The Role of Self-Efficacy in the Relationship Between Shared Leadership and Performance in Leader-Follower Dyads

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Abstract

With the recent rise in entrepreneurship, exploring different leadership styles and their impact on performance outcomes has gained importance. This paper examines the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between shared leadership and employee performance in leader-follower dyads. Leader-follower pairs were sampled, with each party completing a position-specific questionnaire. Followers provided insights into perceived shared leadership and self-efficacy, while leaders reported on their followers' performance. The results revealed no significant relationships between shared leadership and performance or between self-efficacy and performance. Additionally, the hypothesis that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between shared leadership and performance was not supported. The lack of significant results may be attributed to inherent differences between dyads and groups, which can negatively affect shared leadership processes, as well as the study design itself. Future research should further investigate factors influencing shared leadership and performance, such as group size and gender

Keywords: Shared Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Leader-Follower Dyads, Performance-Outcomes

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The economic surge witnessed in the Western world over the past century has significantly contributed to creating a favorable environment for entrepreneurship (Paige et al., 1961). In the United States alone, approximately 5.5 million businesses were established in 2023, reflecting a remarkable 56.7% increase in new business formations compared to the year 2019 (Commerce Institute, 2024). Naturally, with such a drastic increase in company start-ups, investigating work dynamics within companies has become increasingly important. A crucial aspect of work dynamics revolves around the interpersonal relationship between an employer and their employees. Organizational psychology has extensively examined various leadership styles, going so far as to identify leadership as one of the five fundamental factors crucial to determining organizational performance (Chien, 2004). One of the leadership styles standing out in research is shared leadership. Shared leadership is characterized by the internal distribution of leadership influence among team members who collectively shoulder leadership responsibilities (Morgeson et al., 2009; Carson et al., 2007). Thus far, shared leadership has been linked to several positive team outcomes including heightened group trust and team creativity (Bergman et al., 2012; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Moreover, shared leadership has been previously associated with increased organizational team performance, an especially desirable outcome for businesses as previously stated (Drescher et al., 2014; Carson et al., 2007).

The impact of shared leadership has primarily been investigated in the context of team dynamics. However, it is important to note that these team patterns often stem from individual patterns of behavior and perception rather than from group behaviors (DeRue, 2011). It can be argued that interpersonal relationships form the foundation of any group,

with most interactions occurring within dyads (Linden et al., 2016). Naturally, the quality of these dyadic relationships significantly impacts group outcomes and overall organizational success (Bass, 2008; Gooty & Yammarino, 2011). Given that shared leadership is essentially based on interpersonal interactions, examining dyadic relationships within this context becomes increasingly important. In particular, the dyadic relationship between leader and follower is especially relevant, as there is an increased focus on mutual responsibilities and influence between the leader and their follower. However, research specifically delving into this dyadic relationship in a shared leadership setting has been limited.

Furthermore, investigating the factors that facilitate and strengthen the relationship between shared leadership and performance has been a trend in organizational psychology ever since the concept 'Shared Leadership' emerged. As of now, some moderators influencing the relationship between shared leadership and performance outcomes are differing levels of trust, task complexity, or different personality traits (Carson et al., 2007; Martin et al., 2018). Another popular moderator variable in the field of organizational psychology is self-efficacy. Especially relationships focusing on performance outcomes as a dependent variable are often influenced by differing levels of self-efficacy. For example, in goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002), self-efficacy is one of the key variables moderating the relationship between goal setting and performance. Despite functioning as a moderator, self-efficacy is also directly related to several relevant outcomes. For example, high self-efficacy is associated with positive sentiments toward the work environment (Gardner & Pierce, 1998), which may have a favorable impact on the relationship between employee and employer. Lastly, a key advantage of self-efficacy is its malleability; it is not a fixed trait (Bandura, 1977). Organizations could actively

promote cultivation and enhancement of self-efficacy, leading to significant practical benefits.

Consequently, the present study aims to provide further insight into the relationship between shared leadership and performance. Firstly, by focusing on dyadic relationships, which form the fundamental building blocks of all teams, and secondly, by introducing the variable self-efficacy as a possible moderator. Moreover, this study is conducted in the Netherlands, further broadening the perspective on the effectiveness of shared leadership in different cultures outside of the United States of America.

The current study will involve pairs of leaders and followers who will each complete a tailored questionnaire. Followers will be queried about their self-efficacy and the perceived level of shared leadership, while leaders will respond to questions related to their followers' performance.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Performance at Work

Performance has been the focus of many papers in the field of organizational psychology. While the conceptualization and definition of the term “performance” has proven challenging, Motowidlo (2003) has made a solid attempt at handling this task. According to him, performance encompasses the expected organizational value derived from sets of behaviors exhibited by an individual within a certain timeframe. This definition specifically highlights the role of performance as a behavior which can then be deconstructed into different dimensional frameworks of performance behaviors. Task-behavior, also commonly referred to as in-role behavior, emerges as a particularly important dimension which encompasses the competency with which individuals execute job-specific tasks; essentially, it measures how effectively core job responsibilities are carried out (Koopmans et al., 2011). Complementing the dimension of task-behavior is the

context dimension, which entails behaviors that contribute to the social environment within an organization, contingent upon the functioning of task-behavior (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), a term first introduced by Organ in 1998, describes individual behaviors fostering the establishment and maintenance of a cohesive social and psychological environment within an organization. Given its substantial overlap with the contextual dimension, the two terms are frequently used interchangeably (Koopmans et al., 2011).

