

Democratic Leadership and Team Performance: Moderating Effect of Gender

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ABSTRACT

Team performance is a crucial part of a management working system in today's world. The unity of the team determines the future that organization heads to. This study aims to identify the effects of democratic leadership on the team performance, and the moderating role of gender in these effects. Through the study of various research articles and published papers, it develops a simple regression model and assesses the dummy indicator regression of the variables used and discusses the results of analysis which indicates that democratic leadership has a positive and significant effect on team performance with p-value less than 0.05, the value of coefficient of multiple determination was 0.264. Likewise, the gender is moderating the impact of democratic leadership on team performance. This study attempts to provide some of the empirical support that there is a positive association between democratic leadership and team performance. This paper concludes with various implications which can be used by organizations to create leadership development courses that teach managers and supervisors how to lead democratically and gives research directions for future research study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's work environment is characterized by rapid technological advancements, global connectivity, and a shift toward collaborative and dynamic structures. Organizations are increasingly emphasizing teamwork as a crucial component for achieving success in this complex landscape. The importance of team performance cannot be overstated, as teams are often responsible for tackling multifaceted challenges that require diverse skill sets and perspectives. Chandansekhar (2011) highlighted factors that increase employee performance, wherein it was

discovered that all these factors are elements of democratic leadership.

Hanfai et.al. (2018) stated that one's leadership has a very large role in every decision-making, so making decisions and taking responsibility for the results is one of the duties of a leader. In this case, it can be concluded that the leadership style is very influential in achieving organizational goals. Organizational goals are impossible to achieve if people in the organization do not have good performance. The leadership style has three basic patterns, namely those that prioritize the implementation of tasks, those that emphasize cooperative relationships, and those that emphasize the

results that can be achieved. So, the most appropriate leadership style is something that can foster motivation and easily adapt to all situations (Hanafi, 2018).

The democratic leadership style is currently seen as a very suitable leadership style since it is a leadership style that grants subordinates a wide range of authority (Laliosa, 2018). Always involve your team if a problem arises. In a democratic leadership style, the leader gives his subordinates a lot of information about their tasks. This model leader's fundamental character is white. Members play a larger role in democratic leadership. In this leadership style, the leader just outlines the objectives to be met and provides participants with the means to do so. Additionally, members have the freedom to find solutions to the issues they encounter (Nasila, 2014). The delegation of power gives employees responsibility and encourages their personal development which allows for self-realization. In addition, this style of leadership aims to achieve equality and respect for everyone (Henri, 2016).

In their discussion of motivation and performance House (1971) argues that a democratic leadership system will result in a highly motivated workforce, and as a result, higher worker performance.

Tella (2007) stated that workers are more satisfied with their jobs when they are governed democratically. This is a result of the characteristics of a democratic leader, which include offering incentives, fostering effective communication between employers and employees, paying attention to the workers, and creating an environment that is suitable for making broad decisions. It is also thought that as employee work satisfaction rises, performance rises as well, which in turn affects organizational productivity.

Mohammed (2014) proposed that there exists a significant relationship between participative leadership style and employee performance in an organization. Leadership, therefore, has a significant effect on the performance of workers and organization growth in general; Dixon

(2010) also emphasizes this correlation. According to Mehra (2006), employee performance is impacted by the leadership style applied and affects the ability of employees to achieve corporate goals and objectives. A leadership style that motivates employees is critical for achieving good performance as noted by Northouse (2014) and Sougui (2016) established that the four path-goal theory leadership styles namely directive, supportive, participative and achievement had a significant impact on employees' performance in organizations. Otieno (2015) found out that the democratic leadership styles led to employee engagement which in turn led to superior employee performance in the organization.

On the other hand, according to Tannenbaum (1958), democratic leadership is characterized by decentralized decision-making that is shared by subordinates. On the other hand, democratic leadership, while appealing in theory, rarely gets bogged down in its own cumbersome procedure, and practical outcomes typically demand a tremendous lot of labor (Michael, 2010). In such contradictory views of different scholars on team performance, the question arises: What is the degree of impact of democratic leadership on team performance? Again, does the gender of the employees play a moderating role in such impact of democratic leadership on team performance?

