able to detect a significant interaction effect.

Practical Implications

This study provides critical practical implications for team leaders, human resource managers, and organizations more broadly. Our findings indicate that the implementation of shared leadership might not consistently result in enhanced team performance as traditionally suggested. Therefore, organizations may need to adopt a more nuanced, context-specific approach to leadership. For example, the decision to encourage shared leadership should be made in consideration of the unique needs, dynamics, and contexts of the team, as it may not be universally beneficial across all settings. Moreover, while fostering trust within teams is a recommended practice, it might not directly lead to an increase in team performance in every context. This suggests that while trust is a vital element within a team, organizations may also need to prioritize other factors such as role clarity, performance feedback mechanisms and team cohesion. These factors could complement the effects of trust and more directly influence team performance.

Strengths and Limitations

One of the strengths of this study is the diversity of the analysed dyads. The teams came from varied industries and represented organizations of different sizes. This diversity is beneficial as it allows our findings to be more broadly applicable and less constrained by sector-specific or size-specific biases. It provides a rich and varied dataset, enabling us to capture and explore the nuances of shared leadership and trust dynamics across different contexts. Another strength lies in the methodology applied in our study. We utilized well-established measures for shared leadership, trust, and team performance, contributing to the

reliability and validity of our results. Our methodological rigour increases confidence in our findings and offers a solid foundation for further research. This strength, combined with our diverse sample, lends significant credibility and robustness to our study.

A clear limitation of this study was the small sample size with a total of 26 dyads combined with the cultural homogeneity of the participants - Dutch-speaking individuals in the Netherlands - which could limit the generalizability of the findings. The impact of cultural and social nuances on shared leadership and trust dynamics may not be fully captured in this study. This limitation points to the need for future research to involve larger and more culturally diverse samples carried out in different countries. Further, the design of this study is another limitation. Our study adopts a cross-sectional design, which merely offers a snapshot of the interplay among shared leadership, trust, and team performance at a specific point in time. Consequently, it falls short of establishing causal relationships or observing how these associations change over time.

Future Directions

Given these limitations, subsequent research can delve deeper into the intricate dynamics among shared leadership, trust, and team performance. Utilizing a larger and more varied sample would yield more universally applicable findings, increasing the external validity of the study by considering it in a cross-cultural context (House et al., 2004). Further, shared leadership might manifest and function differently across cultures, affecting its impact on team performance. Conducting comparative studies in various cultural contexts could provide valuable insights into the cultural specificities of shared leadership and its interplay with trust and performance. Implementing a longitudinal research design would permit make monitoring changes over time possible, documenting the progression of shared leadership and trust within groups, and their impact on performance (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). This

approach would offer richer information and allow a more accurate determination of cause-and-effect relationships.

In terms of the theoretical model, an interesting extension could be the inclusion of additional moderating or mediating variables. For instance, cultural dimensions as put forward by House et al. (2004) could be factored in to understand whether cultural attributes such as power distance or collectivism interact with shared leadership and trust in shaping team performance. As our research contradicts previous findings, future studies could concentrate on examining the unexpected results we obtained. It would be interesting to further explore why shared leadership failed to improve team performance in high-trust settings, which could contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of leadership dynamics. Our study provides a critical foundation for these future explorations. By expanding our theoretical model and adapting our research design to include these suggestions, future research can deepen our understanding of the complex relationships between shared leadership, trust, and team performance.

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between shared leadership, trust, and team performance. The results challenged commonly held views about shared leadership as a universal positive contributor to team performance. While trust maintained its well-known positive influence on performance, shared leadership presented an unexpected negative correlation. Interestingly, the interaction between shared leadership and trust, despite not being statistically significant, suggested a complex interplay that does not align with conventional expectations. These unexpected findings underscore the complexities within these relationships and pave the way for re-evaluating prevailing assumptions, thereby highlighting promising areas for future exploration.

