The Influence of Entrepreneurial Leadership on Team Performance  
-Focusing on the Mediating Role of Team Efficacy

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Abstract  With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, companies pursue innovation and opportunities, and corporate performance is also newly defined. As a result, the demand for new leadership is stronger. This paper conducted an empirical analysis to examine the role of team efficacy between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance. Using the SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 20.0 Statistics Package, 530 members in 79 work teams in China collected data was analyzed. The results showed that entrepreneurial leadership has a positive (+) effect on team performance, and team efficacy has a partial mediating effect between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance. This study deepened the understanding of entrepreneurial leadership and revealed the importance of entrepreneurial leadership in organizations. Future research can focus on multi-level research involving self-efficacy and individual entrepreneurial intent.

Key Words : Entrepreneurial Leadership, Team Performance, Team Efficacy, Team, Leadership.

요약  조직성과를 창출하기 위해 리더십에 대해 관심이 많아 많은 연구가 있었지만, 4차 산업혁명 시대의 변화에 적응하기 위해 팀 리더들의 역할에 주목한 연구는 많이 없었다. 이에, 본 연구에서는 현 시대의 필요한 리더의 기업가적 리더십이 팀 성과 사이에서 팀 효능감을 매개변수로 하여 어떠한 영향을 미치는지에 대해 연구하고자 한다. 이를 검증하기 위해 중국 주요 기업의 총 79개 팀, 530명의 팀원을 대상으로 데이터를 수집하고 SPSS와 AMOS을 사용하여 분석한 결과, 기업가적 리더십이 팀 성과에 정(+)'의 영향이 있으며, 기업가적 리더십과 팀 성과 간의 관계에서 팀 효능감이 공정적인 매개역할을 하는 것으로 나타났다. 따라서 본 연구에서는 사람과 성과를 동시에 추구하는 팀워크 관점에서 팀 리더들의 기업가적 리더십의 중요성과 팀 효능감을 향상시키는 중요성을 밝히는 것이 그 의의가 있다. 향후 팀 차원뿐만 아니라 개인 차원의 자기효능감과 창업의향을 포함한 폭 넓은 연구를 계속 진행할 계획이다.

주제어 : 기업가적 리더십, 팀 성과, 팀 효능감, 팀, 리더십.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The past decade has witnessed the most spectacular and powerful emergence of entrepreneurial activities in the world. The entrepreneurial revolution has redefined the economy, creating new jobs, new products and even new industries[1]. From the advent of smart phone to artificial intelligence, human lifestyles and ways of thinking have changed dramatically. With a series of high-tech continuous fermentation, entrepreneurs are now described as aggressive catalysts for change in the world of business, individuals who recognize opportunities where others see chaos, contradiction, or confusion[2].

The creation and sustainable development of new businesses require not only vision and financial capital but also the need to lead others to transform that vision and financial capital into a reality of success[3]. Consensus has been reached on the positive role of leadership in affecting individual and organizational performance in the field of organization management[4, 5]. To some extent, leaders’ capable of sustaining innovation in adapting to rapidly changing environment has been emphasized[6]. Obviously, attention should be paid to the occurrence of a strong presence of factors that are of the entrepreneurs—leaders. Cogliser and Brigham (2004) remark that one of the potential areas where entrepreneurship researchers might benefit from is the successes of leadership researches[7]. Entrepreneurial leadership emerges as the only concept that can reconcile various gaps, which is considered as a combination of entrepreneurship and leadership. The necessary to integrate entrepreneurship research and theory into the more established traditions of leadership and management was also emphasized by Vecchio(2003) [8]. Combining the importance of entrepreneurship in the company’s economic development and reconstruction, integrating entrepreneurship and leadership can be regarded as the GAP of existing research, and the gaps and limitations in the protean literature are worth explaining[9].

1.2 Research Questions and Purposes

Entrepreneurial leadership is not a new concept, but it has only recently received attention in both western and Asian academic world. While considerable academic research has explored the skills and abilities demanded of entrepreneurs, limited research has been devoted to the leadership issues[3]. The internal process of how the entrepreneurial leadership influence organizational/ individual innovation and performance has also attracted the attention of scholars [10–13]. But at present, there is none research focusing on efficacy in team level related with team performance.

