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The Role of Decision Influence and Team Performance in Member Self-Efficacy, Withdrawal, Satisfaction with the Leader, and Willingness to Return

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This study examines team performance as a moderator of the relationship between decision influence and outcomes relevant to team effectiveness in hierarchical teams with distributed expertise. In this type of team staff members have unique roles and make recommendations to the team leader, who ultimately makes the team's final decisions. It is suggested that the positive relationship between decision influence and favorable outcomes (e.g., satisfaction) consistently described in the literature is dependent on team performance in this type of team. Specifically, team effectiveness outcomes are proposed to be consistently more favorable in higher performing than in lower performing teams. Decision influence is proposed to relate positively to member satisfaction with the leader, willingness to return, and self-efficacy and to relate negatively to withdrawal in higher performing teams. The opposite pattern of relationships is expected in lower performing teams. A laboratory study was conducted with 228 undergraduates performing a computer task as subordinates in 76 four-person teams with a confederate leader. The results generally support the hypotheses and illustrate a dilemma for leaders attempting to manage team effectiveness. © 2000 Academic Press

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Because the complexity and demands of many tasks and decisions are too great for any one individual (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1971), teams are becoming increasingly prevalent in organizations (Nahavandi & Aranda, 1994; Salas, Dickinson, Converse, & Tannenbaum, 1992). Because they are able to process large amounts of information, top management teams, surgical teams, cockpit crews, and project teams comprised of members with different expertise are ubiquitous in military, medical, industrial, and government contexts (Cannon-Bowers, Oser, & Flanagan, 1992).

When designing decision-making teams, a key question is how influence should be distributed. Greater leader use of one's input has been found to lead to more positive individual reactions, including satisfaction and commitment (Bass, 1981, 1990; Drake & Mitchell, 1977; Locke & Schweiger, 1979). Meta-analyses of research on participative decision making have also shown that participation in decisions is generally related to greater satisfaction, motivation, and task performance (Miller & Monge, 1986; Wagner & Gooding, 1987), although some studies in the United States have found moderately strong negative relationships (Gibb, 1951; Richter & Tjosvold, 1980; Shaw, 1955).

One explanation for the mixed findings regarding the effectiveness of decision influence may be the lack of attention that has been paid to team performance. Members with greater decision influence are likely to feel more responsible for the team's performance. Although this would lead to a positive relationship between decision influence and favorable outcomes on higher performing teams, the relationship is likely to be negative on lower performing teams. Because of their unique expertise, if *any* team members withdraw long-term team viability can be threatened. It is important for team leaders to understand the independent and combined implications of team performance and of differentially weighting staff input for staff reactions. This is particularly true when the nature of the task creates the need for differential influence and all members have expertise valuable to the team.

The purpose of this study is to examine how team performance affects the relationship between decision influence and team viability outcomes. Previous research on the relationship between decision influence and team viability is limited because it has tended to ignore outcomes other than decision accuracy (e.g., Brehmer & Hagafors, 1986; Hollenbeck, Ilgen, Sego, Hedlund, Major, & Phillips, 1995; Phillips, 1999; Sniezek & Buckley, 1995). However, team effectiveness encompasses more than decision accuracy. Hackman (1987) and Sundstrom, DeMeuse, and Futrell (1990) define work team effectiveness as including both performance and viability. Team viability is, at a minimum, members' satisfaction, participation, and willingness to continue working together (Sundstrom et al., 1990). Even if a team has made good decisions in the past (high team performance), a team that cannot *continue* to work together due to member withdrawal or turnover cannot be considered effective in the long term because it will not continue to perform effectively in the future. As they play

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