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, although the many research has shown the importance of team performance and how they have a positive impact on the workplace, the limited empirical research on team performance that is currently available suggests that further greater insight into the study is needed to better explain ethically questionable events and behavior in organizations, as well as to inform organizational policies and practices geared toward encouraging such practices. By empirical analysis we find out the degree of impact of democratic leadership on team performance in Nepalese Commercial Bank,

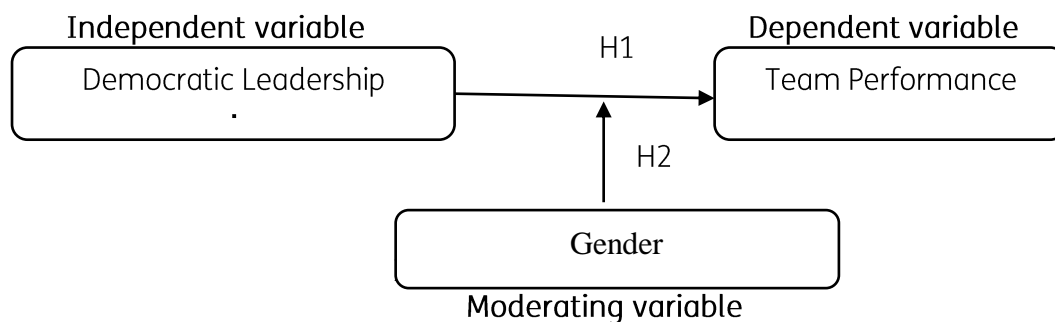
this study extends previous team performance research. Second, Tannenbau (1958) observed democratic leadership is characterized by decentralized decision-making that is shared by subordinates. Nonetheless, there is a significant probability of making poor decisions and executing them poorly. On the other hand, democratic leadership, while appealing in theory, rarely gets bogged down in its cumbersome procedure, and practical outcomes typically demand a tremendous lot of labor (Michael, 2010).

The study of democratic leadership helps determine its correlation with higher

levels of employee satisfaction and engagement. Third, this insight can influence organizational policies and practices related to employee involvement, leading to a more inclusive and participatory workplace.

The democratic leadership style is currently considered a very appropriate leadership style because the democratic leadership style is a leadership style that gives broad authority to subordinates (Laliasa, 2018). Thus, the following conceptual framework has been developed.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Laliasa, 2018

The Democratic leadership is independent variable which impacts the dependent variable, team performance. The role of moderating variable will be played by gender which impacts the relationship between democratic leadership and team performance.

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

1.1.1 TP AND DL

Participative leadership theories suggest that the ideal leadership style takes the input of others into account. Participative leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel relevant and committed to the decision-making process. A manager who uses participative leadership, rather than making all the decisions, seeks to involve other people, thus improving commitment and increasing collaboration, which leads to

better quality decisions and a more successful business (Lamb, 2013).

According to the examination of employee performance, organizational productivity also rises as employee performance does. As a result, this relationship is noted as having a favorable relationship. A democratic leadership structure is necessary for employee motivation and organizational productivity, according to Carew (2009) who also says that workers would perform better in a democratic atmosphere. A similar argument was put out by Karim (2012), who claimed that a respectable and equitable workplace where each employee is treated with respect is a stimulant for higher profit. The proper coaching and training to the employees effect the team performance of the employees which is also the result of their personal experience.

Mullins (1999) investigated that the democratic leadership style places a larger emphasis on people and encourages more

interaction within the group. Members of the group share in the leadership responsibilities, and the leader becomes more integrated into the team. Similarly, the principles of democratic leadership, according to Wilson (1994) and Luthar (1996), are friendliness, helpfulness, and the promotion of participation. Similarly, McGregor (1960), characterized this leadership style as charitable, participatory, and believing in people. He compared a democratic leader to a Theory Y manager, who is known to promote follower engagement, productivity, and commitment (Hackman, 2007).

The effect of democratic leadership along with team coordination has an impact on team performance. Chandansekhar (2011) highlighted factors that increase employee performance, wherein it was discovered that all these factors are elements of democratic leadership. These factors include cordial employee-employer relations, provision of training and other development programs, presence of initiatives to increase team spirit, and most importantly, the opportunity for employees to have their voices heard. Leaders should emphasize the participation of the subordinates in the decision-making process which can make the employees more active and creative while doing the work.

The two-way communication system and the interchanges of ideas and experiences gather all the leaders and the team together. Democratic leadership also provides more scope for the use of human creativity and initiative. Leaders can recognize the human values of subordinates and behave with them as members of the organization. All these situations show the importance of creating team spirit and group effort to gain common goals.

