The impact of personal reputation on leader emergence in autonomous work teams: theoretical considerations for future research

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Abstract

Purpose – Research has demonstrated that varying degrees and combinations of individual traits, behaviors and characteristics influence the emergence of leaders in teams. While existing models have shown that such variables affect leader choice independently and interactively, the overall findings suggest that there is still a lack of research on a potentially significant factor, the impact of personal reputation on leader selection in autonomous work teams (AWTs), an increasingly ubiquitous team practice in organizations. This preliminary review thus aims to offer a general overview of personal reputation and its effects on leader emergence in the context of AWTs.

Design/methodology/approach – By surveying extant literature on team leader emergence, this review has identified that the potential impact of personal reputation on leader selection in teams is significant yet largely ignored.

Findings – Models of leader emergence in teams should incorporate the realistic assumption that teams formed in organizations are often comprised of individuals who have information on others either directly or indirectly. Personal reputation based on an individual's history thus moderates how one's behaviors or traits exhibited become contextualized in the overall assessment of leader desirability and selection in teams.

Research limitations/implications – Based on a review of existing research on leadership emergence and personal reputation, this work contends that the external validity and predictive value of leader emergence models would greatly benefit from the inclusion of employee reputations as a moderating variable in the future assessment of the leader emergence process in AWTs.

Practical implications – By designing models that explain the potential effects of personal reputations on leader emergence in self-managed teams, team members and managers can be better elucidated and ultimately improve their understanding of the process of the evaluation and selection of team leaders.

Originality/value – Despite the prolific research on leader emergence, there is still a paucity of studies examining personal reputational effects on leader selection, especially in the context of AWTs. This work is the first review piece calling for the inclusion of personal reputation, a substantive factor overlooked and excluded in previous models, to enhance the current understanding of leader emergence in AWTs.

Keywords Leadership, Reputation, Work teams

Paper type General review

Introduction

Organizations frequently assign employees to autonomous work teams (AWT) to focus on achieving specific goals within specific business domains (Oh, 2012; Pfeffer, 1995;

Taggar *et al.*, 1999). Once established, these work groups often engage in the process of leader selection to self-organize for coordinating collective endeavors and meeting goal expectations. The process by which leaders emerge in work groups has been the subject of substantial research and has included areas such as personal traits, behaviors and demographic composition of group members. Although research into these areas has identified variables and relationships that are influential in AWT leadership choice, results have also demonstrated them to be incomplete predictors of leader emergence in general and often poor criteria for assessing the potential of individuals to be effective in the group leadership role (Hanna *et al.*, 2021; Norton *et al.*, 2014). The implicit assumption in most of these models is that when such groups are established, little to nothing is known to the members about others in the work group. In light of a growing body of literature on reputational effects in organizations, this work holds that to date, the study of leader emergence has overlooked employee reputation as a component of the leader emergence process, both as a variable in and of itself and as a potential moderator that can act to contextualize observable behaviors and characteristics of individuals within AWTs. Indeed, while individuals assigned to organizational groups may be unfamiliar with each other, organizations are not black boxes where information about fellow members' talents and work proclivities are unknown. Flowing from a review of the research, this work contends that the external validity and predictive value of leader emergence models would greatly benefit from the inclusion of employee reputations as a moderating variable in the future assessment of the leader emergence process in AWTs.

Preliminary review of personal reputation and leader emergence in work teams

Prompted by the total quality movement in the 1980s, the practice of AWTs proliferated as they demonstrated the ability to circumvent the cumbersome practices inherent to large hierarchies and realized substantial gains in organizational productivity (Bakker, 2010; Bauer and Erdogan, 2015; Zaccaro *et al.*, 2018). The advantages of AWTs led to their widespread use in organizations, with nearly 75% of the top Fortune 1,000 companies having reported using such teams in earlier research (Douglas and Gardner, 2004). As the practice of AWTs became increasingly ubiquitous, organizational researchers became interested in various factors that influenced the emergence of leaders within AWTs.