Shared Leadership and Performance

As previously indicated, shared leadership involves sharing the distribution of leadership influence and responsibilities (Morgeson et al., 2009; Carson et al., 2007). This leadership style is characterized as an active and dynamic process that unfolds gradually over time (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Drescher et al., 2014). Several factors facilitate the development of shared leadership, including establishing a common social purpose and fostering a socially supportive and communicative environment that encourages input from everyone involved (Carson et al., 2007). By addressing these factors, individuals are more likely to willingly share leadership responsibilities, enhance within group support, and increase their level of involvement (Avolio et al., 1996; Marks et al., 2001; Seers, 1996).

The positive outcomes associated with shared leadership are numerous: increased team effectiveness (Pearce & Sims, 2002), increased trust (Drescher et al., 2014), increased innovation (Hoch, 2012), and most importantly, increased in-role performance, and OCB (Carson et al., 2007; Bostancı, 2013). To better explain the development of leadership and in-role performance in teams, Steiner (1972), McGrath (1984), and Hackman (1987) proposed the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model. In this model, 'Input' refers to each team member's individual skills, abilities, and knowledge. A leader's input

may include leadership abilities and experience, conflict management skills, and overall organizational expertise. 'Process' represents team dynamics that foster effective teamwork, that may lead to outcomes like enhanced team performance (Output). Applying this model to a shared leadership setting, each member equally contributes their individual skills. Contributions from both sides could aid the development of a socially supportive environment that fosters shared leadership. As a potential result, group tasks, and responsibilities become shared, possibly leading to improved team performance.

In this study, we anticipate a similar process occurring in dyadic relationships, as most teamwork happens through these interactions. We expect that the input, consisting of the leader's and follower's relevant abilities, will positively influence the development of shared leadership between them, consequentially improving employee performance.

Therefore, the first hypothesis will be formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Shared leadership in a leader-follower dyad is positively associated with employee performance.

Self-Efficacy and Performance

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully accomplish a task (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs are primarily shaped by four key sources: performance outcomes, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). Performance outcomes refer to past experience influencing one's confidence in future task performance, with positive experiences boosting mastery expectations and negative experiences diminishing them. Vicarious experiences involve learning from observing others' outcomes after task completion. Still, according to Bandura (1977), vicarious experiences appear to generally have less impact on self-efficacy beliefs than performance outcomes. Verbal persuasion involves the use of encouraging language meant to increase self-efficacy. However, its effect on self-efficacy

beliefs is moderate due to its perceived lack of authenticity (Bandura, 1977). Lastly, emotional arousal, also called physiological feedback, is thought to influence self-efficacy beliefs by providing emotional cues. For instance, self-efficacy beliefs tend to rise as anxiety levels decrease (Bandura, 1977).

The concept, self-efficacy, has been extensively examined in organizational psychology, with studies linking it to various factors crucial for organizational success, such as adaptability to advanced technology, skill acquisition and positive sentiments toward the work environment (Hill et al., 1987; Mitchell et al., 1994; Gardner & Pierce, 1998). According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021), self-efficacy is a crucial internal process that influences motivation, effort, and persistence. Additionally, high self-efficacy is associated with increased engagement (Bandura, 1977), meaning those with strong self-efficacy are more inclined to be actively involved and exert more in effort in tasks compared to those with lower self-efficacy. Furthermore, high self-efficacy is linked with greater perseverance, so when faced with challenging tasks, these individuals are less likely to give up, potentially resulting in enhanced performance (Bandura, 1997). Lastly, Lane and Lane (2001) argue that increased self-efficacy promotes the development of effective coping strategies when met with high cognitive demand, ultimately leading to improved performance.

Considering these findings, we propose that self-efficacy directly influences performance due to its motivational properties. The following hypothesis is based on previous research that has shown a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance (Stajković & Luthans, 1998; Maria et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 2: Self-efficacy is positively associated with employee performance.

Self-Efficacy as a Moderator

As previously mentioned, the relationship between shared leadership and performance can be explained using the I-P-O model (Steiner, 1972; McGrath, 1984, Hackman, 1987). In this model, both leader and follower contribute mutually to the development and maintenance of shared leadership processes, thereby enhancing performance outcomes. The model emphasized individual input of each contributor, suggesting that individual factors may moderate the relationship between shared leadership processes and performance outcomes. One such moderating factor in this relationship is self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy can positively influence the relationship between shared leadership and performance in several ways. For instance, individuals high in self-efficacy tend to have favorable sentiments toward the work environment, fostering a socially supportive work atmosphere crucial for the practice of shared leadership. In goal setting theory, self-efficacy moderates the relationship between goal setting and performance by directly affecting persistence and commitment and increasing the likelihood of setting challenging yet realistic goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). Similarly, Frost and Mahoney (1976) discovered a link between interest and performance, possibly moderated by self-efficacy, which later established itself in the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994).

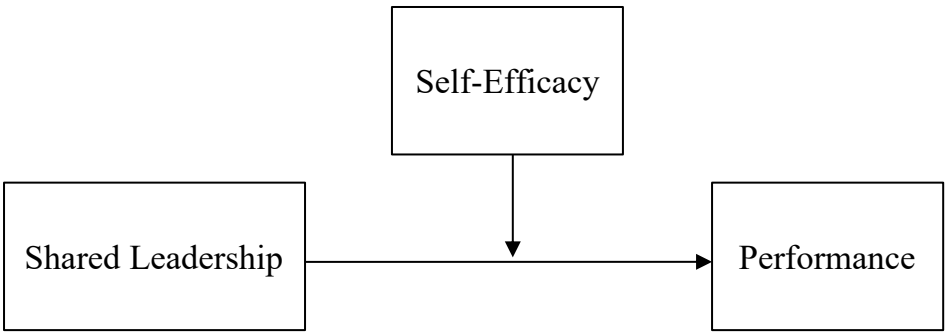
Conversely, individuals low in self-efficacy tend to be less engaged and show lower effort overall compared to their high self-efficacy counterparts (Bandura, 1977). They are also more prone to stress, burnout, anxiety and depression (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Faure & Loxton, 2003) and often exhibit higher levels of neuroticism, a personality trait linked to lower confidence in handling difficult situations (Martin et al., 2018). These negative effects associated with low self-efficacy may diminish the potential for successfully creating an environment where shared leadership can flourish, thereby possibly weakening the relationship between shared leadership and performance.

