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Exploring and Discussing the Link between Integrated Leadership in the Public Sector and Follower Happiness: the Case of South Korea

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Abstract

This study tests the applicability of concepts of integrated leadership-in-government and follower happiness in South Korea and then comes up with implication and limitations on the applicability based on the study of Mathias et al. (2018). The study adopts eight leaderships: accountability, rule-following, political loyalty, network governance, task-oriented, relations-oriented, change-oriented and diversity-oriented leadership that Mathias et al. (2018) employ from Fernandez et al. (2010) and Tummers and Knies (2016). We also select job satisfaction and self-perceived performance to measure follower happiness depending on Mathias et al. (2018). According to the analytical results, it shows that accountability leadership, network governance leadership, task-oriented leadership, relations-oriented leadership, and change-oriented leadership have positive influences on follower happiness measured. Based on the analytical results, this study suggests implication and limitation on the applicability of the link between integrated leadership and follower happiness in comparison to the results from Mathias et al. (2018).

Keywords: Integrated Leadership, Public sector, Follower Happiness, Applicability

1. Introduction

Mathias et al. (2018) published a concept of integrated leadership-in-government and tested the effect on follower happiness in the Dubai and Wider Gulf context. In the article, they insisted that the purpose of the study is to contribute to developing integrated models of leadership in terms of offering a new synthesis of leadership roles in the public sector including the empirical test on the multifaceted construct [1].

Approaching an integrated viewpoint on leadership in the public sector is dependent on our weak understanding of leadership effectiveness. The public sector is strictly different from the private sector in some ways like organizational vision, strategies, decision making, service motivation, etc. The public sector, however, tends to borrow leadership theories from the business field without developing leadership theory with something special for the public sector. Based on this reflection, some scholars researching leadership in the public sector have been developing the styles of leadership with the distinctiveness comparable with the

business world. This distinctiveness is attributed to many factors especially purposes of public leadership [2]. Mathias *et al.* (2018) emphasize that public leadership embraces both political and administrative leaders in public organizations, and typically focuses on those holding very senior posts. They, however, apparently explain that their study excludes political leaders in the subject of the research following the distinction made by Van Wart (2012) and Fernandez *et al.* (2010) of leadership in government who just focus on those in administrative (non-elected) posts at all levels in government organizations [3][4]. On the other hand, we need to identify the effect of leadership on the employees-as-follower because they presented that few studies have examined leader-follower relationships in government with approaches to its special context [1]. In particular, Mathias *et al.* (2018) concentrated on follower happiness as a dependent variable to investigate the effect of integrated leadership-in-government. There are potential-different opinions on what is happiness for followers in the public sector. They presented job satisfaction and self-perceived performance to measure follower happiness. It may be controversial in defining the concept of follower happiness in the public sector and selecting variables for measuring it.

This study makes a test on the applicability of the link between integrated leadership-in-government and follower happiness in South Korea and then comes up with implication and limitations on the applicability based on the analytical results. The study focuses on just the applicability of leadership roles and the concept and variables of follower happiness from Mathias *et al.* (2018) in the Korean context.

2. Theoretical Context

Integrated leadership in public organizations like government departments, public enterprises, public authorities, councils, and so on has been discussed by academic groups that are trying to develop and apply integrated leadership-in-government as a new one of the leadership styles in the public sector. We can find evidence in some articles by Fernandez *et al.* (2010) [4], Tummers and Knies (2016) [5], and Mathias *et al.* (2018) [1]. Fernandez *et al.* (2010) suggest the concept of integrated leadership in the public sector. They present that integrated leadership is conceived as the combination of five leadership roles - task, relations, change, diversity, and integrity oriented leadership - that are performed collectively by employees and managers at different levels of the hierarchy [4]. Tummers and Knies (2016) focus on four ways public leaders can support their employees: accountability leadership, rule-following leadership, political loyalty leadership, and network governance leadership [5]. Mathias *et al.* (2018) arrange eight of the nine leadership styles defined separately from Fernandez *et al.* (2010) and Tummers and Knies (2016): accountability, rule-following, political loyalty, network governance, task-oriented, relations-oriented, change-oriented and diversity-oriented leadership.