Teamwork is conceptually nested within team performance and is a collection of related beliefs, attitudes, and actions that support the dynamic performance processes. This kind of interaction between processes may be seen in team cognition, also known as team-level macro cognition,

which has been the subject of a lot of recent studies. Teams are typically described as information-processing units in team cognition research (Hinsz, Tindale, & Vollrath, 1997). Team members manage their individual and team-level taskwork and teamwork processes, which is how team performance is understood as a multilevel process (and not a product) (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000).

Coupling the observations mentioned above, this study presents the following hypotheses:

H1: Democratic leadership would be positively associated with employee's team performance.

H2: Gender would be moderating the impact of democratic leadership on team performance in Nepalese Development Bank.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

There are 17 development banks in Nepal which constituted the population for this study. Out of these commercial banks, 5 banks were elected as a sample. Therefore, Convenience Sampling was adopted. Questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents of the selected banks.

After excluding missing data, 84 of the 100 respondents were included in the sample for analysis. The average age of the participants was 28.89(SD = 7.80) and had an average of 5.92 years of tenure (SD = 5.14). Among them, 48.8% were female, and 77% of them had earned their bachelor's degrees and above.

2.2 MEASURES

All substantive variables were assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

2.3 DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP (DP)

The DP scale developed by Sougui (2016) was used for this study. Democratic Leadership-related questions include 10 items. The coefficient alpha was 0.823. Sample items: "My leader believes in

decentralization of power and invites me in the decision-making process.”; “Two-way communication system exists between me and the leader”; and “The leader doesn’t try to change rules by force as per their convenience.”; and other areas including openness to criticism, creativity encouragement, positive motivation, provides rewards and incentives were included to measure the democratic leadership of Nepalese Development Banks.

2.4 TEAM PERFORMANCE (TP)

TP was assessed based on the 6-item scale developed by (Northhouse, 2014). The coefficient alpha was 0.902. Respondents were asked 10 questions on the team performance related to behavior, commitment, coordination, communication, and satisfaction with the team to identify the team performance level of respondents and achieve the first research purpose.

2.5 CONTROL VARIABLE

Spector and Brannick (2011) and Atinc et al. (2012) discussed the appropriate use (and potential misuse) of control variables in non-experimental research. They recommended that before using any extraneous control variables, previous findings and theory should be considered. Therefore, this study controlled for employee gender (1 = female, 2 = male; Kish-Gephart et al. 2010; Umphress et al.

Among them, 48% of respondents were female.

2.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS TOOL

A descriptive and correlational research design was adopted to assess the relationship between DL and TP in Nepalese development banks and achieve the first research objective in which regression analysis was performed. The collected data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS statistics version 23. Under the correlation analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient and simple linear regression analysis were performed. Pearson’s ‘r’ has been calculated to test the first hypothesis. In similar research conducted by Kozlowski & Klein (2000), they used regression analysis to find out the association between variables. Similarly, dummy variable regression analysis was performed to test whether gender is moderating the relationship between DL and TP.

3. RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Inter-correlations

3.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DL AND TP

Pearson’s Correlation coefficient is calculated; the results on this coefficient is presented.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	DL	TP
DL	3.9643	0.721519	1	0.514**
TP	3.68571	0.775396	0.514**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

As indicated by the results presented in Table 1, democratic leadership had positive relationship with team performance, and the relationship was significant since p-value was less than 0.05.

3.2 IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP ON TEAM PERFORMANCE

To achieve the first research objective and test the first research hypothesis, multiple regression model was used; the results are presented in following tables:

The results on coefficient of multiple determinations (R square) are presented in Table 2: This shows the total variation in TP explained by DL.

Table 2: Variation in TP explained by DL

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.514 ^a	0.264	0.255	6.69393

a. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic Leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Team Performance

Source: SPSS output

As shown in table 2, the value of coefficient of multiple determination was 0.264. This implies that the variation in TP can be explained by DL is 26.4%.

For the goodness-of-fit of regression analysis, analysis of variance test was made. The results of this test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Goodness of fit of Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1315.974	1	1315.974	29.369	0.000 ^b
	Residual	3674.312	82	44.809		
	Total	4990.286	83			

a. Dependent Variable: Team Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic Leadership

Source: SPSS output

As indicated in table 3, the alternative hypothesis was accepted since p-value was significant (0.000). This implies that DL contribute to the TP.