To conclude, self-efficacy might moderate the relationship between shared leadership and self-efficacy by directly affecting individual's engagement, effort, motivation, and cognitive coping strategies. In a shared leadership setting, working together to create social purpose, provide social support, and foster communicative work relationships appear to be crucial for its success (Carson et al., 2007). However, low self-efficacy could negatively impact these elements by diminishing an individual's engagement and motivation to take on responsibilities and work towards shared goals, thereby likely decreasing performance. Therefore, the third hypothesis will be:

Hypothesis 3: As self-efficacy increases, the relationship between shared leadership and performance becomes stronger. Conversely, as self-efficacy decreases, the relationship between shared leadership and performance becomes weaker.

Figure 1

Hypothesis 3



Method Section

Participants

A total of 235 leaders and 243 followers were initially sampled. 136 leaders and 143 followers were excluded due to not meeting the relevant criteria, further reducing the sample size to $N = 99$ leaders and $N = 100$ followers. Missing values were deleted, resulting in 96 dyads for statistical analysis. To be eligible for participation, individuals

had to be Dutch-speaking employees working a minimum of 16 hours weekly in a Dutch company. Only participant pairs where both the employer and employee completed the study were included in the analysis.

The three most prevalent industries were healthcare (12%), construction and installation companies, retail, wholesale (10%), and hospitality (8%). Most participants were employed in small organizations with 50 or fewer employees and have completed at least a degree from a university of applied sciences (HBO).

The mean age for the leader group was $M = 42$ ($SD = 12.75$, range = 22-65), with roughly 39% female and 61% male. Most leaders possess at least five years of leadership experience in their current position and directly supervise $M = 17.45$ ($SD = 19.41$, range = 1-100) employees on average.

Followers were around 42% male, and 58% female, with a mean age of $M = 33$ ($SD = 12.25$, range = 18-63). Most followers possess two to five years of experience in their current position and work directly in a team with three or more other employees.

Regarding dyadic relationships, most leaders saw their followers multiple times a week and had been directly supervising them for one to two years.

Design and Procedure

The present study is a one wave multi source field study. Participants were sampled using the snowball sampling technique. Initially, students reached individuals within their social networks, who then referred other potential participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and responses were confidential. Prior to commencing the study, it was approved by the ethics committee of the University of Groningen.

Participants were approached either through a QR code or an invitation email containing detailed information and a link to one of two questionnaires (programmed on Qualtrics). Depending on their role within the organization, participants received a tailored

questionnaire designed for either leaders or followers. Before filling out the questionnaire, all participants gave their informed consent. Upon completion, participants were prompted to provide contact information for their counterpart in the study. If the participant initially contacted was the follower, they were asked for their leader's contact information, and vice versa. Subsequently, the initial participant either directly notified their counterpart about the thesis project via email or forwarded their counterpart's email address to the student, who then sent an informative email. Once the counterpart agreed to participate, they were provided with a link to their respective questionnaire. In both questionnaires, each participant was instructed to generate a unique code to link their dyadic study partner's results with their own. The code was composed of the participant's last name's two letters, and the last two letters of their leader's or follower's last name. The questionnaire for leaders comprised 62 questions, assessing variables such as trust, psychological safety, performance, and reflexivity. In total, eight different variables were measured. Meanwhile, the questionnaire for followers consisted of 88 items covering 12 variables, including shared leadership, trust, self-efficacy, psychological safety, and despotic leadership. At the end of both questionnaires, each participant was requested to give some additional demographic data, such as gender, age, and industry they work for.

For this study, we specifically focused on three variables: Shared leadership, self-efficacy, and performance. Shared leadership and self-efficacy were reported only by the follower. The follower provided insights into their perception of their leader's practice of shared leadership, while self-efficacy reflected their own assessment of their level of self-efficacy. Conversely, performance, exclusively reported by the leader, pertained to the follower's performance.

Measures

Shared Leadership (Independent Variable)

Shared leadership was assessed using three subscales introduced by Hoch et al. in 2013: transformational leadership, individual empowering leadership, and participative leadership. The scale was adapted for leader-follower analysis and translated into Dutch (see Appendix E). A total of 18 items were used to evaluate shared leadership. Six of these items focused on transformational leadership, with questions like, "My supervisor encourages me to do more than just what is expected of me (e.g., put in extra effort)," and "My supervisor shows appreciation for my efforts." Eight items assessed individual empowering leadership, with questions such as, "My supervisor insists on taking responsibility for the work myself," and "My supervisor insists on working as a team with others who are part of the team." Four items addressed participative leadership, including questions like, "My supervisor and I work together to choose my performance goals," and "My supervisor and I sit down together to reach an agreement on my performance goals." All questions used a 7-point Likert response scale, ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). These questions on shared leadership were only included in the version of the questionnaire for follower positions. The scale was reliable with a Cronbach's alpha value of $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ = .715.