This study employs the eight roles of public leadership tested by Mathias *et al.* (2018) based on the purpose of the research.

Accountability leadership. This role is particularly relevant for public leaders as being accountable to several stakeholders is typical for public sector organizations [5]. The thought is base on Van der Wal *et al.* (2008) describing that accountability is conceived as the most critical value for the public sector [6]. Tummers and Knies (2016) tried to define accountability leadership as leaders who stimulate employees to justify and explain their actions to stakeholders like citizens, media, legislatures and delivery partners [5]. We need to note that Bovens (2007) warns that accountability is an elusive concept. Considering this point, Tummers and Knies (2016) defined the concept of accountability leadership with the most concise description of

accountability as the obligation to explain and justify conduct suggested by Bovens (2007) [7].

Rule-following leadership. Employees in public organizations are implementers for rules and regulations which are a critical public administration value [8]. Lane (1994) also notes that public administration is in its core about implementing the rule of law [9]. Based on the viewpoint, Tummers and Knies (2016) define rule-following leadership as leaders who encourage their employees to act under government rules and regulations [5]. Olsen (2006) makes a note that rules, regulations, and laws are essential tools for governments willing to control the implementation of their policies under procedural rationality legitimized by the laws [10].

Political loyalty leadership. Political loyalty leadership is defined as leaders who stimulate their employees to align their actions with the interest of politicians, even if this is costly for them [5]. Tummers and Knies (2016) employ the principals and the agents to describe and explain political loyalty leadership [5]. Public employees as the agents are likely to become loyal towards their political principals as representatives of citizens. Mathias et al. (2018) note that political loyalty leadership refers to managers' encouragement of their teams to demonstrate loyalty even when it may clash with other loyalties and values they may hold [1]. In reality, public managers perform policies under politicians who have a right to decide public policies and to use constitutional power to be able to affect critical decision-making. It is natural that public employees dependent on loyalty to politicians.

Network governance leadership. Network governance leadership should be understood by borrowing the concept of governance highlighting ability or possibility of working together to solve many issues of governments by mobilizing resources from their stakeholders including the private sector. Based on understanding governance, Network governance leadership is defined as leaders who encourage their employees to connect with stakeholders actively [5]. Network governance leadership requires a collaborative partnership between developers of policies and stakeholders outside governments. It's because public leaders intensively tend to rely on the personal network that is able to mobilize resource for policies.

Task-oriented leadership. There have been a lot of researches on task-oriented leadership since the Michigan and Ohio State leadership studies. Based on Bass and Stogdill (1990) [11], Fernandez et al. (2010) define task-oriented leadership as leaders who are instrumental in contributing to their groups' effectiveness by setting goals, allocating labor, and enforcing sanctions [4]. Yukl (2010) demonstrates that the more effective leaders concentrate on task-oriented functions like planning and scheduling the work, coordinating subordinate activity, and provoking necessary supplies, equipment, and technical assistance [12].

Relations-oriented leadership. Relations-oriented behavior is one of the leadership behaviors found by the Michigan and Ohio State leadership studies. Relations-oriented leaders tend to be more supportive and helpful with followers. Relations-oriented leadership is defined as a concern for the welfare of subordinates and a desire to foster good interpersonal relations among organizational members [4]. Relations-oriented leadership includes showing trust and confidence, acting friendly and considerate, trying to understand followers' problems, helping to develop subordinates and further their careers, keeping subordinate informed, showing appreciation for followers' ideas, allowing considerable autonomy in how subordinates do the work, and providing recognition for subordinates' contributions and accomplishments [12].

Change-oriented leadership. Task-oriented and relations-oriented leadership do not include behaviors related to encouraging and facilitating change for organizations. By the 1980s, change-oriented behavior was

implicit in theories concerned with charismatic and transformational leadership. These days, however, change is one of the main behaviors of leaders with direct effects on organizational success. Change-oriented leadership is defined as behavior for being concerned with improving strategic decisions, adapting to change in the environment, increasing flexibility and innovation, making major changes in processes, products, or services, and gaining commitment to the changes [4]. This concept is significantly dependent on Yukl (2010)'s change-oriented behaviors.