These findings emphasize the relevance of tailoring leadership and trust approaches to suit particular team environments since one attempt might not fit all. Instead of proposing a universally applicable model, we advocate for a more detailed view that contemplates the unique dynamics and requirements of individual teams. By investigating and questioning the limits of our current understanding, we can refine our comprehension of team leadership and trust dynamics. This, in turn, will guide the development of more effective management practices, leading to enhanced team performance. The present study adds a significant step in this continued direction, broadening our comprehension of the challenging relationships between shared leadership, trust, and team performance.

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Appendix A

Shared Leadership Scale by Hoch et al. (2010)

1. My colleagues provide a clear vision of whom and what our team is.
2. My colleagues are driven by higher purposes or ideals.
3. My colleagues show enthusiasm for my efforts.
4. My colleagues encourage me to rethink ideas which had never been questioned before.
5. My colleagues seek a broad range of perspectives when solving problems.
6. My colleagues encourage me to go above and beyond what is normally (e.g., extra effort).
7. My colleagues encourage me to search for solutions to my problems without supervision.
8. My colleagues urge me to assume responsibilities on my own.
9. My colleagues encourage me to learn new things.
10. My colleagues encourage me to give myself a pat on the back when I meet a new
11. My colleagues encourage me to work together with other individuals who are part of the team.
12. My colleagues advise me to coordinate my efforts with the others, who are part of the team.
13. My colleagues urge me to work as a team with the others, who are part of the team.
14. My colleagues expect that the collaboration with the other members in the team works well.
15. My colleagues decide on my performance goals together with me.
16. My colleagues and I work together to decide what my performance goals should be.
17. My colleagues and I sit down together and reach agreement on my performance goals.
18. My colleagues work with me to develop my performance goals.

Appendix B

Trust Scale by De Jong & Elfring (2010)

1. I am able to count on my team members for help if I have difficulties with my job.
2. I am confident that my team members will take my interests into account when making work-related decisions.
3. I am confident that my team members will keep me informed about issues that concern my work.
4. I can rely on my team members to keep their word.
5. I trust my team members.

Appendix C

Performance Scale by Van Der Vegt & Bunderson (2005)

Leaders rated the teams on items such as ‘How does this *team* score on ...

1. Achieving team goals?
2. Achieving deadlines?
3. Working speed?
4. The quality of the work?
5. Productivity?
6. Effectiveness?

Performance Scale by Williams & Anderson (1991)

1. Adequately completes assigned duties.
2. Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description.
3. Performs tasks that are expected of him/her.
4. Meets formal performance requirements of the job.
5. Engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation.
6. Neglects aspects of job he/she is obligated to perform. (R)
7. Fails to perform essential duties. (R)
8. Helps others who have been absent.
9. Helps others who have heavy work loads.
10. Assists supervisor with his/her work (when not asked).
11. Takes time to listen to co-workers’ problems and worries.
12. Goes out of way to help new employees.
13. Takes a personal interest in other employees.
14. Passes along information to co-workers.
15. Attendance at work above the mean.
16. Gives advance notice when unable to come to work.
17. Takes undeserved work breaks. (R)
18. Great deal of time spent with personal phone conversations. (R)
19. Complains about insignificant things at work. (R)
20. Conserves and protects organizational property.
21. Adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order.

*Note: Items marked with (R) are reverse scored.