Performance (Dependent Variable)

Performance was assessed using the scale from Williams & Anderson (1991), which was translated into Dutch and adapted for dyadic analysis (see Appendix F). The scale addressed the following three subscales with seven items per subscale: Performance of In-Role Behavior (IRB), Performance of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors targeted at specific individuals (OCBI), and Performance of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors primarily benefiting the organization (OCBO). For IRB, leaders had to complete the phrase "My employee…", with examples like, "Performs the assigned tasks properly," or

"Engages in activities that directly affect their performance evaluation." For OCBI, the completions included: "Helps others who have been absent," or "Takes the time to listen to colleagues' problems and concerns." For OCBO, leaders could rate statements like, "Attendance at work is above average," or "Complains about trivial things at work." The questions were rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Completely disagree*) to 7 (*Completely agree*) and 4 representing a neutral answer (*Neither agree nor disagree*). All questions were only directed at leaders. The scale was reliable with a Cronbach's alpha value of $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ = .911.

Self-Efficacy (Moderator)

Self-efficacy was assessed using a 6-item scale developed by Rigotti et al. (2008). This scale was translated to Dutch and adapted for dyadic analysis (see Appendix G). It explores self-efficacy among followers through questions like, "When I'm confronted with a problem at work, I usually find several solutions," and "The experiences I've gained from my past work have prepared me well for my work in the future." All questions used a Likert scale ranging from 1(*Completely disagree*) to 7 (*Completely agree*) 4 representing a neutral answer (*Neither agree nor disagree*). The scale was reliable with a Cronbach's alpha value of $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ = .892.

Results

In the following section, we present the statistical analysis of the current study. We utilized SPSS (Version 29.0.2.0) to examine the relationship between shared leadership, self-efficacy, and performance. First, we will share relevant descriptive statistics about the variables. Next, we will test the regression assumptions necessary to ensure reliable results. Finally, we will evaluate the hypotheses through regression analysis.

Descriptives

The descriptive statistics of this data set are presented in Table A1 (see Appendix A). Notably, the means of all three variables ranged between five and six, indicating above-average scores compared to the midpoint of four on the scale. Shared Leadership (1) and Performance (3) show no significant correlation (r = .01, p = .473). Self-Efficacy (2) and Performance (3) are slightly negatively correlated, but this correlation is also insignificant (r = -.04, p = 359). Lastly, Shared Leadership (1) and Self-Efficacy (2) exhibit a very weak and insignificant correlation (r = .09, p = .204).

To ensure reliable results, the data set was checked for outliers. One item with a Cook's distance of 2.44 was deemed too influential and was therefore excluded, resulting in a final data set of 95 dyads.

Before performing the regression analysis, the data was evaluated to ensure it met the necessary assumptions. It was evaluated using standardized values for all variables. To assess normality, SPSS was used to compute a histogram (see Appendix B). The plot indicates that the normality assumption is satisfied in this specific data set. A residual-by-predicted variable scatterplot is used to check for the linearity and homoscedasticity assumption (Appendix D). While there is a slight pattern visible in the residual plot, this pattern is not sufficient to not accept the homoscedasticity assumption. Therefore, despite the slight pattern, the assumption will be considered met for this analysis. The residual plot shows no serious deviation from the linearity assumption. Additionally, the variance inflation factors (VIF) were all well below the threshold of 4.0, indicating no risk of multicollinearity.

Hypothesis Testing

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the moderation model, utilizing standardized z-values. The analysis explored the relationship between shared leadership and performance, with self-efficacy as a potential moderator. In addition

to the interaction effect, two main effects were tested. Performance was regressed on shared leadership and self-efficacy within the model. The overall model, which included both predictor variables and the interaction, explained close to none of the total variance in performance scores, $R^2 = .002$, $R^2_{adj} = -.03$, $F(3, 89) = .057$, $p > .05$. Therefore, the model is not significant at an alpha level of .05.

Hypothesis one states that shared leadership positively affects follower performance, as rated by leaders. However, the results in Table A2 (see Appendix A) indicate a non-significant positive relationship between the two variables at an alpha level of .05. The slope for shared leadership is $\beta = 0.01$ ($t = 0.08$, $p = .936$). Consequently, the regression analysis does not support the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis proposes that self-efficacy positively predicts follower performance, as rated by leaders. However, the results in Table A2 display a non-significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and performance, with a slope of $\beta = -0.04$ ($t = -0.4$, $p = .688$). These findings do not support the second hypothesis.

Lastly, the third hypothesis asserts that increasing self-efficacy positively affects the relationship between shared leadership and performance, and decreasing self-efficacy negatively affects this relationship. However, Table A2 shows a slightly negative slope for the interaction effect, indicating that this interaction is not significant at an alpha level of .05 ($\beta = -0.02$, $t = -0.18$, $p = .859$). Therefore, this data analysis does not support the third hypothesis.

Discussion

Considering the economic growth of the last century, which has created a fertile ground for company startups, the investigation of work relationships has gained increasing popularity among organizational psychology in recent years. The aim of the current study was to explore such work relationships, specifically the dyadic relationship between leader

and follower. Therefore, we examined the interplay between shared leadership and performance in leader-follower dyads in the Netherlands, focusing on the moderating effect of self-efficacy, which could potentially enhance or diminish performance outcomes.

The first hypothesis predicted that employees reporting higher levels of shared leadership would also exhibit increased performance, as assessed by their leader. Contrary to our expectations, performance was not significantly affected by shared leadership in this study.

Secondly, we predicted that self-efficacy would positively impact performance. However, this hypothesis was not supported by our findings, as the relationship between the two variables was statistically insignificant.

Lastly, we hypothesized that the positive influence of perceived shared leadership on performance would strengthen as employee self-efficacy increased and weaken as self-efficacy decreased. However, this hypothesis was also unsupported, as the interaction effect between self-efficacy and shared leadership did not significantly impact performance.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The present study provides further insights into the interplay of shared leadership, self-efficacy, and performance in leader-follower dyads in a Dutch context. Thereby, it adds to the current research body, additionally shedding light onto work-dynamics from a different cultural perspective.