Diversity-oriented leadership. Diversity in the public sector means complex relationships among actors in stakeholders such as racial and demographic diversity [13]. Public administration includes various interests of participants in public policies, which is a political place of struggle for diverse stakeholders. Diversity-oriented leadership is defined as leader roles by those in public settings who appreciate and promote diversity and is taken to embrace all forms of demographic diversity [1][4]. Public leaders are responsible for reflecting the diversity of stakeholders in the process of policy. Diversity-oriented leadership focuses primarily on the business setting, not on the public one. It is very hard to find out evidence that can show the positive relationship between diversity and better performance in the public sector [4].

We need to take attention to define the concept of follower happiness discussed by Mathias *et al.* (2018). Mathias *et al.* (2018) did not give us the appropriate concept of follower happiness, just showing variables for measuring follower happiness [1]. It may be controversial in comparison with other authors. Mathias *et al.* (2018) adopted job satisfaction and self-perceived performance as dependent variables. Fernandez *et al.* (2010) used organizational performance as a dependent variable to test the causal relationship with integrated leadership in the public sector. The dependent variable is PART results which are the federal sub-agency's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) score on the "Results" component of the overall PART score for 2006-2007 [4]. Tummers and Knies (2016) adopted leadership effectiveness as the dependent variable, and they measured organizational commitment, job satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behavior for organizational effectiveness.

Happiness at work may be depend on psychology in defining its concept. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) conceives happiness at work positive psychology at work, defining the term as a science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions that aims to improve quality of life [14]. The concept is so very broad that happiness at work-related constructs vary from transient level to unit one. Fisher (2010) presents the list of concepts related to happiness at work: a three-dimension construct including the job itself, the job characteristics, and the organization as a whole [15].

3. Data and Statistical method

3.1 Data

The survey was administrated through local governments including Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Daegu metropolitan city, and Busan metropolitan city in South Korea. The survey measured the demographic characteristics of the respondents by questioning gender, age, work level, and educational achievement which is used as control variables in the research.

Table 1. Description of survey sample (N=354)

Gender	
Male	53.2%
Female	46.8%
Age	
20-29	10.2%
30-39	35.9%
40-49	44.2%
older than 50	9.7%
Work level	
Technical	11.9%
Officer/Administrator	50.2%
Supervisor	17.9%
Middle manager	10.1%
Senior manager	9.9%
Educational achievement	
High school	9.3%
Bachelor's degree	15.9%
Postgraduate diploma	67.1%
Master's degree	6.4%
Doctorate	1.3%

3.2 Measures

Integrated leadership-in-government (independent variables). This study employs two scales from the existed literature to explain eight leader roles on happiness at work in the public sector: four leader roles from Tummers and Kines (2016) and four from Fernandez et al. (2010) based on Mathias et al.'s (2018) viewpoint that fifth role of integrated leadership discussed by Fernandez *et al.* (2010), integrity-oriented leadership, overlaps with the roles of accountability leadership and rule-following leadership [1].

A factor analysis was conducted to test for the assumed conceptual differentiation between the individual variables used to construct each scales. no overlap between the constructed scales is detected. All factor loading-values of these items are significant ($p < 0.05$) and all Squared Multiple Correlations-values are higher than 0.4. Internal reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha; in all case, $\alpha > 0.70$.

Table 2. Scales for measuring integrated leadership

Accountability leadership	
My supervisor	
Encourages me and my colleagues to explain our actions to various stakeholders.	
Stimulates us to inform stakeholders of our way of working.	
Provides us with the possibility to explain our behavior to stakeholders.	
Emphasizes that it is important that we answer questions from clients.	
Strives to ensure that we are openly and honestly share the actions of our organizational unit with others.	Stimulates
us to explain to stakeholders why certain decisions were taken.	

Rule-following leadership

My supervisor

Encourages me and my colleagues to support political decisions, even when other stakeholders confront us with it.
Encourages me and my colleagues not to jeopardize the relationship with political heads at risk, even if that entails risks.

