

Directive Leadership can Benefit Team Innovation Climate: A Leader-Organization Fit Perspective

Tim Vriend , University of Groningen
(with David DeGeest, Janka Stoker, Harry Garretsen)

Despite increasing research interests in unravelling the relationship between leadership and innovation, the relationship between directive leadership and team innovation climate remains ambiguous. Although theory suggests that directive leadership and team innovation climate should be negatively related (e.g., path-goal theory; House, 1971, 1996), research has shown that the two have the potential for both negative and positive relationships, suggesting that boundary conditions play a crucial role. In this study, we take a person-environment fit perspective (Kristof, 1996) to argue that a leader-organizational fit between a leader's directive leadership and the organizational norm for directive leadership can create a value congruence that counterbalances the negative effect of directive leadership on team innovation climate. Furthermore, we argue that national culture, defined along the lines of power distance, long-term orientation, and indulgence (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), moderates the leader-organizational fit effect of directive leadership. We test these propositions using a unique dataset of 85,064 managers within 1,392 organizations across 58 countries. Results indicate that although directive leadership is negatively related to team innovation climate, a leader-organizational fit of directive leadership leads to higher levels of team innovation climate, and that low long-term orientation and high-indulgence cultures enhance these fit effects. We then discuss these results in light of theoretical and practical implications.