Curiously, none of the research findings of the current study align with previous research. As previously mentioned, a variety of underlying processes may have led to these results. For example, the focus on dyadic relationships in the study may have

influenced the results concerning the relationship between shared leadership and employee performance. In past research, most studies conducted on this relationship focused on group dynamics instead of dyadic relationships. For example, Carson et al. (2007) studied shared leadership in teams ranging from four to seven members. Similarly, another study by Drescher et al. (2014) examined groups varying in size from three to 60 members when investigating the relationship between shared leadership and performance. In both studies, performance was measured at the group level rather than the individual level. This study may have failed to replicate earlier findings because, contrary to our expectations, shared leadership is more likely to influence group performance outcomes rather than individual performance levels. Previous research has highlighted potential differences between dyads and groups. For instance, Moreland (2010) described dyads as unique, pointing out that they differ from groups in several ways. He argued that dyads are more short-lived, forming and breaking down more rapidly than groups, making them less stable overall. To avoid the dissolution of dyadic relationships, maintaining a high quality of relationships is crucial (Liden et al., 2016).

Liden et al. (2016) claim that one factor influencing the quality of dyadic relationships, especially between leader and follower, is group size. They argue that in larger groups, where leaders supervise a significant number of employees, maintaining high-quality dyadic relationships with each individual follower may be challenging. Considering that, on average, leaders in our study oversee 18 followers, the quality of leader-follower relationships may have already been affected. This, in turn, may have impacted the development of shared leadership processes, consequently influencing performance in the present study. Group size may also have affected individual perceptions, especially regarding gender. Notably, the leader group is predominantly male. In interpersonal interactions, individuals often judge each other based on surface level

attributes like gender, which can lead to unconscious formation of in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This may be especially true for interpersonal relations within larger groups, as leaders may lack the time and energy to know each member individually, making it more likely that they resort to surface-level attributions (Liden et al., 2016). Consequently, this tendency could result in leaders unconsciously favoring followers belonging to their perceived in-group, potentially heightening the risk of discrimination against out-group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Considering that in this study leaders subjectively judged their follower's performance, their perception of their employees' performance outcomes may have been influenced by in-group and out-group status. For leaders overseeing larger teams, this may have impacted results in the present study.

Moreover, the hypothesis that shared leadership positively correlates with performance was based on the Input-Process-Output model (Hill et al., 1987; Mitchell et al., 1994; Gardner & Pierce, 1998). However, this model also has its limitations, which must be considered. For instance, it has been criticized for its inability to fully represent the complexity of reality, as it may not account for all factors that influence the input-to-output flow (Merciai, 2019). The model's simplicity may have led to unrealistic assumptions about the explored relationship, resulting in the unexpected current findings.

Regarding the relationship between self-efficacy and performance, the lack of significance may be more related to the study design than to the actual absence of a relationship between the two variables. The positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance has been extensively explained in this paper. Self-efficacy can positively influence performance by enhancing motivation, effort, and persistence (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). On the contrary, some research has also investigated negative relationships. Vancouver et al. (2002) argued that excessive self-efficacy might lead to

overconfidence, which can negatively impact performance by increasing errors. Therefore, in the present study, the complete absence of any effect may be related to the study's attributes themselves. Specifically, the relatively small sample size may have led to decreased power, hindering the detection of a potential relationship.

Lastly, it appears that self-efficacy failed to moderate the relationship between shared leadership and performance. The insignificance of the interaction effect could be partly attributed to the same factors that explained the non-significant main effects. Primarily, the correlational nature of the study might make it difficult to observe an effect on performance. Previous research investigating the moderating effect of self-efficacy often used a pretest-posttest design to obtain more accurate results (Shirom et al., 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is important to note that the average scores for shared leadership, self-efficacy, and performance outcomes were all exceptionally high in the present study. Considering self-efficacy as a motivational process, as suggested by Bandura (1977, 1997), raises the question of which group is most affected by high self-efficacy levels. In a study conducted by Yuan et al. (2021), it was found that in a workplace context, benefits and bonuses (extrinsic motivators) mostly motivate low performers. Considering that extrinsic and intrinsic motivators might function similarly, viewing self-efficacy as an intrinsic motivator could possibly explain the insignificant effect found in this study. In this case, self-efficacy may fail to significantly affect the relationship between shared leadership and performance in high performers.

Practical Implications

Since there were no significant results in the study, we must conclude that shared leadership does not significantly affect performance in leader-follower dyads in the Netherlands. Therefore, despite the increasing popularity of horizontal leadership styles like shared leadership, caution is warranted when considering its implementation in

practice. To achieve the best results, organizations should assess their current priorities and evaluate which leadership style aligns most effectively with their predetermined goals. In the context of performance outcomes within leader-follower dyads, shared leadership may not be the most beneficial approach.

Strengths and Limitations

A clear strength of the present study is its focus on dyadic relationships, expanding current research on shared leadership practices within these specific interactions. Additionally, all instruments used to measure the study variables have demonstrated reliability, guaranteeing consistent and stable results. Another strength in this study is the diversity in age groups, with participant age ranging from 18 to 65 years. This ensures generalizability among different age groups. Lastly, since the study was conducted with Dutch companies, it provides insights into the relationship between shared leadership and performance in leader-follower dyads specifically within the Netherlands, further addressing current research gaps.

The most prominent limitation in the general study design is its inability to establish causality. The present study only permits correlation analysis, making stable predictions impossible and increasing the risk of confounding variables. Additionally, all data relies on self-report from either the leader or follower, making the study particularly prone to cognitive biases like mood-biases.