The constant value and regression coefficients for the analysis of regression were calculated; the results of these values are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of DL on TP

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	18.113	3.535		5.124	0.000
	Democratic Leadership	0.552	0.102	0.514	5.419	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Team Performance

Source: SPSS output

As indicated in Table 4, the degree of impact of democratic leadership on TP is significant since p-value (0.000) was less than 0.05. The regression equation of team performance on democratic leadership in line with the equation $Y=a+ bX$ is given by:
 Team Performance = 18.113+ (0.552) Democratic Leadership

Where,

Y= Dependent Variable (Team Performance)

X= Independent Variable (Democratic Leadership)

a= Constant (18.113)

b= Slope of regression line (0.552)

3.3 MODERATING ROLE OF GENDER ON IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP ON TEAM PERFORMANCE

To test whether the gender is playing moderating role on impact of democratic leadership on team

performance, dummy or indicator variable regression analysis was performed. The results on this are presented in subsequent tables.

Table 5: Variation in Team Performance Explained by Gender

Gender of the respondents	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Female	1	0.653 ^a	0.427	0.393	5.09098
Male	1	0.434 ^a	0.189	0.144	8.51491

a. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic leadership
Source: SPSS Output

As shown in Table 5, the values of coefficients of multiple determination for male and female were .427 and 0.189 respectively. This implies that the variation in team performance explained by democratic leadership is different in different gender. For the goodness of fit of dummy regression analysis, analysis of variable test was made. The results of this test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Goodness of fit of Regression

Gender of the respondents	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Female	1	Regression	328.340	1	328.340	12.668	0.002 ^b
		Residual	440.607	17	25.918		
		Total	768.947	18			
Male	1	Regression	303.482	1	303.482	4.186	0.056 ^b
		Residual	1305.068	18	72.504		
		Total	1608.550	19			

a. Dependent Variable: Team performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic Leadership
Source: SPSS Output

As indicated in Table 6, the alternative hypothesis was accepted since p values were significant female (0.002) whereas in case of male, the hypothesis was rejected since p value of male insignificant (0.56). This implied that there was a significant difference between female and male when it came the democratic leadership to have impacted on team performance. This showed the gender was playing moderating role on impact of democratic leadership on team performance.

3.4 HYPOTHESES TEST

The study had proposed to test two different hypotheses. They were tested based on simple and dummy variable regression model.

H1: Democratic leadership would be positively associated with employee's team performance.

For testing the first hypothesis, simple regression model was performed. The regression equation of TP on DL showed that DL has significant positive impact on TP. This confirmed the proposed hypothesis.

H2: Gender would be moderating the impact of Democratic Leadership on Team Performance in Nepalese Development Bank.

Referred to Table 6, the gender was moderating the impact of DL on TP, which accepted the proposed hypothesis.

4. DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between democratic leadership and team performance. This study furthermore focused on the potential underlying role of gender as a moderating variable in the relationship between democratic leadership and team performance. As expected, a significant positive relationship was found between DL and TP. A study by Choi, et al. (2015) found that participative leadership positively influences team performance by enhancing members' commitment. Team members feel valued as their opinions are considered in decision-making processes. This involvement boosts their engagement and commitment to the team's goals and tasks, ultimately leading to higher performance levels. Research by DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus (2010) indicates that participative leadership positively correlates with team innovation and problem-solving. This atmosphere stimulates creativity and innovation, as individuals feel empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and suggestions without fear of judgment.

It is important to note that the relationship between the DL and TP was significant and positive, and this was found different in the male and female groups when it came to democratic leadership and its impact on team performance (Table 5). Research by Eagly et al. (2003) concludes that women tend to adopt a more participative leadership style compared to men. In a team with a diverse gender composition, the effectiveness of democratic leadership may differ based on how it aligns with gender norms and expectations. The level of participative team, good communication, and team decision-making in the studied organizations in this research paper was

found to be at a moderate level of engagement and commitment, creativity, and innovation, which led the team to be well in their job. When team members feel that their voices are heard and their contributions are valued, they experience greater job satisfaction and morale. This positive work environment cultivated by democratic leadership translates into higher levels of motivation and productivity. A study by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) found a positive relationship between participative leadership and employee satisfaction. These discussions fully accepted the proposed hypothesis that democratic leadership is positively associated with team performance in establishing the possibilities that workplace unity can, following the earlier discussed mechanism, can contribute to the team performance of the employees. The confirmation of the second hypothesis showed that gender moderates the relationship between democratic leadership and team performance. This indicated that the positive relationships between democratic leadership and team performance differed in employees of different genders. It means the gender of the employees has an impact on the relationship between democratic leadership and team performance. Research by Eagly and Johnson (1990) suggests that gender stereotypes can shape expectations regarding leadership styles, potentially impacting how democratic leadership is received and its subsequent influence on team performance. Gender differences in communication styles may influence how team members interact within a democratic leadership framework. For instance, women may tend to engage in more collaborative and inclusive communication patterns, which align well with the principles of democratic leadership. Research done by Holmes and Digman (2007) suggests that gender differences in communication styles can impact team dynamics and decision-making processes, potentially affecting team performance outcomes.