O’Reilly, Snyder & Boothe (1993) emphasized that executive team’s experience is a very important determinant of the team’s functioning[14]. Team members may be influenced by leaders’ entrepreneurial leadership and identified an entrepreneurial mind-set to be more confident in their team to discover new opportunities and to engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, team creative efficacy was found to exert a mediating role between entrepreneurial leadership and employee creativity[25]. Follow this logic, we consider team efficacy as an associator with team performance. Thus, this paper aimed at exploring the latent influence relationship between leader’s entrepreneurial leadership and team performance, focusing on team members’ efficacy on their team.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurial Leadership
Entrepreneurial leadership is emerging as a critical issue in our understanding of the hyper competitive context and the dynamics of economic development in the 21st century[15]. Similar with the leadership development, in the early researches, the entrepreneurial leadership has been defined from the trait view that the entrepreneurial leadership is an ability of an individual to influence others [16, 17]. In other words, the entrepreneurial leadership has been recognized as an ability of an individual. Others imply that the entrepreneurial leadership should be considered as part of general leadership, which influencing subordinates by role modeling[8]. Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud & Brännback (2015) defined the entrepreneurial leadership, different from management, as influencing and directing the performance of group members toward the achievement of organizational goals that involve recognizing and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities[19].

Reviewing relevant literature, previous researchers are identifying the most important fundamental attributes that reflect entrepreneurial leadership, including vision, opportunity, impact, planning, motivation, creativity, achievement orientation, flexibility, persistence, patience, risk-taking, high degree of ambiguity, tolerance, self-confidence, tenacity, power-orientation, positive behavior, sustainable and internal control points [20, 21]. Most of scholars consider entrepreneurial leadership as a single component concept [12, 22, 23].

The positive link between the entrepreneurial leadership and innovative is confirmed, but its nature is unclear. For instance, Chen (2007) found that the entrepreneurial leadership positively correlated with creativity in entrepreneurial teams, while none significant correlation was found between the entrepreneurial leadership and patent creation[22]. While Huang, Ding & Chen (2014) indicated that entrepreneurial leadership leads to organizational innovation and creativity, which further positively influenced new venture performance [12]. Paudel (2019) also confirmed a significant positive effect of entrepreneurial leadership on business performance of small and medium enterprises[39]. As entrepreneurial leaders have been described as one who creating opportunities and setting goals, we inferred that there should be a positive relationship between the entrepreneurial leadership and team performance. Thus, we make hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Entrepreneurial leadership is positively related to team performance.

2.2 Team Efficacy

Team-efficacy has recently attracted a great deal of attention on variables that are important for explaining team-level performance. Cai et al. (2018) expected entrepreneurial leadership motivates and challenges employees to engage in creative behaviors and outcomes, which associated with the courage or confidence to take a new step[25]. In this vein, past researches have also suggested that leaders’ behaviors may motivate team members to increase their efficacy on their team. According to the entrepreneurial leadership theory, entrepreneurial leaders benefit a lot by building effective venture teams to accomplish innovative goals[26]. In other words, such research highlights the role of entrepreneurial leadership in team-level attributes regarding higher business performance, such as pushing team members to be more interdependent and act in a more innovative way, which may contribute to higher team efficacy[38].

Lord et al. (2001) suggested that team members who have been supervised by the same leader tend to form a collective view of their joint efficacy to generate entrepreneurial outcomes[27]. Entrepreneurial leaders motivate co-workers to
follow and join the opportunity-driven process as one part of the collective by being committed to the identification and exploitation of opportunities, which is useful for efficacy formation [28]. Thus, we proposed the following hypothesis considering the suggesting relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurial leadership is positively related to team members’ team efficacy.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Leadership, Team Efficacy and Team Performance

Existing conceptual and empirical studies has found a positive relationship between team efficacy and team performance[40]. Specially, individuals are motivated through the establishment of high goals to attain effective outcomes[24]. The team goal commitment expectations, which are influenced by their efficacy on their team, are likely to motive them to devote effort to generating team effectiveness[29].

Entrepreneurial leaders were described as leaders who can maintain innovation and adaptability in high-speed and uncertain environments[4]. While influencing others to exploring opportunities and changes, he or she must be act as a passionate role model. The passionate entrepreneurial leaders showed can have a contagious effect on members‘ confidence on their team’s ability, which was positively related to team level work performance [30]. Moreover, confidence generated by team efficacy can helps motivate and direct efforts to complete the team’s goals[41].

Srivastava, Bartol & Locke (2006) has examined the relationship between empowering leadership, team-efficacy, knowledge sharing and team performance[31]. According to their research, knowledge sharing, and team-efficacy partially mediated the positive relationship between empowering leadership and team performance. As entrepreneurial leaders have been described as one who pushes others to act in a more innovative way[19], we inferred that there should be a positive relationship between the entrepreneurial leadership and team performance, and team efficacy may mediate this relationship. Thus, we make hypothesis as follows.