One of the first notable limitations concerning participant sampling emerged during data collection. Many participants abandoned the questionnaire midway, resulting in numerous missing values. Moreover, due to the focus on dyads, it was necessary to sample leader-follower pairs. However, over half of the initially sampled leaders and followers failed to forward the respective questionnaire to their counterpart, leading to their exclusion from the data set. Consequently, the sample size was relatively small,

compromising only 95 dyads, which undermines both the internal and external validity of the research findings. Of the 95 dyads, a majority held an HBO (Higher professional education) degree. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024), individuals with a bachelor's degree earn approximately 86% more than those with only a high school diploma, suggesting that participants in this study share a similar socioeconomic status. This homogeneity presents another limitation, as the findings may not generalize to all socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly in leader-employee interactions within lower-paying jobs.

The lack of diversity in the present study not only manifests itself in terms of socioeconomic status, but also gender. In the leader group, only around 39% participants are female, with 61% being male. This imbalance affects generalizability and may raise concerns about unconscious categorization into in-groups and out-groups, as previously discussed. Such biases may have influenced participant perceptions, particularly those of leaders regarding their follower's performance.

Moreover, the study may be vulnerable to volunteer bias. The means for each of the three variables were above average, suggesting that most participants reported high performance results, strong self-efficacy, and perceived shared leadership. This suggests that mostly above-average participants who were already satisfied and positively inclined toward their job may have chosen to participate in the study, potentially affecting generalizability of the findings.

Regarding the validity of specific questionnaire items, the study presented various limitations. Firstly, shared leadership was reported only by employees and not by their leaders. Given that shared leadership involves mutual influence, considering only one side of this mutually developed attribute seems counterintuitive. Other studies have measured shared leadership in both the leader and follower using density calculations or a

specifically designed game offering measurable shared responsibilities (Carson et al., 2007; Drescher et al., 2014). This suggests that the incomplete assessment of shared leadership diminishes the instrument's validity. Additionally, the validity may be further compromised by the wording of the individual items. Most items emphasize the impact the leader has on the employee and the social support provided. It may be difficult to distinguish these items from those measuring transformational leadership, which focuses on a supportive, influential, motivational, and inspirational leader (Braun et al., 2013). Consequently, it is unclear whether the items accurately measure shared leadership or transformational leadership, putting the accuracy of the study results at risk. Furthermore, the performance measure was based solely on self-report, which can result in a biased perception of performance.

Future Research

Regarding the relationship between shared leadership and performance, several factors should be considered for future research. Firstly, the quality of dyadic relationships might be negatively affected by increasing group size, which could later impact the development of shared leadership practices. Therefore, researchers could investigate the moderating effect of group size on the relationship between shared leadership and performance, hypothesizing that an increase in group size negatively affects this relationship.

Another factor that needs further investigation is gender. In the current study, most leaders were male, while gender was equally distributed among followers. Considering how in-group and out-group status can influence the perception of a dyadic partner (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), controlling for or investigating gender differences may become important. Future research could explore the effect of shared leadership on performance in homogeneous dyads, or in dyads with a female leader and a male follower. This approach could also be extended to include other minority groups. Previous research has shown that members of

minority groups feel less committed to their organization compared to those in majority groups, potentially weakening the quality of dyadic relationships (Liden et al., 2016). Based on these findings, the present model could be enhanced by adding organizational commitment as a moderator, while controlling for in-group and out-group status.

To better investigate the effect of self-efficacy as a moderator, future research could conduct pretest-posttest longitudinal studies, enabling causal inferences about its impact on performance. Additionally, performance could be categorized into low-performers and high-performers, to examine whether self-efficacy affects these groups differently.

Lastly, to avoid the shortcomings of the present study, future research should aim to increase the sample size. Given the difficulties encountered in data collection, incentives could be used to enhance participation. This strategy might also attract lower performers who lacked intrinsic motivation to participate. Moreover, performance should be measured objectively in future studies. Self-report measures often suffer from biases, undermining their accuracy. Therefore, self-report measures should be limited to concepts that rely on subjectivity, like self-efficacy. Performance can be objectively measured using statistics. Similarly, to measure shared leadership accurately, both parties should be assessed. Including only one-sided data can undermine validity and should be avoided in future research.

Conclusion

To conclude, we aimed to examine the relationship between shared leadership and performance in leader-follower dyads in the Netherlands, with self-efficacy as a potential moderator. We hypothesized for shared leadership to be positively correlate with performance. Secondly, we predicted a positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance. Lastly, we hypothesized for the relationship between shared leadership and performance to improve with increasing self-efficacy, and to weaken with decreasing self-

efficacy. However, none of the investigated relationships were statistically significant. This study does not provide support for any of the hypotheses made.

The lack of significance could be attributed to several factors, including the inherent differences between groups and dyads, affecting the development of shared leadership, or the study design itself, making it challenging to properly investigate the role of self-efficacy.

The study presented various limitations, which should be considered in future research. Furthermore, future research should consider factors that might affect shared leadership and performance such as group size and gender.

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Appendix A

Tables

Table A1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Core Study Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*
1. Shared Leadership	5.58	0.52			
2. Self-Efficacy	5.74	0.83	0.09		
3. Performance	5.87	0.77	0.01	- 0.04	

Note: *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$.