Emergent leaders are individuals who are perceived by others as leaders and exert substantial influence over their teams despite not holding a formal leadership role granted by organizations (Lord *et al.*, 1984; Schneier and Goktepe, 1983). In autonomously managed teams, it has been suggested that emergent leaders are as crucial as formally designated leaders in facilitating team task completion (Oh, 2012; Stogdill, 1974). There are several ways such leaders emerge in leaderless AWTs whose members are equal in organizational rank and egalitarian in personal power. In some instances, a leader may emerge by virtue of their personal characteristics or initial performance as a team member and subsequently adopts the leadership role (Zaccaro *et al.*, 2018). In other cases, team members may feel a personal indifference to assuming a leadership role and simply choose a fellow member who articulates a high motivation to lead (MTL) (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; Judge and Long, 2012; Kruglanski, 1990; Oh, 2012). Situational demands have also been found to affect the process of leader emergence; for example, research has shown that when team demands are high and immediate upon formation, the pressure can result in more haste and less scrutiny than if the initial tasks are less urgent or important (Bowers *et al.*, 1994; Norton *et al.*, 2014; Yun *et al.*, 2005). Given these variations impacting the methods of leader emergence in AWTs, this review is limited to examining leader emergence through the informal mechanism of a group consensus or a majority endorsement since personal reputation is presumed to be more influential in evaluating potential leadership at the

onset of a team. Based on previous research and theoretical rationale provided in the analysis of leader emergence in groups, this work argues that in the assessment of factors affecting the probability of leader emergence, a potentially significant variable, the pre-existing individual reputations of members comprising the teams, has been largely overlooked and thus excluded in existent models.

AWT general structure and leadership emergence in the early stage of team formation
AWTs are generally characterized by the primary feature of being wholly (or mostly) self-managed by the employees comprising the groups (Bakker, 2010; Bauer and Erdogan, 2015). The initial development and composition of AWTs are typically established by upper management by delineating their expectations for ongoing group tasks and projects. Once created and tasked, the teams are self-managed and work as independent units empowered with authority to achieve specific organizational objectives and monitor their own work progress (Morgeson, 2005; Salas *et al.*, 2012; Zaccaro *et al.*, 2012). Members assigned to AWTs are usually egalitarian in power and often opt to elect an internal leader in the absence of a designated leader (Day *et al.*, 2004; Oh, 2012; Smith and Foti, 1998). Because the leadership is not designated by management, group leadership is decided upon through a consensus of majority agreement (Lord *et al.*, 1984). Initially, the role of selected leaders tends to be process-driven to coordinate team activities, such as establishing role clarity, facilitating team meetings and generating commitment to achieving specified goals (Pearce, 2004; Wageman, 2001). Occasionally, when teams are originally intended to be limited in scope and duration, individuals who initially agree to organize meetings and coordinate activities may transition into team leaders (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). However, if the team expectations are increased in complexity or importance, the authority of the chosen leader often becomes greater relative to the other team members (Taggar *et al.*, 1999).

In the case of AWTs, since no extra compensation or tangible benefits are provided to the person acting as team leader, it can create a general indifference among members, and consequently, members may narrow their choice among those who express a high MTL (Oh, 2012; Taggar *et al.*, 1999). If several candidates demonstrate a high MTL, then the group looks to other factors among the candidates before making a final selection. It is at this juncture where researchers have aimed to identify the most significant facets affecting leader selection in AWTs beyond simple choice-through-default. In doing so, numerous traits, behaviors and general characteristics have been examined as influential criteria for selecting team leaders (Zaccaro *et al.*, 2018).

Factors influencing leadership emergence in autonomous work teams
When a new team is formed, members often assess the leadership potential of others based on a combination of attributes which they assume demonstrate evidence of leadership effectiveness. The well-established five-factor personality taxonomy of McCrae and Costa (1999, 2003) has been widely used to identify potential predictors of leader emergence (Grant *et al.*, 2011; Zaccaro *et al.*, 2018). While studies using the big five personality traits demonstrated that some elements of conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability are positively related to leader emergence (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; Grant *et al.*, 2011; Judge and Zapata, 2015), the trait of extroversion has stood out as the most predictive of leader selection (Bass, 1954; Grant *et al.*, 2011; Mullensalas and Driskell, 1989).

