**Research Question**

What is the effect of rotating leadership in self-managing teams in terms of employee performance and career development?

**1. Introduction**

*“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”* This is a famous quote from Lao Tzu (604 BC – 531 BC). Self-managing teams are becoming more popular recently, as they do perform well in contemporary setting, it has worked in remote, hybrid, and in-office setup. It does also work in different industries, including IT, manufacturing, etc... Self-managing teams are popular, but they can only benefit team performance if their members are competent to navigate within self-managing systems (Doblinger, M., 2021). Thus, self-managing team is not a silver bullet for companies as skillsets, team dynamics, and many other variables determine its performance. Within self-managing teams, there is a variety of leadership models being practiced, the common ones are shared leadership, rotating leadership, and teams implementing agile methodologies.

This research aims to identify how rotating leadership model, in terms of performance, works against other leadership models in self-managing teams in contemporary companies.

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1 Self Managing Teams**

Doblinger, (2021), through systematic review of the empirical literature on self-managing teams of the last four decades, have created a comprehensive picture of the individual competencies related to different performance and success indicators of self-managing teams. The review shows that individual knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) in self-managing teams differ from those of teams in general and are significant for team performance in various ways. The current review advances theory by offering starting points to identify interdependencies of single factors or white spots, and by providing a starting point for studying team composition regarding individual KSAOs. Also, the results can serve to enhance the quality of personnel and organizational development and personnel selection in self-managing teams. The study approach focused on the types of KSAOs and traits that every individual has in relation to team performance in self-managing teams. Doblinger argued that these KSAOs strongly correlates to performance, the KSAOs listed are leading and deciding, supporting and cooperating, interacting and presenting, analyzing and interpreting, creating and conceptualizing, organizing and executing, and enterprising and performing.

However, it is important to know that there are other factors that affect team performance, according to Tan, C. et al. (2019), coordination, relationship building, cohesion, communication, trust, culture, and diversity are most of the factors that affect team performance. It is important to also know that these skills can be taught, and managers/leaders can emphasize this through career and development. KSAOs is a tool for assessing and developing talent. Learning and development teams can use KSAOs to structure effective learning environments and promote a culture of continuous improvement in all fairness. By strategically applying KSAOs, learning and development professionals can drive tech teams toward higher efficiency, better compliance, and more successful career development outcomes (Haider, A., 2024). Self-managing virtual teams might more explicitly recruit or select members who ware particularly skilled at these functions and pay more attention to the ongoing process of developing shared mental models and rules and norms. Since virtual work is increasingly common, educational programs for all kinds of workers might incorporate these ideas. For example, distance education classes that use technology support for instruction should provide instruction for students on the nature of leadership in self-managing virtual teams and thus set expectations for how the work can best be accomplished, as well as requiring team projects to provide an opportunity to practice these skills. They further suggest that it is important for self-managing virtual teams to develop shared mental models and norms early in their interaction (Eseryel, Y., et. al. (2021).

According to Ng, S., & Tan, B (2021), self-managed teams are also commonly known as self-directed teams or autonomous teams. They refer to teams with diverse knowledge and skills, and who collectively take actions to decide how to achieve team goals (Magpili & Pazos, 2018; Hoch & Dullebohn, 2017, as cited in Ng & Tan, 2021). At first glance, it might be assumed that self-managed teams are leaderless; however, various literature has pointed out otherwise. A self-managed team does not have a formally appointed leader and as stated by Solansky (2008, cited by Ng & Tan, 2021), it is “allowed to designate its own leader”; Taggar, Hacketh, and Saha (1999, as cited in Ng & Tan, 2021) pointed to the organic emergence of a leader in autonomous teams. Literature had also posit that leadership is even more important in a self-managed team due to task related issues and team development issues (Barry, 1991, as cited in Ng & Tan, 2021).

**2.2 Leadership models in self-managing teams**

Klasmeier, K., (2020), through field study, found that their study highlights team trust and transformational leadership of shared leadership at the individual and team level. In contrast, perceived organizational support affected only the individual perceptions of shared leadership, whereas the results did not indicate a relationship at the team level. Regarding the consequences of shared leadership, they found that shared leadership was positively related to team performance and team creativity. Teams in which the members influence each other towards a common goal may be better able to accomplish their goals and meet performance expectations. Moreover, teams with high level of shared leadership can develop more novel ideas and suitable solutions for complex problems. Furthermore, shared leadership fully mediated the team-level relationships of trust and transformational leadership with team performance and team creativity. This highlights shared leadership as an important team state. Thus, shared leadership has been proven to be an effective leadership model in self-managing teams. Exposing the team members to certain responsibilities will help them have a feel on how a manager thinks and works in day-to-day operations.

**2.3 Rotating Leadership**

Hiatt, G. (2021), using semi-structured interviews, concluded that the learning was accelerated through rotating to various business units to take on projects for which the subjects felt unprepared. These experiences accelerated the learning process through developing a tolerance for change, receiving focused mentoring, coaching, and advocacy from executive sponsors and program management staff, and facing projects which were described as large, complex, and important. Classroom training and workshops, personal assessments, and networking with peers augmented on the job training. Study participants provided numerous examples of how confidence was bolstered each time a project was confronted and successfully completed, and that confidence was reinforced each time an executive sponsor was impressed by successful performance. Thus, rotational leadership might look daunting as the employee being exposed to a leadership role might feel unprepared. With the help of a mentor, it will help the employee in the long term as they will get accustomed to how leadership role thinks and performs daily. In relation to self-managing team, this model will be helpful in empowering individuals as they will get exposed to manager tasks and duties early in their career.

**3. Conclusion**

With self-managing teams becoming more and more popular these days, it is important to note that self-managing teams take time to be successful as it requires competent individuals to have good performance. The existing literature on self-managing teams have proven it to be successful however there is little data on what leadership models were practiced. It is important to note as well that rotating leadership is not mutually exclusive leadership approach; it can co-exist with other forms of leadership.

The impact of rotating leadership has been discussed and analyzed critically in the research articles reviewed in this paper. However, this review has limitation as there is no data that it was explicitly used in self-managing teams. In general, the study conducted by Hiatt, G (2021), discussed that rotating leadership has been successful in training individuals to be future leaders. We may safely conclude that rotating leadership shows promise and has the potential to be a successful leadership model in self-managing teams.

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