Table A2

Results of the Regression Analysis Predicting Performance

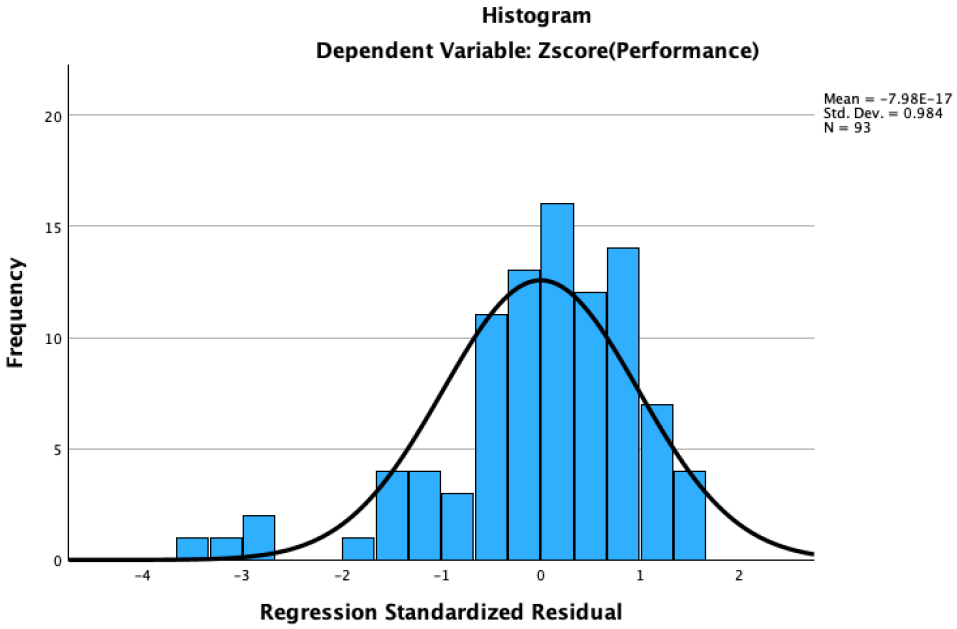
Predictor	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Constant	-.02	.11	-.17	.862
Shared Leadership (Z-Score)	.01	.11	.08	.936
Self-Efficacy (Z-Score)	-.04	.11	-.40	.688
Interaction SLxSE	-.02	.11	-.18	.859

