

Behavioral Dynamics (in Staff Meetings): What Patterns Lead To Success?

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Analyzing the patterns of behavior in an organizational context is of paramount importance to the knowledge of effective corporate governance. This study aims to reveal new insights in the social-behavioral repertoire of members during (and around) staff meetings. In this research we will not only test the currently most known leadership model (the so called transformational model), we will also capture the interactive (video-taped and -analyzed) dynamics between leaders and their co-workers (i.e., followers) in and around regular staff and staff meetings (i.e., influence patterns). This proposed effectiveness study of the behavioral patterns during staff meetings builds on earlier field studies of actual behavior of leaders in staff meetings [1] (see appendix 1 for initial results on the leaders' behavioral repertoire). Here we extend the survey- and video-field research approach to capture the behavioral patterns of staff meetings. On these premises, a number of specific hypotheses will be developed, based on various theory, coming from leadership, social influence (i.e., Human Interaction Dynamics: HID), entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship, small-group and team research. These hypotheses will be examined with the following sources of information combined: (a) reliable behavioral coding of video-taped leader and followers in and around staff meetings; (b) reliable expert ratings of both individual leaders and of their team's effectiveness; (c) team member surveys for the assessment of more generic interpersonal relationships, and (d) self-reports on cognitive characteristics.

Research topic

Acknowledging that human actors form the 'spine' of all organizations, various subareas of Management research show a growing interest in the behavioral complexity of human work carried out in small and large ventures or organizations. A rich literature on leading group, departmental or teamwork is meeting to some extent that need. A behavioral research focus on the complexity of effective team processes during (and around) staff meetings would fill a large gap; the specific behavioral repertoire of both the leaders and followers and its underlying motivational, cognitive and social-interaction aspects may add to extant knowledge, especially when also drawing upon the Leadership field of scholarly action [2-5]. The extant research on effective team behavior has thus far largely ignored the dynamic interplay among team members and its subsequent effects on team or leader effectiveness and meeting success. Also the effects of these influence or interaction forces are still unknown, e.g., how does effective interaction stimulate intrapreneurial behavior (i.e., in terms of creation of new-business venturing; innovativeness; self-renewal; proactiveness, see Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001) or other relevant functional behaviors (e.g., decision making or information exchange).

While a lot of scientific attention is devoted to teamwork in general (for reviews see e.g., [6]), our knowledge as regards to how teams effectively interact and respond in routine, time constraint events (i.e., regular staff meetings) is still unaddressed. Previous work suggests that patterns of interaction among team members are found to be consequential and highly generalizable antecedents of team effectiveness [7]. In this sense, Greer and Van Kleef [8] noted that team interaction styles are related to functional or dysfunctional outputs. In recognition hereof and partially driven by the increasing time devotement in meetings, we aim to answer the following general question: What functional behaviors affect/are related to different meeting goals? This study aims to reveal the multi-faceted nature of the various interaction events during regular staff meetings and subsequent outcomes. The study integrates research in: team behavior during team meetings (i.e., assembling objective and direct measures of actual leader and follower behavior in the field [9]); social-interaction processes (using Bales' and Borgatta's [10,11] interaction theory as building block); and team cognitive diversity as predictors of team effectiveness (i.e., individual characteristics, values, self-efficacy [12-19]).

Approach

A video-methodological approach, already fruitfully applied to leader-behavior during randomly selected, real-life or non-experimental staff meetings, is likely to bring more objective insights on effective dynamics and interaction patterns in regular staff meetings, especially if paired with the more customarily used methods in this area (such as the interview; survey; and expert ratings). The research design is built up accordingly to the underlying assumptions of triangulation. Video-coding behavior (and interaction through for example sequential analysis) will result in reliable systematically-video coded data (as defined and conceptualized by Bakeman & Gottman [20]), representing fine-grained behavior and interaction patterns.

Observing behavior. Shondrick and Lord [21] argued that understanding leadership behavior through perceptions of followers may result in categorizations of leaders which match available role models. Instead, many leadership authors, including for instance Hunter et al. [22] and Hindmarsh and Heath [23] have advocated the use of direct measurements of actual field behavior, other than through surveys.

