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The Relationship Between Leadership Decision-Making Styles and Employee Performance in Government Public Sector: A Multi-Case Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Leadership decision-making styles exert a significant influence on employee performance, yet the underlying mechanisms are seldom linear, as heterogeneity, nonlinear responses, and cross-level dependencies often complicate the relationships. To address these complexities, this study proposes a Hybrid Multi-Method Framework (HMMF) that integrates four complementary perspectives: symmetric structural modeling to estimate direct and mediated paths, configurational analysis to capture equifinality and causal asymmetry, necessary-condition testing to identify noncompensatory constraints, and cross-level evaluation to account for organizational context. Applied to diverse organizational settings, HMMF examines how leadership styles, mediators, and moderators jointly shape performance and is benchmarked against widely used single-paradigm approaches such as PLS-SEM, CB-SEM, and fsQCA. The evaluation covers explanatory power, predictive relevance, configurational strength, and robustness, and results show that HMMF consistently outperforms these baselines.

KEYWORDS

Leadership Styles, Employee Performance, Hybrid Multi-Method Framework, Structural Equation Modeling, Configurational Analysis, Cross-Level Modeling

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INTRODUCTION

The styles of decision making in leadership have a strong bearing on the performance of employees in the government public sector; however, their impacts are not always linear or unilinear (Thien & Liu, 2024). Such relations are both mediating and reliant on context via their dependency on the conditions of boundaries and change across levels of the organization, which are hard to describe using a single methodology. Knowledge of these coupled pathways is critical in both theory and practice, as leadership influences organizational performance and the environment that helps maintain innovation, motivation, and job satisfaction (Gaan & Shin, 2024; Yaqub, 2025). Although classical structural models such as structural equation modeling (SEM, a multi-variate statistical technique for testing complex relationships among observed and latent variables) are nonetheless useful in identifying directional paths, they tend to downplay the role of indirect mechanisms and ignore nested structures, thereby limiting the understanding of how leadership can occur in various organizational fields (Cahyadi et al., 2022).

With the increased heterogeneity of public organizations in terms of organization and culture, there is the need for more extensive methods of analysis. To mitigate this requirement, this study presents a hybrid multi-method framework (HMMF) that combines four mutually complementary points of view: symmetric structural modeling, configurational analysis, necessary-condition testing, and explicit cross-level evaluation. Collectively, the approaches allow the estimation of both direct and mediated effects, the determination of equifinal pathways and causal asymmetry, the detection of non-compensatory breakpoints, and the evaluation of contingencies at the team and organization levels. The resultant integration provides a more elaborate explanation of the interaction between leadership styles, mediators, and contextual moderators in terms of their influence on performance.

The research question guide this study is simple: How do leadership decision-making styles affect performance, and what does the integrated multi-method research design add to single-paradigm and other approaches in the public sector? The study, therefore, suggests two levels of hypotheses. On the individual level, leadership styles should have direct and mediated impacts on performance. On the situational level, contextual conditions (e.g., organizational climate and structure) are expected to forge moderating effects. In addition, the study hypothesizes that the multi-method approach will outperform single-method procedures in an explanatory and predictive sense, and that explicit cross-level modeling will draw inferences into how organizational situational conditions define leader effectiveness.

However, integration is a challenge. The traditional analyses of the situation tend to give priority to linear, compensatory directions, considering necessary conditions or cross-level effects as secondary. Although data nesting is recognized, many studies do not explicitly model the variation in slopes of random effects or cross-level effects, leaving their importance uninvestigated. Moreover, few contributions unite path models, set-theoretic reasoning, and multi-level estimation within such a manner that adheres to rigorous methodological principles while remaining accessible to applied researchers.

The HMMF manages this mismatch by placing four analytical tools within a workflow. Partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) approximates direct, mediating, and moderating effects, supporting both explanation and prediction. FsQCA establishes enough configurations—alternative combinations of leadership attributes and contextual eventualities—and measures causal disparity. NCA identifies the required thresholds that indicate such conditions exist, even if they are not adequate on their own. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) offers intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC, the proportion of total variance attributable to differences between groups rather than individuals), random intercepts and slopes, and tests of cross-level moderation; centering decisions and slope variance distinguish between within- and between-group effects. Collectively, these elements enable the exploration of common trajectories, structural forms, bare necessities, and organizational contingencies without subjecting the dynamics of leadership to a single form of analysis.