Appendix D

Figure D1

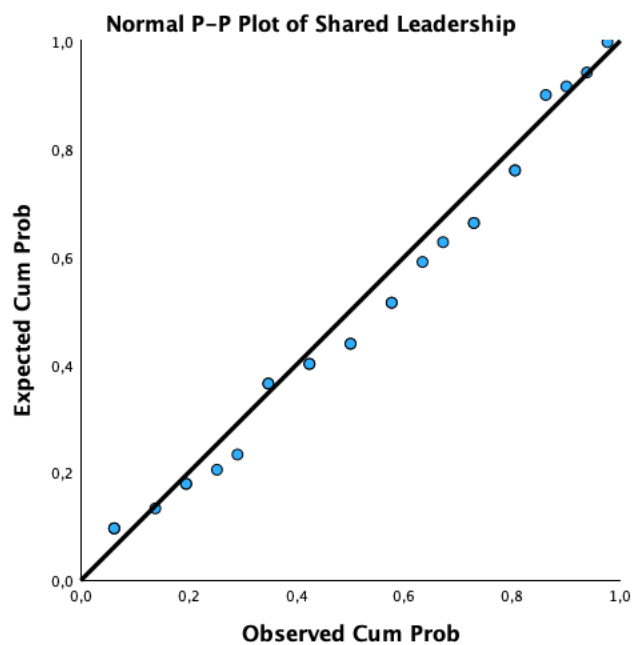
Normal P-P Plot of Shared Leadership

Figure D2

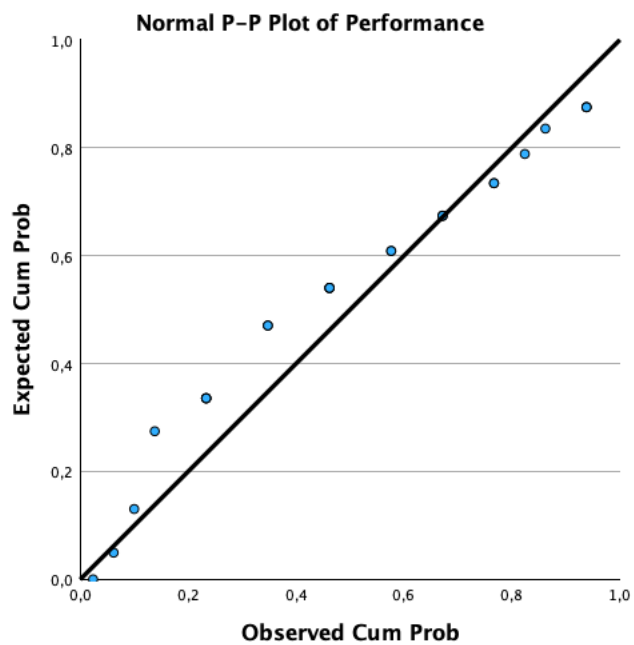
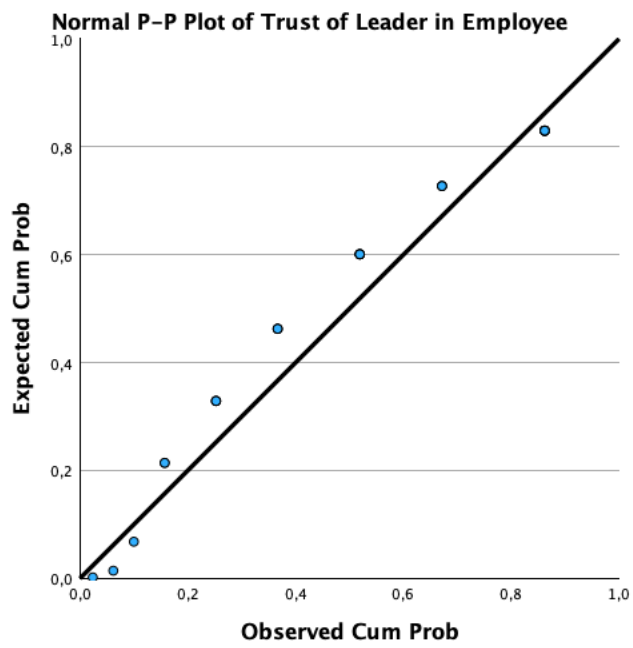
Normal P-P Plot of Performance

Figure D3

Normal P-P Plot of Trust in Employee as Rated by the Leader.



Appendix E

Figure E

Homoscedasticity Scatterplot for Performance