Stimulates me and my colleagues to implement political decisions, even if that means additional responsibilities should be taken up.

Encourages me and my colleagues to defend political choices, even if we see shortcomings.

Encourages me and my colleagues to support political decisions, even when we see downsides.

Political loyalty leadership

My supervisor

Encourages me and my colleagues to support political decisions, even when other stakeholders confront us with it.

Encourages me and my colleagues not to jeopardize the relationship with political heads at risk, even if that entails risks

Stimulates me and my colleagues to implement political decisions, even if that means additional responsibilities should be taken up.

Encourages me and my colleagues to defend political choices, even if we see shortcomings.

Encourages me and my colleagues to support political decisions, even when we see downsides

Network governance leadership

My supervisor

Encourages me and my colleagues to maintain many contacts with other organizations.

Encourages me and my colleagues to invest substantial energy in the development of new contacts.

Stimulates me and my colleagues to regularly work together with people from our networks.

Stimulates me and my colleagues to develop many contacts with people outside our own department.

Stimulates me and my colleagues to introduce others to contacts of our own networks.

Encourages me and my colleagues to be a 'linking pin' between different organizations.

Task-oriented leadership

Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.

I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.

Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals, and needed resources).

Managers review and evaluate the organization's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives.

Supervisors/team leaders provide employees with constructive suggestions to improve their job performance.

Relations-oriented leadership

I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.

Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit provide employees with the opportunities to demonstrate their leadership skills.

Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.

Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit support employee development.

Change-oriented leadership

I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

Creativity and innovation are rewarded.

Diversity-oriented leadership

Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit are committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.

Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.

Job satisfaction (dependent variable). This study adopts Kunin's (1995) single-point scale [16] to measure job satisfaction defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences [17].

A factor analysis was conducted to test for the assumed conceptual differentiation between the individual variables used to construct each scales. no overlap between the constructed scales is detected. All factor loading-values of these items are significant ($p < 0.05$) and all Squared Multiple Correlations-values are higher

than 0.4. Internal reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha; in all case, $\alpha > 0.70$.

Table 3. Scales for measuring job satisfaction

In general, I am satisfied with my job.
I think there are many other jobs which are more interesting than mine.
My current job fulfils the expectations I had before I started it.
I would like to get another job because I am not satisfied.
My current job is pleasant.
I think my current job is interesting and fascinating.

Self-perceived performance (dependent variable). This study adopts four-item measurement scale of perceived performance invented by Vandenaabeele's (2009) [18]. The reason why the study chooses the scale has high fitness with integrated leadership.

A factor analysis was conducted to test for the assumed conceptual differentiation between the individual variables used to construct each scales. no overlap between the constructed scales is detected. All factor loading-values of these items are significant ($p < 0.05$) and all Squared Multiple Correlations-values are higher than 0.4. Internal reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha; in all case, $\alpha > 0.70$.

Table 4. Scales for measuring self-perceived performance

In my opinion, I contribute to the success of the organization.
I think I am performing well within this organization.
I think I am a good employee.
On average, I work harder than my colleagues

4. Results

To isolate the impact of each variable on follower happiness, an OLS regression analysis was performed on the full sample. The results are presented in Table 5. These results show that accountability leadership ($\beta = .150$, $p < 0.01$), network governance leadership ($\beta = .075$, $p < 0.05$), task-oriented leadership ($\beta = .157$, $p < 0.01$), relations-oriented leadership ($\beta = .095$, $p < 0.01$), and change-oriented leadership ($\beta = .723$, $p < 0.01$) have positive influences on follower happiness measured by job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. As can be seen, about 61.2% of the variation in the perception of follower happiness could be explained by integrated leadership-in-government.