4.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes various new ideas to theory. First and foremost, as was already said, there is a dearth of study in the literature that addresses how DL affects team performance (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Only recently have researchers started looking into this potential outcome. This study brought variables into the research setting and examined their interactions with TP in order to address this clearly acknowledged research gap. There has been little empirical study conducted on team performance driven by the desire to benefit the organization or its members. That is to say, those who have a strong sense of team unity and a shared set of values are more likely to engage in TP. Second, by addressing the request of scholars to investigate the antecedents of TP, the current study adds to the body of existing knowledge (Tannenbaum, 1958). This study can investigate, in more detail, the antecedents of team performance that is carried out to help the organization by concentrating on the relationship between DL dimensions and TP. Thirdly, this study makes a substantial contribution to TP and research job satisfaction. This study demonstrates that democratic leadership is the origin of good TP, as few other studies have examined the relationship between democratic leadership and TP in other directions. The notion democratic leadership and TP are positively correlated is predicated on the Social Exchange theory. By involving team members in decision-making processes and empowering them to contribute to goal-setting and problem-solving, democratic leaders foster a sense of reciprocity and trust within the team, leading to higher levels of engagement and performance (Blau, 1964). Lastly, this study clarifies the precise reasoning of gender by which the DL aspects connect to TP. Determining the mediating mechanism is crucial because it contributes to the explanation of the contradictory phenomena of different genders affecting TP. This study demonstrates that when leaders focus on innovation and creativity within teams, this study will contribute to

innovation theories by providing empirical evidence for the relationship between participative decision-making and innovative outcomes.

4.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study's findings have significant consequences for management practice, which are discussed below:

Firstly, the results of this study can be used by organizations to create leadership development courses that teach managers and supervisors how to lead democratically. Organizations may develop an empowered culture and boost performance by providing leaders with the skills and resources they need to support inclusive decision-making procedures and encourage teamwork. Organizations can invest in team building initiatives aimed at strengthening interpersonal relationships, improving communication, and fostering trust among team members. By promoting a supportive team environment, organizations can maximize the positive impact of democratic leadership on team performance.

Secondly, setting goals should be a unique responsibility of management, who should make sure that team work and management coordination are balanced. When managers incorporate elements of democratic leadership, such as involving team members in goal-setting and providing opportunities for feedback and recognition, into their performance management processes.

On the other hand, Organizations that want to take a more participatory leadership stance might start working to change the culture in order to foster openness, diversity, and trust at all organizational levels. In addition, leaders can leverage democratic leadership practices to involve employees in the change process, solicit their input and feedback, and address any concerns or resistance to change.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study has certain limitations even if it added the previously mentioned ideas to the body of literature. First, prevalent technique bias is one of the study's limitations. Despite the fact that reliability check was carried out prior to the hypothesis being verified, common method biases may still exist because all data were collected at a single moment in time from the same respondents. Because two variables were tested using the same methodology, common techniques bias was described as an overstated correlation between them (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

Stated differently, it is recommended that future studies investigate the moderating effects of respondents' gender, age, position, and tenure and assess the degree and direction of these attributes on the model. One limitation of the study was the collection of all data at one time point, which limited the ability to examine potential reverse causal relationships between WPS characteristics and team performance. Also, the validity test can be performed. Social desirability or perceptual biases may have an impact on participants' self-reporting of measures like satisfaction or perceived leadership style by participants. Future Researchers can include more larger sample size and study the diverse population. In addition, the further study of corporate organizations, insurance companies and other sectors can be studied on the same topic.

6. CONCLUSION

This study offers an empirical examination of the influence of democratic leadership on team performance which provides valuable insights into the dynamics of leadership within organizational settings. The positive relationship between democratic leadership and team performance shows that the employees prefer being heard and participated while making any organizational decisions. They prefer the leader who is open to feedback, communication and ideas. Maximizing team effectiveness while reducing the

hazards connected with over-democratization necessitates a strategic integration of democratic principles with efficient decision-making frameworks. This paper found that through the identification and mitigation of these possible drawbacks, organizations can use the advantages of democratic leadership while mitigating its detrimental impact on team performance.

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