

**Delegation dynamics and spinoffs:
Direct effects and moderating role of
a Functional background.**

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Abstract

Delegation is widely acknowledged as a fundamental element of effective management; however, our understanding of it has been restricted into its *behavioral outcomes* in tapered settings. Thus, the following research undertakes the impact of authority delegation in knowledge-intensive firms where expertise and functional practice plays a key role in predicting team performance outcomes. The study draws from the task-oriented leadership theory and suggests a model to assess the moderation level of managers' functional background impact on team performance under a delegation context. Making use of the SEM approach for hypotheses and model testing.

Keywords:

Authority Delegation, Team Performance, Functional Background, SEM.

Research Gap

The past three decades generated a significant amount of instructive research undertaking **delegation motives** (Leana, 1986; Yukl, G. and Fu, 1999), outcomes in relation to job satisfaction, and Leader-Member Exchange (Farrow, Valenzi, & Bass, 1980; Chen, 2006; Chiniara & Bentein, 2017) under various settings (Wakabayashi, 1994; Hui et al., 1999) and little attention has been allocated to studying the impact of the functional background of delegated managers on team performance.

Although previous empirical research has generated important findings on understanding motives and outcomes of delegation (e.g: Bunderson, 2003); a shortage of research is perceived concerning the managerial functional background importance and contribution into delegation outcomes and team performance

While addressing these gaps, the present study builds on Mintzberg (1980) managerial roles perception (Pavett & Lau, 1983) and (Leana, 1986) managerial background works and aims to extend the works of (Bunderson, 2003) and (Cannella, Park, Lee, & Jr, 2008) on the functional background moderating effects.

The literature builds on the foundational works of Max Weber on authority as well and seeks to structure the managerial functional background in a task-related leadership theory frame of a conceptual model.

Research contribution to the literature

This study offers three primary contributions to the delegation literature:

- First, we take the initial steps toward addressing the importance of delegation in knowledge-intensive institutions
- Second, we investigate the nature and significant role of managerial functional background into team performance
- Finally and most importantly, we reveal the moderating role of functional background and to which extent and under what conditions it affects the delegation decision and team performance.

Literature review

- **Delegation and Job Performance**

- the organizational structure of knowledge-intensive institution is assumed to depend on both the nature of the organizational work environment requirements and the level of different position interdependence within the organization (Jesmin, 2012; Sayilar, 2016);
- the greater the direct association among different functional positions, the higher the level of task interdependencies, thus, the importance of manager delegating arises as a regulatory tool towards target achievement and performance enhancement (Al-Jammal et al., 2015; Lunenburg, 2010; Schriesheim et al., 1998; Yukl, G. and Fu, 1999).
- Moreover, delegation in such institutions is also a form of involvement in the decision-making processes requiring the assignment of specific tasks and responsibilities to other subordinates and monitor their performance (Joiner et al., 2006)

Various research findings have associated authority delegation to amplified job performance :

(Joiner et al., 2006; Leana, 1986; Bunderson, 2016; Young, Charns, & Heeren, 2004) described it as a set of individual behaviors exhibited on a team leading basis to better achievement of organizational goals (Van Scotter & Cross, 2000; Sonnentag and Frese, 2005) including both *task* and *contextual performances* implying specific job-related tasks and non-job-specific interpersonal behaviors

The potential of this impact-relationship was examined by (Leana, 1986) whom, after observing predictors and consequences of delegation, proved the direct relationship between delegation and job performance in terms of leader-Member functional competence and similarity of goals, Aghion and Tirole, (1997)

H1: Authority delegation in knowledge-intensive firms positively affects Team Performance.

The Moderating role of Functional Background

It is worth noting that the areas of management shedding light on managers' functional background have been scarcely investigated throughout the years (Bunderson, 2003; Cannella, Park, Lee, & Jr, 2008; Pavett & Lau, 1983).

Yet; the contingent management model requires managers to manifest different behaviors at different settings -the behavior might vary according to their functional background- with an assumption that their efficiency and success at performing lower level tasks would be as corresponding at upper level settings (Pavett & Lau, 1983).