The importance of investigating specific observed behaviors as a basis for exploring leader effectiveness is written about in the work of Uleman [24] and Yukl et al. [25]. Yukl [26] argues that specific behaviors would provide a solid base for theory generation of leader effectiveness. He noted a void in existing studies of leader behavior; analyzing specific behaviors contributes to a better understanding of leader effectiveness. When emphasis is directed toward more specific behavior, solid ground for the behavioral and interaction theories would be established [27].

Behavioral coding scheme. In order to clearly specify leadership behavior during daily work practices, a coding scheme was developed and pilot tested [27,9]. A solid base for this scheme was found in the work of Bales [10] and Borgatta [11]. Both Bales and Borgatta observed interaction processes between leaders and their followers in small group settings. Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) coding scheme and Borgatta's Interaction Process Scores (IPS) analysis distinguished between positive-social emotional behavior, neutral-task oriented behavior and remaining socio-emotional behavior. Their work and that of others led to a set of mutually exclusive behaviors to provide a scheme for the coding of a full range of a leader's behavioral repertoire. Another study, using an experimental approach towards measuring leader behavior, was Feyerherm's extension [28] of the work of Bales [10] and Borgatta [11] with several task- and social-oriented directly observable behaviors, which was taken into consideration as well. These three frameworks have in common that they (a) assessed directly observable *behavior* and (b) used their behavioral schemes to code leader behavior in a group context. In addition to the results of this experimentally oriented research within small groups, we also incorporated behaviors that had been assessed or covered by questionnaire-based measurement tools. The bulk of the leadership literature, though, especially for examining transformational versus transactional *style*, uses namely survey measures as the sole determinant of effective 'behavior.' A critical note to this approach is that it fails to capture actual, observable leadership behavior but mainly presents *follower perceptions* of a leaders style [29]. But we could not neglect the emergent behavioral pattern that so many leadership scholars referred to and studied (e.g., [30, 31, 25]). As another key reference point for comparison purposes we also included as much as possible into our own scheme the behavioral taxonomy of Yukl et al. [25]. The resulting integrative leader behavior coding scheme, used in this study, is listed in Table 1.

Data analysis

Regular staff meetings in a group-setting will be audio- and video-recorded, using special equipment for the *behavioral* measure of leader and follower behavior in a field setting. This set-up allows for a *measure of interaction processes between leader and followers and vice versa (i.e., or between members of the meeting)*, as coded interdependently by several trained coders. A thoroughly developed and pilot-tested 15-page codebook is used. This codebook, consisting of 11 mutually exclusive behaviors, is based on the extensive experience and work of prominent behavioral scholars (such as [10,11,28,25]). They laid the foundation of our more-or-less objective measure of the interaction processes within a team context (see also [32]). The current behaviorally anchored coding scheme was extensively developed and pilot tested (e.g., [27,9]). Video-analyses will be

Table 1. Behaviors of highly vs. moderately effective leaders*.

Behavior	Highly effective leaders	Moderately effective leaders	
	<i>n</i> = 16	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 29
1. Showing disinterest	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%
2. Defending one's own position	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
3. Providing negative feedback	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
4. Directing	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%
5. Verifying	6.3%	6.6%	6.4%
6. Structuring the conversation	7.2%	7.5%	7.4%
7. Informing	16.3%	15.5%	15.9%
8. Visioning	10.3%	10.9%	10.6%
9. Intellectual stimulation	5.7%	5.8%	5.8%
10. Individualized consideration	10.1%	10.0%	10.1%
11. Listening	38.9%	39.0%	38.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

* = no significant differences were found between the highly and moderately effective leaders (t-tests, $p < .05$).

conducted in the Leadership Lab at the University of Twente, utilizing a software program specifically developed for analyzing video-based behavioral data: The Observer XT [33]. Next to this, Theme (Noldus Information Technology, Wageningen, The Netherlands) will be used for unraveling the detailed time structure of behavior, using T-Analysis for the analysis of social interactions.

Besides video-filming the meetings, expert-raters will be selected on the basis of either being in a supervisory position vis-à-vis the leader or working in close proximity to the focal leaders. These subjective performance assessments will be complemented with more objective evaluation forms obtained from the organization, where possible. Next to the expert-raters both the leaders and followers are asked to provide several measures related to behavioral variables and group effectiveness indicators (i.e., values, MLQ, LMX, TMX, SI, interaction; leader, team and meeting effectiveness).

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