Hypothesis 3: Team efficacy mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Sampling and Procedure

Data collection was carried out targeting at general work teams in eleven Chinese companies. Personal networking was used when conducting the survey. And the convenience sampling methods were used which refers to the samples can be secured by the researchers, instead of random sampling or probability sampling. In order to avoid common method bias, we set a time interval when we collected the questionnaire from different sources, and anonymity was adopted in the questionnaire distribution process. We first interviewed senior managers to acquire the permission, and asked them about team age and team size. Then we choose several teams randomly and sent questionnaire to team members (including demographics, team performance and team efficacy) through e-mails and web links. The instructions in the questionnaire inform participants that the survey was designed to learn more about the organization, how employees think about team leaders and the performance of their teams, and how they see themselves on the capability of the team. Each
survey packet begins with an indication, followed by several instruments to evaluate each variable. Finally, demographic issues such as gender, age, education level and tenure were asked. We ultimately received 530 valid questionnaires from 79 teams (response rate 66.2%). Of all the participants, 54.3% were men. In terms of age, there are most people aged 25–30 (75, 32.9%). Team age of over 6 years accounted for the largest proportion (49.4 %, N=39). In the team size, 4–6 members were the most, with 49 (62 %). The most frequently indicated education level was a bachelor’s degree with 219 (41.3%), and the most job type is engineers/R&D with 182 (34.3%). More detailed demographic information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
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<th>(%)</th>
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<td>4–6 years</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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3.2 Measures and Operational Definitions

All the items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 point (strongly disagree) to 5 point (strongly agree) unless otherwise indicated.

Entrepreneurial leadership (Independent Variable): We defined Entrepreneurial leadership (α=0.93) as a distinctive leadership role which influencing and directing the performance of group members, along with the mind-set of opportunity identification and opportunity exploration. It was measured using the 8-items "ENTRELEAD scale" developed by Renko et al. (2015)[19].

Team Efficacy (Mediating Variable): We defined team efficacy as the beliefs or faiths of team members about the skills and abilities to organize and perform the actions required to successfully achieve the team task. To measure team efficacy(α=0.89), we adopted Edmondson (1999)’s 3-factor scale and 1 item from Zhao et al. (2015) to text how much an individual perceived about their team capability[32, 33].

Team performance (Dependent Variable): We defined team performance(α=0.94) as the extent to which the team members perceived team’s effectiveness and efficiency in performing tasks. Consistent with appraisal research, assessments of both team outcomes and team behaviors were included [34]. We combined dimensions such as knowledge of tasks, quality of work, quantity of work, initiative, interpersonal skills, planning and allocation, commitment as team performance.

Jansen, Van Den Bosch & Volberda (2006) have suggested controlling the age and size of new businesses, as these two variables may be related to exploration and performance[35]. Thus, we controlled team size and team age in the team level. Gender, age, education, tenure, main job the one does in the team were controlled in the individual level.
3.3 Data Aggregation

Considering team level research requires special statistical procedures to analyze the data, we justified aggregating individual members’ responses statistically by using rwg, ICC(1), and ICC(2) to ensure that multi-item rwg are generally considered sufficient agreement to warrant aggregation [36, 37].

The ICC(1) values of entrepreneurial leadership, team efficacy and team performance were 0.34, 0.38 and 0.62, respectively, while the ICC(2) values were 0.76, 0.80 and 0.91. Moreover, the rwg values of entrepreneurial leadership, team efficacy and team performance were 0.82, 0.88 and 0.72, all above 0.7. The results indicate that data aggregation is justified.

4. Results

4.1 Validity Analysis

To assess the discriminant validity of the measures in our study, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 20.0 statistics package. The results are presented in Table 2. The overall structural model showed a good fit to the data ($x^2=114.58$, df=87, p=.03, $x^2/df=1.32$, IFI=.97, TLI=.97, CFI=.97, RMSEA=.06).

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The results of correlations are provided in Table 3. As expected, entrepreneurial leadership is significantly correlated with team efficacy (r=0.42, p<0.01) and team performance (r=0.55, p<0.01). Team efficacy is also positively correlated to team performance (r=0.50, p<0.01). Moreover, age is positively correlated to tenure (r=0.40, p<0.01) and team efficacy (r=0.09, p<0.05). It means that the older the members, the longer he or she may stays at the team, and the higher team efficacy may be.

4.3 Hypotheses Test

We use SEM procedures to examine the relationship of entrepreneurial leadership, team efficacy and team performance. As Table 4 shows, entrepreneurial leadership positively influence team efficacy and team performance, with standardized regression weights of 0.48 (p<0.01) and 0.65 (p<0.01), lending support for

<table>
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$x^2=114.58$(p=.03), df=87, $x^2/df=1.32$, IFI=.97, TLI=.97, CFI=.97, RMSEA=.06
Table 3. Means, standard deviations and correlations

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<td>-0.05</td>
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*p<0.05, **p<0.01.