From the findings of the general extroversion-leadership relationship, a theory known as the "babble hypothesis" of leadership postulates that the most verbose team member often becomes the team's leader, in which case the leader's emergence becomes grounded on loquaciousness over substance (MacLaren *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, since extroverts vocally exhibit confidence and demonstrate charismatic communication skills, they are perceived to

be adept at social interactions and assumed to have a high MTL (Ensari *et al.*, 2011; Judge *et al.*, 2002, van Vugt *et al.*, 2008). The trait associated with charismatic extroversion can also manifest in narcissistic individuals (Trzesniewski *et al.*, 2008). Unlike typical extroverts, narcissists hold a highly inflated self-image, crave dominance and are willing to manipulate and undermine others for their own gain (Brunell *et al.*, 2008; Raskin and Novacek, 1991; Robbins and Beer, 2001). Deriving from their inflated self-opinion and ambition to dominate, narcissists are drawn to desire and pursue leadership roles (Judge *et al.*, 2002). To maintain their self-image and achieve their desire for control, narcissists frequently couple extroversion with impression management to make positive impressions and appear competent in the beginning stages of relationships when acquaintanceship has been short (Oltmanns *et al.*, 2003; Paulhus, 1998; Paulhus and Williams, 2002). Narcissists display the attractive traits of charisma by demonstrating their willingness to take risks and promote their visions as inspirational in what has been deemed "visionary boldness" (Galvin *et al.*, 2010; Higgins *et al.*, 2003). Such impressions are grounded in purposeful manipulation, insincere concerns and personal advancement.

In addition to personality and behavioral traits, demographic characteristics have also been demonstrated to influence the selection of team leaders. Numerous studies on leadership selection have examined the variables of gender and race and found significant effects with respect to choice (Dovidio and Gaertner, 1996; Eagly *et al.*, 1995; Javidan *et al.*, 2006, van Engen *et al.*, 2001). Other personal characteristics that are less obvious have also been elucidated in the literature. For example, individuals above average in height have been found to be more likely to be chosen as leaders than those below average (Judge and Cable, 2004). Similarly, Stulp *et al.* (2013) identified that United States (US) Presidents who were tall were more likely to be re-elected and perceived as having greater leadership and communication skills than those with a more diminutive stature. Olson *et al.* (2018) found that overweight or obese individuals were frequently stereotyped as being lazy, lacking in competence and having issues in self-control, which was consistent with prior research demonstrating senior leaders at the US Army War College associated overweight appearance as indicative of poor leadership qualities (McCowen, 2003). Even the quality of voice pitch was found to influence the assessment of potential leadership and thus possibly affect leader emergence (Klofstad *et al.*, 2012).

Potential issues in the leader selection process in autonomous work teams
While personality, behavioral and individual characteristics have been found to significantly influence leader emergence in teams, the ability of such attributes to identify an optimal leader is often poor. For example, making assumptions about leadership ability based on an extrovert's verbosity ("babble") can lead to a cognitive error of valuing quantitative comments over qualitative contributions and, thus, compromise the quality of potential leader assessment (MacLaren *et al.*, 2020). When the extroverted charisma of a narcissist is used to manipulate leader selection in their favor, beyond the issues engendered by simple extroversion, it can lead to choosing a highly polarizing, insensitive leader and even promote follower dependency that only becomes evident after a period of their leadership has passed (Bass, 1985; Norton *et al.*, 2014; Yukl, 2010). For example, a recent meta-analysis of leadership and narcissism has found that the effectiveness of narcissistic leaders is curvilinear. While they are initially perceived as effective leaders, over time, members grow aware of their negative qualities and manipulative style, become dissatisfied, and their leadership effectiveness substantially declines (Back *et al.*, 2010; Grijalva *et al.*, 2015). It is important to note that the trait of extroversion itself can be a great leadership quality, and extroverts (not narcissists) can be excellent leaders. This is evident in numerous studies showing a positive relationship between extroversion and effective transformational leadership skills

(Dababneh *et al.*, 2022; Judge and Bono, 2000; Judge *et al.*, 2002; Lim and Ployhart, 2004; Ployhart *et al.*, 2001). It is reasonable to assume that not all extroverts or narcissists have a high MTL, especially if the leadership role is seen to be mostly administrative, lower in visibility and unrewarded beyond that given to all group members equally. In cases where members are initially apathetic and the leader selected by volunteerism, should the project demands and expectations grow to require a leader with abilities essential to directing effective group performance, the established leader may not be fit to manage in the expanded role.