Therefore, *this study, takes into account the functional background referring to individual's work history and experience earned through specializing in a particular organizational field* (Bunderson, 2003) and investigates its spinoffs in knowledge-intensive settings where delegation is in favor of employees who sufficient skill-set, abundant expertise, and overall problem-solving convergence

Several research credited a diversified functional background as an enabler to bring different and complementary knowledge and expertise to teams (French and Henning, 1966)

This study is focused on investigating the impact of three key managerial roles related to task-level activities :

(1) planning, (2) monitoring, and (3) strategic decision-making in knowledge-intensive firms.

H2: Functional Background Impacts Team Performance at a task-level

A delegated manager with a diversified functional background finds it easier to interact with team members from several functional areas and specialties due to his vast experience cross-functional (Bunderson, 2003) this advantage enables him to structure his team consistently and systematically in alignment with its preset targets towards amplified performance (Lamude & Scudder, 1995)

When it comes to decision making; an adequate functional background allows managers to relate to team dynamics and workflow aptly.

Moreover, the functional background of a team leaders allows them to focus on the big picture rather than narrowing down to only their specific background when discerning problems their team is facing (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996)

H3: The Functional background moderates Delegated Authority and Team Performance relationship in knowledge-intensive firms.

Conceptual Framework

The study builds on the task-oriented leadership theory (Forsyth & Nye, 2008) which is a behavioral approach to leadership, in which leaders pay more attention to the tasks-to be performed by teams, goal achievement, and performance standard proliferation rather than interpersonal tasks and suggests the following relational model to test both the impact and moderation relationship between Delegated Authority, Team Performance, and Functional Background.

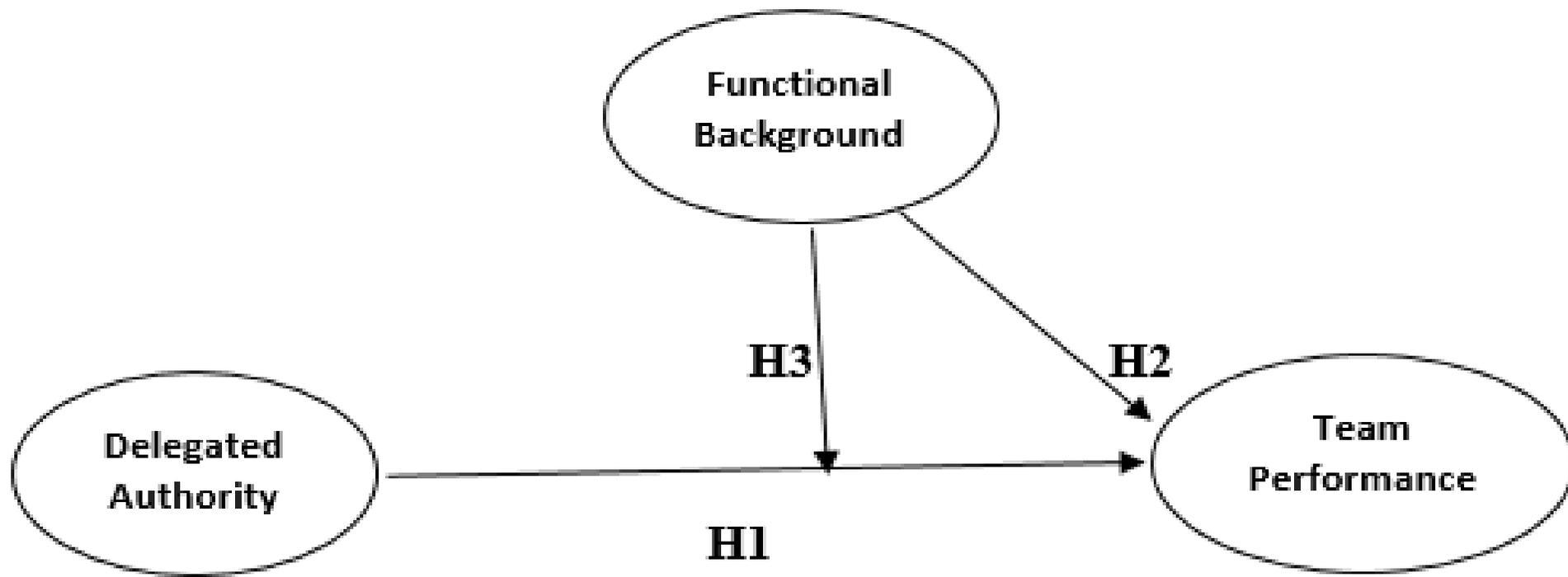


Figure1. Conceptual Model

Thank you for your attention