Dependent Variable: Performance Z-Score

*Note: N = 95, *p < .05, **p < .01*

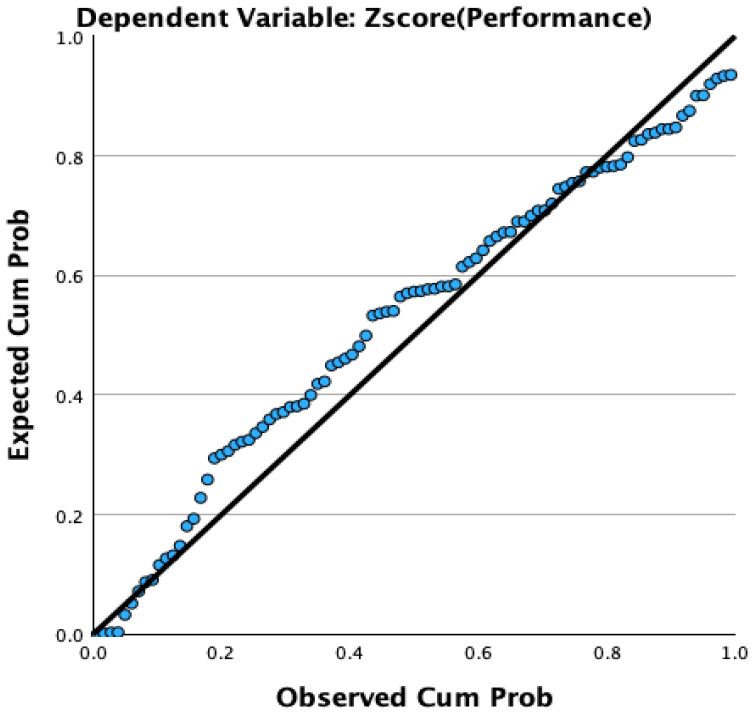
Appendix B

Histogram



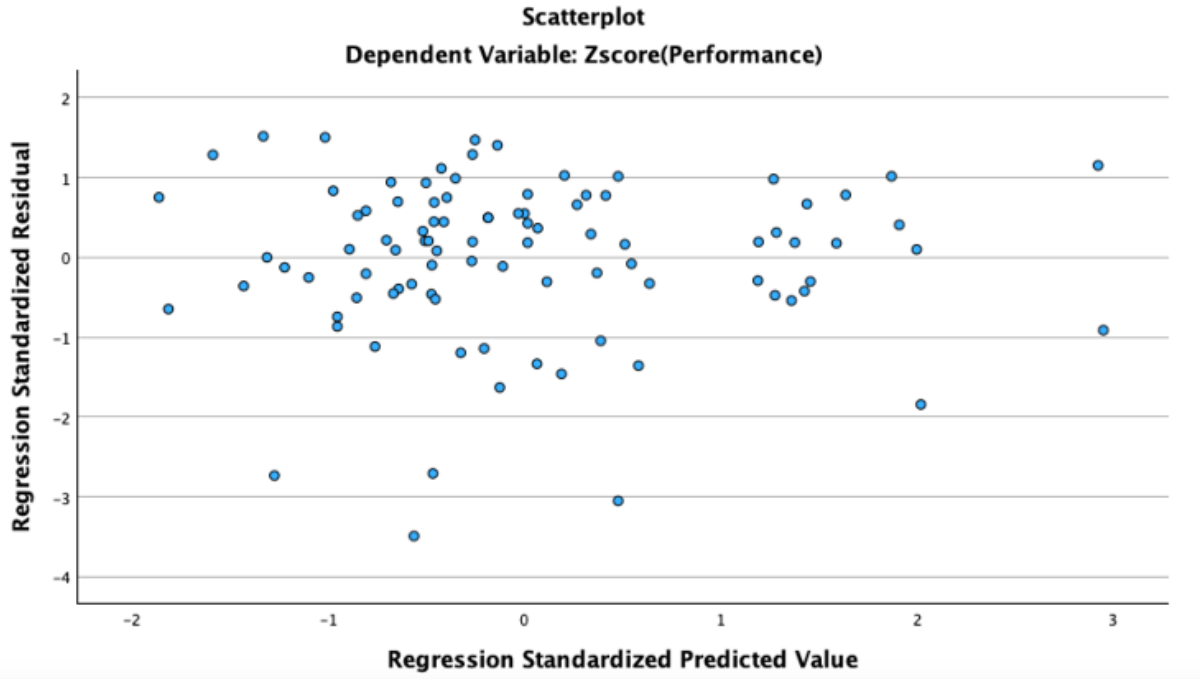
Appendix C

Q-Q Plot



Appendix D

Residual-by-Predicted Variable Scatterplot



Appendix E

Questionnaire Items: Shared Leadership

De volgende vragen gaan over uw leidinggevende.

Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

[1 Helemaal mee oneens; 7 Helemaal mee eens; 4 niet mee eens, niet mee oneens]

1. Mijn leidinggevende geeft een duidelijk beeld van waar ons team voor staat.
2. Mijn leidinggevende is gedreven door hogere doelen of idealen.
3. Mijn leidinggevende laat waardering zien voor mijn inspanningen.
4. Mijn leidinggevende moedigt mij aan om ideeën te heroverwegen die nooit eerder in twijfel getrokken zijn.
5. Mijn leidinggevende maakt gebruik van veel verschillende perspectieven om problemen op te lossen .
6. Mijn leidinggevende moedigt mij aan om meer te doen dan alleen dat wat van mij verwacht wordt (bijv. extra inspanning).
7. Mijn leidinggevende moedigt mij aan om zelf oplossingen te zoeken voor mijn problemen in het werk.
8. Mijn leidinggevende dringt aan om zelf verantwoordelijkheid voor het werk te nemen.
9. Mijn leidinggevende moedigt mij aan om nieuwe dingen te leren.
10. Mijn leidinggevende moedigt mij aan om mezelf een schouderklopje te geven wanneer ik een nieuwe uitdaging heb behaald.
11. Mijn leidinggevende moedigt mij aan om samen te werken met andere teamleden.
12. Mijn leidinggevende adviseert mij om mijn werk af te stemmen met anderen, die onderdeel uitmaken van het team.
13. Mijn leidinggevende dringt erop aan om als een team samen te werken met anderen, die deel uitmaken van het team.

14. Mijn leidinggevende verwacht dat de samenwerking met de andere teamleden goed verloopt.

15. Mijn leidinggevende besluit samen met mij wat mijn prestatiedoelen zijn.

16. Mijn leidinggevende en ik werken samen om te kiezen wat mijn prestatiedoelen moeten zijn.

17. Mijn leidinggevende en ik gaan samen om de tafel om overeenstemming te krijgen over mijn prestatiedoelen.

18. Mijn leidinggevende werkt met mij samen om mijn prestatiedoelen te ontwikkelen.

Appendix F

Questionnaire Items: Performance

De volgende vragen gaan over uw medewerker.

Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

[1 Helemaal mee oneens; 7 Helemaal mee eens; 4 niet mee eens, niet mee oneens]

Mijn medewerker:……

1. Voert de opgedragen taken naar behoren uit
2. Voldoet aan de verantwoordelijkheden vermeld in de functiebeschrijving
3. Voert de taken uit die van hem/haar verwacht worden
4. Voldoet aan de formele prestatie-eisen van de functie
5. Houdt zich/haar bezig met activiteiten die rechtstreeks van invloed zijn op zijn/haar prestatiebeoordeling
6. Verwaarloost aspecten van het werk dat hij/zij verplicht is uit te voeren
7. Faalt in het uitvoeren van essentiële taken
8. Helpt anderen die afwezig zijn geweest
9. Helpt anderen die een zware werklast hebben
10. Assisteert mij bij mijn werkzaamheden (wanneer niet gevraagd)
11. Neemt de tijd om te luisteren naar problemen en zorgen van collega's
12. Doet zijn/haar uiterste best om nieuwe medewerkers te helpen
13. Heeft persoonlijke belangstelling voor andere werknemers
14. Geeft informatie door aan collega’s
15. Aanwezigheid op werk is boven de norm
16. Geeft van te voren aan wanneer hij/zij niet kan komen werken
17. Neemt te veel werkpauzes
18. Besteed veel tijd aan persoonlijke telefoongesprekken

19. Klaagt over onbelangrijke dingen op het werk
20. Bewaart en beschermt eigendommen van de organisatie
21. Houdt zich aan informele regels die zijn opgesteld om de orde te handhaven

Appendix G

Questionnaire Items: Self-Efficacy

De volgende vragen gaan over uw werk.

Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

[1 Helemaal mee oneens; 7 Helemaal mee eens; 4 niet mee eens, niet mee oneens]

1. Ik kan kalm blijven wanneer ik geconfronteerd word met moeilijkheden in mijn werk, omdat ik kan terugvallen op mijn vaardigheden
2. Wanneer ik geconfronteerd word met een probleem in mijn werk, dan vind ik meestal meerdere oplossingen
3. Wat er ook gebeurt in mijn werk, ik kan het meestal wel aan
4. De ervaringen die ik in het verleden in mijn werk heb opgedaan, hebben me goed voorbereid op mijn werk in de toekomst
5. Ik haal de doelstellingen die ik aan mezelf stel in mijn werk
6. Ik voel me in staat om de eisen van mijn werk het hoofd te bieden