Relying on assumptions associated with gender, ethnicity or physical characteristics in choosing a leader is also a poor metric to affect leader consideration because it introduces stereotype bias unrelated to leadership abilities into the selection decision process (Cox *et al.*, 2012; Eagly and Karau, 2002). The trait-based approach, based on the notion that successful leaders are born with specific attributes, blessed with the "right stuff" (Bass and Stogdill, 1981; Kirkpatick and Locke, 1991), can lead members to erroneously assume, even implicitly, that certain sub-groups are ill-suited to positions of power and influence, such as females or ethnic minorities (Haslam *et al.*, 2009; Haslam and Ryan, 2008; Ryan and Haslam, 2007). Physical characteristics, while having been shown to bias leader selection, have also been demonstrated not to be indicative of actual leadership skills (Little, 2014; Re and Perrett, 2014).

Another factor affecting leader emergence in AWTs is the time constraints in which important task deadlines are demanded of the newly formed teams and of the complexity whereby leadership is necessary for successful performance execution. When this is the case, the shorter the time allotted for tasks requiring leader coordination to successfully complete, the faster the group must establish a leader. In such circumstances, researchers have found that individuals may become highly susceptible to first-impression errors (Kalish and Luria, 2016; Shamir, 2011; Zinko *et al.*, 2007, 2012a). Under tight time pressure, there is little time to discern if an extrovert's talk is of high quality or "babble", thereby exacerbating the possibility of selection error. Moreover, when the group is under pressure to get on with leader selection, they become increasingly prone to using cognitive heuristics based on stereotype bias. Importantly, – the converse may also be true. When newly formed teams are given ample time to adjust and select a leader without urgent pressure, greater discernment can be used in assessing a leader for the group (Norton *et al.*, 2014; Yun *et al.*, 2005).

While research has elucidated many of the components influencing the probability of leader emergence, the predictive value of such factors also highly depends on how team members of AWTs come to view and relate to one another. Current leader emergence models implicitly assume that team members know little to nothing about the other members prior to group formation; that knowledge of other members is a tabula rasa that relegates their choice of leader largely based on the qualities they observe among newly-met initial members. This work argues that for research to improve its explanatory power and validity in the realistic understanding of how leaders emerge within AWTs, it is necessary to examine and incorporate variables that account for interpersonal dynamics. Specifically, employees, in small and mid-sized organizations, are familiar with others from close proximity over time, past work in other joint collaborations, or other formal or informal workplace contacts. In large organizations where proximity may not be as close, the existence of "personal networks" can be the nexus from which a query about others can garner information on other group members. To this extent, the absence of individual reputation in leadership emergence models weakens their explanatory power and generalizability to actual workplace settings. Furthermore, it is important to discern if and how reputational effects have a direct, moderating or interactional relationship with the many traits established to influence leader emergence in AWTs.

Reputation as an excluded factor in leader emergence in autonomous work teams
Ferris *et al.* (2007, p. 215) defined an individual's "reputation" as a "perceptual identity formed from the collective perceptions of others, which is reflective of the complex combination of personal characteristics and accomplishments, demonstrated behavior, and intended images presented over some period of time as observed directly or reported from secondary sources, which reduces ambiguity and unexpected future behavior". More recently, Zinko *et al.* (2016) operationalized and delineated personal reputation into three facets: (1) task reputation based on skill at performance; (2) social reputation based on social interactions; and (3) integrity reputation based on individual character and values. In small organizations, it is likely many, if not all individuals, "know" each other to some degree, with some even having worked together on previous work collaborations. In large organizations where individuals may not be familiar with each other from direct interaction, information on others is often available through informal "grapevines" consisting of "casual conversations ... carpools, around water coolers, through email messages and phone conversations and the like" (Kimmel, 2004, pp. 15–17). Office gossip, informal, unverified and often judgmental information about an individual by others, plays a crucial role in disseminating personal reputation in organizations despite its negative connotation (Fritz, 2002; Mumby, 2005). Although direct, first-hand personal experience with an individual is generally preferred and most informative in forming a personal reputation, people often rely on the opinions of others who claim to have direct personal experience of the person in question (Bromley, 1993). For instance, an employee is inclined to take a close, trusted co-worker's first-hand opinion on a new team leader regardless of the veracity of the information provided by such secondary sources. Consequently, personal reputation helps reduce uncertainty or doubt about an individual by suggesting predictable patterns of behavior in given situations (Zinko *et al.*, 2016). This is particularly true when complete information or direct experience is unavailable to assess the individual, and then personal reputation acts as a proxy for predicting the person's action with a reasonable expectation (Zinko *et al.*, 2007, 2012b).