Table 5. Regression results of integrated leadership-in-government on follower happiness

Variables	Coefficient	Standard error	t ratio	β
Accountability leadership	.113	.041	2.745**	.150
Rule-following leadership	-.054	.047	-1.148	-.071
Political loyalty leadership	-.017	.044	-.393	-.021
Network governance leadership	.049	.022	2.270*	.075

Task-oriented leadership	.120	.027	4.424**	.157
Relations-oriented leadership	.078	.025	3.124**	.095
Change-oriented leadership	.634	.025	24.988**	.723
Diversity-oriented leadership	.000	.013	.035	.001
Gender	.001	.032	.044	.001
Work level	.019	.018	1.036	.040
Age	-.004	.021	-.187	-.008
R ²			.618	
Adjusted R ²			.612	

*p< 0.05, ** p< 0.01

5. Conclusion

Based on the analytical results, there are some things to be discussed about the applicability and limitations on the concept of integrated leadership in the public sector including the concept and sub-constructs of follower happiness. A few studies including Fernandez *et al.* (2010) and Mathias *et al.* (2018) have concerns about developing the concept of integrated leadership. It may be said that these have characteristics of attempting research which requires more empirical tests to confirm the applicability of a concept by convergent validity and discriminant one. Judging from the analytical results, this study shows that the concept of integrated leadership in the public sector has a relatively high degree of convergent and discriminant validity. Mathias *et al.* (2018) adopted the scales from Fernandez *et al.* (2010) and Tummers and Kines (2016) to measure eight leader roles for the public sector. It is assessed by some studies exploring or testing acceptance of integrated leadership that these scales get a high degree of validity and reliability in some countries.

As noted before, we need to take a look at defining the concept of follower happiness. Mathias *et al.* (2018) for the first time used follower happiness to identify the causal relationship with integrated leadership in the public sector, but they did not present the concept of it. The concept of happiness is almost used in the business field, termed as happiness at work [19][20]. Vallina *et al.* (2018) note that despite the number of studies, there is little evidence about happiness at work that could be maintained with a minimum of certainty, and limited knowledge has been developed about what happiness at work means, how to measure it, or what its antecedents and outcomes are [19].

We employed variables from Mathias *et al.* (2018) to measure follower happiness. They adopted job satisfaction and self-perceived performance as variables. Tummers and Knies (2016) used organizational commitment, job satisfaction, work engagement, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behavior as dependent variables to measure integrated leadership roles. They used the term 'the public leadership roles' as an outcome variable of the four leadership instead of follower happiness. They also suggested more various variables than Mathias *et al.* (2018). Fernandez *et al.* (2010) adopted PART results that is the federal sub-agency's Program Assessment Tool score on the Results component of the overall PART score for 2006-2007 to measure the dependent variable of integrated leadership. They did not test the link between integrated leadership and follower happiness. Excepting for Mathias *et al.* (2018), there is the dearth of exploring the correlation between integrated leadership and follower happiness. There is something to be considered in measuring happiness for the public sector, happiness is largely dealt with in the business field focusing on building up companies' competitiveness by making employees aligned and motivated for achieving more effective goals. Considering that there is a difference in ways of motivating employees between the public organizations and private ones, we note that there should be more exploration and test on the applicability of

follower happiness suggested by Mathias *et al.* (2018) in the public sector focusing on the link with integrated leadership.

From our analytical results, we can find out something interesting in the effects of integrated leadership on follower happiness. It shows that change-oriented leadership has the highest influence on follower happiness. Judging from the context of leaders' behaviors in governmental organizations in South Korea, it is said that the managers tend to rely on task-oriented leadership or rule-following leadership. The Korean government, however, has experienced dynamic changes in administrative philosophy toward promoting change and innovation for sustainable growth and taking deep-rooted evil away for the rebirth of a new nation. These movements have encouraged the managers' behaviors and roles in all the level of the governments to be merged into new and better ways of treating with working and developing creative and innovative strategies for the success of their own policies. It, however, will be very elusive to make sure that change-oriented leadership is wide-spreading and distinctive in the Korean government just depending on the result of this survey. Based on the research, diversity-oriented leadership has low fitness with leader behaviors in the Korean government because of the culture and value of the public sector affecting leaders' ways of thinking and behaving.

To sum up, this study suggests that the model of integrated leadership should be more tested through empirical researches to elaborate on the universal validity of the leadership styles and follower happiness with an examination of the applicability for the public sectors in many countries.

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