Table 4. Path analysis

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<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial leadership→Team efficacy</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team efficacy →Team performance</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Direct effects, indirect effects and total effects of variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial leadership</td>
<td>Team performance</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team efficacy</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team efficacy</td>
<td>Team performance</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H1 and H2. Our findings also show that team efficacy partially mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance (see Table 5). When entrepreneurial leadership influenced team performance with a mediating role of team efficacy, the path coefficient was 0.30(0.65*0.45), and when the influence directly affected team performance without team efficacy as a mediator, the path coefficient was 0.48, lending support for H3.

In addition, Bootstrapped confident intervals corroborate the significant indirect effect of entrepreneurial leadership on team performance (95%CI=[0.17, 0.47]). While the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance is showed to be positively significant (t=9.46, p<.01 95%CI=[0.72, 1.11]). It means that the mediation effect of team efficacy exists, while it is not a complete mediator. Thus, we confirmed that team efficacy partially mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance, again supporting H3.

5. Conclusions

The present study was motivated by three goals/ First, to investigate the effect of entrepreneurial leadership on team performance. Second, to prove the importance of team efficacy to team performance. Third, to advance the understanding of the role of team efficacy between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance.

As expected, the research results supported all of our hypotheses, which showed that entrepreneurial leadership positively effect team performance(H1), and team efficacy (H2). In addition, bootstrap CIs corroborate the
significant indirect effects of entrepreneurial leadership on team performance through team efficacy, which means that team efficacy partially mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance (H3).

Scholars suggested that it is necessary to conduct further research on the desirable workplace outcomes as a distinctive leadership style [15, 19, 26]. Entrepreneurial leadership can play a critical role in situations where a innovative workforce is required [22]. This means that employees should have a strong desire to identify and explore opportunities, which associated with new venture performance [12]. While we still have limited understanding of how entrepreneurial leadership may stimulate innovative behavior and organization performance [23]. Following Renko et al.’s (2015) conceptualization of entrepreneurial leadership [19], we argue that the entrepreneurial leadership style enables a firm to make its members more confident in their own team by influencing and directing the performance of group members as a passionate role model. Our study empirically extends the understanding of the role of entrepreneurial leadership style in organizational behavior in team level. Our findings indicate that entrepreneurial leadership positively related to team members' team efficacy. This provides evidence to support that entrepreneurial leadership may inspire employees' feeling of being compatible with their leader and organizational goals [25]. We confirmed team efficacy's mediating role between entrepreneurial leadership-team performance relationship. It stressed the importance of entrepreneurial leaders in terms of motivating workplace employees to develop their efficacy beliefs toward their teams (e.g. Renko et al., 2015). We respond to scholars' calls for investigating intervention mechanisms by showing that entrepreneurial leadership influences team performance through a motivational mechanism.

Our findings have certain practical implications. First, in order to help firms to produce more outcomes, organizations should recognize the important value of entrepreneurial leadership by selecting leaders with this characteristics. At the same time, organizations can develop general managers' entrepreneurial skills by training (e.g., designing dynamic and acceptable goals). Our results also point the role of team efficacy on team performance. Thus, leaders and organizations should desirably coordinate well to help team members share strong beliefs concerning their teams' performance. Organizations should develop practices to build high-efficacy teams and develop team members understanding of the common goals. Considering the importance of team efficacy to team performance, organizations should develop practices to cultivate team members' understanding of common goals as well as confidence in achieving them. This may boost employees’ contributions as part of a strong unit.

Our study may generate ambiguity regarding causality. Future studies may use a longitudinal empirical research design to confirm the causal effects between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance. In addition, considering the limited ability to collect questionnaires, we collected individual-level data for team-level analysis. There may be some deviations between the results of member's recognition and the results of leader's evaluation. Thus, further research could examine team performance from multi sources. Moreover, although this study contributes empirical evidence to the widely established relation between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance via team efficacy, further research is encouraged to explore the results while connecting with self-efficacy in teams. For example, entrepreneurial leadership may also stimulate
individual’s self¬efficacy by role modeling regard to team common goals. Assuming self¬efficacy can also mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and team performance, it seems necessary to study the magnitude of the two mediating effects. Furthermore, since entrepreneurial leadership emphasizes identifying and exploring opportunities, future research could study the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and employees’ entrepreneurial intent within and without the firm following prior studies[40, 41], and the influence of entrepreneurial intent on entrepreneurial success[18]. Cross¬level research of integrating self¬efficacy, team¬efficacy, and other relevant mechanisms would enrich current knowledge on how entrepreneurial leadership influence organizational outcomes.

REFERENCES


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