Although the existing literature on personal reputation in organizations has been applied broadly to general areas such as a predictor of career success, moderator of political behavior effectiveness, and mediator of job performance and satisfaction (Ferris *et al.*, 2007; Hall *et al.*, 2009; Hochwarter *et al.*, 2007; Judge *et al.*, 1995), the application to the area of team leadership has been limited to factors affecting the effectiveness of already-chosen leaders (Blass and Ferris, 2007). The lack of attention to personal reputational effects on leader emergence may be due to the fact that personal reputations in organizations as a whole have still been "historically understudied" and thus, the construct itself is "still in its infancy" (Zinko *et al.*, 2016, p. 634). However, excluding reputational effects in modeling the selection criterion used by AWTs ignores the high probability that the members assigned to the teams have prior knowledge of and access to information on other members concurrent with and following team formation. This oversight is potentially consequential as the reputation of past performance and behavior based on an individual's history can act as either a stand-alone reference point of selection rationale or as a moderator impacting how traits or behaviors exhibited by other members are contextualized and interpreted. For example, using the classifications of Zinko *et al.* (2016), if a team has a high need for trust in their leader, then the reputation of being "ethical" may be weighted more heavily than superficial beliefs based on stereotypical assumptions on race, gender, charisma or physical prototypes.

Personal reputation could also act as a moderator of how behaviors are interpreted. That is, extroverted "babble", which may erroneously portray competence with no other context, may be moderated if the verbose individual has a reputation of being "all talk and no action" or widely known to be a self-promoting, manipulative narcissist. Furthermore, personal reputation can have an interactive effect on the assessment of leadership qualities. If a person presents as one who is babbling and simultaneously has a reputation as being "brilliant," then

the combination of being both highly talkative and intelligent may be valued more than either of the two separately. How reputation is attained as a variable for group consideration may affect its influence on group choice as well. For example, if two or more members within a group know or have worked with each other previously, then some direct reputational opinion is available from the start. In contrast, when all members are unfamiliar with each other and information desired when leader selection is considered, informal reputational "searches" such as reaching out to known associates of specific candidates for opinions may occur (Bromley, 1993; Emler, 1990; Zinko et al., 2007). As previously noted, it is possible that time constraints also increase the reliance upon direct versus indirect reputational information as the time and resources for a reputation search can be constricted.

While the use of employee reputation is likely influential in the leader emergence process and can work positively to correct errors brought on by erroneous assumptions based on first impressions, stereotype biases and behavioral misinterpretations, the influence of using reputational information in the selection process also has significant downsides that should be considered. First, once "reputational" information goes beyond any statement of facts, it is subject to the distortion of opinion. Such distortions may be small or large and potentially malleable by those with intent. As reputational searches move from direct to indirect, the information becomes increasingly vulnerable to distortion as low-quality rumors and gossip moderate through introducing inaccuracy (Kimmel, 2004; Zinko et al., 2017). The decision on how to weigh the information attained from the depths of the organizational rumor mill can be contingent on the source of the gossip's credibility. Research further suggests that if the reliance on such secondary sources is unchecked or mismanaged, the decision outcome can be particularly deleterious (Ben-Ze'ev, 1994; Dunbar, 1996). In cases where time deadlines necessitate a quick leader selection, if the information collected quickly conflicts with firmly held stereotypes, it could result in cognitive dissonance in which greater uncertainty and decision hesitation may impede one's choice (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones and Mills, 2019). Occasionally, the gossip about a team member is salacious in nature; there may be rumors about their sexual preference, social activities, political leanings and other unusual personal idiosyncrasies. While such gossip may be considered "interesting" to those who hear the details, much, if not all, is not job-related. Nevertheless, it impacts the credibility of the individual being assessed and affects the probability of their selection to a leadership role. The ability of AWT members to parse apart job-related qualities and discern the quality of reputational information about members will ultimately determine if the use of such information is positive or detrimental in its effect upon leader emergence.

Finally, social media and online platforms are a new frontier in disseminating personal reputation in organizations (Harris and Rae, 2009; Zinko and Rubin, 2015). With their ubiquitous presence and powerful search abilities, online mechanisms provide significant information conduits whereby general assessments of individuals can be made. For example, employees can access information on team members by searching various social media sites and other online sources such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Employees may have disclosed personal information by "tweeting" a particular viewpoint in such cases. In contrast, in other cases, there may be "tweets" made by others familiar with them that may affect their reputation. As in regular in-office gossip, online information can be low in quality and be a mix of opinionated truth and lies and potentially misconstrued given the contextual unfamiliarity of the searcher. Individuals can also develop their reputation strategically by regulating the type of information that they signal to others (Bromley, 1993; Ferris and Judge, 1991; Hochwarter et al., 2007). As technology has a greater role in shaping reputations, knowing and being able to assign credibility to the source will become more important than ever for valid selection. Research on leader emergence that incorporates the dimension of reputation would also benefit by measuring the use of technology in impression judgments.

Moving forward: implications of personal reputation for autonomous work teams
Research into the process of leader emergence in AWTs has been fruitful in identifying numerous factors that individually and interactively affect the probability of leader selection. The general categories of predictors that have been identified are personality traits, observable behaviors and member demographic characteristics. However, many of these factors, while "influential," are substantially limited in their ability to predict selection outcomes, and many of these variables themselves are low-quality predictors of effective leaders. Further adding to the difficulty of developing realistic models of leader emergence is accounting for the circumstantial contexts, such as task complexity, task demand and time constraints, which may constrain the decision process itself and hence rely on more superficial individual characteristics as heuristics in selection. For the research on leader emergence to coalesce into comprehensive taxonomies having high external validity, they must incorporate realistic assumptions of workplace dynamics, of which perhaps the most important yet currently overlooked being the moderating effect of "personal reputation."

Organizations are social networks. It is more realistic than not to assume that many individuals assigned to an AWT had known each other beforehand. If members do not have any direct past interaction with assigned others, they do have reputations that are known by other colleagues or assessable through existent grapevines and other secondary sources. The absence of a variable measuring of controlling for personal reputation in the attempt to develop a robust explanation of the process in AWTs substantially divorces such models from authentic organizational realities. Because the conceptualization and work on "reputations" in organizations itself is relatively new, work must be done in the construction of a variable using valid measures that operationalize and account for reputational dimensions such as degree of positivity/negativity, information quality, degree of job-relatedness and source credibility.

Personal reputation is socially identified and constructed within teams and organizations (Berger *et al.*, 1972). Consequently, personal reputation should be actively yet carefully managed if individuals wish to cultivate such reputations that benefit themselves as a leader and their team. This means making themselves and their achievements are known to others, and such self-enhancing processes provide individuals with status, prominence, influence and perceived leadership qualities by others (Bromley, 1993; Buss and Dedden, 1990). This can, of course, have the opposite effect if such self-presentation is not backed by genuine personal qualities and performance claimed and ultimately derails the team from achieving its mission and task. It should also be noted that the impact of personal reputation on leader emergence is a dynamic process that can change over time. As a result, individuals' perceptions of who the leaders are in a group evolve over time (Kalish and Luria, 2016; Shamir, 2011; Zinko *et al.*, 2007). Similarly, integrating a new member into an already-established group can create challenging interpersonal dynamics and team management depending on the personality and leadership abilities of the new member. A power battle for leadership may intensify if a leader is not yet emerged, resulting in tensions and relational conflicts. This is an additional area of further investigation. Consequently, organizations should realize that time is needed for leaders to emerge in AWTs, and their reputations are truly assessed as first impressions and prototypes may be misleading.

Conclusion
The process of leader emergence has been of significant interest to organizational theorists as the use of AWTs became increasingly widespread. Although extant research has identified numerous factors influencing AWT leadership choice, the generalizability of these findings to actual workplace environments is limited as they omit consideration of the relational component which moderates the opinions of others in teams. Based upon both the works in

leadership emergence and personal reputation in organizations, this work calls for the inclusion of personal reputation in future research on leader emergence in AWTs as a nexus to align theory with practice more closely. The research into personal reputation in organizations has delineated multiple dimensions of assessment that can be used to comprise a variable for theoretical examination and applied research. The recent study by Zinko *et al.* (2016) is noteworthy in this regard, as they refined the construct by developing several dimensions of personal reputation applicable to the workplace. Further work that includes and explicates the impact of reputation would allow for a more sophisticated understanding of leader choice through a multidimensional paradigm inclusive of informational quality, dissonance with assumptions and selection satisfaction over time. Finally, although this review only addressed the impact of personal reputation on leader emergence in the context of self-managed work teams, other forms of traditional work groups would also benefit from understanding the dynamic nature of personal reputation in member interactions and subsequent leader selection.

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