

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Team Interaction and Team Effectiveness: Team Leadership as a Medium

Chao-Sen Wu , Transworld University, Taiwan

Pei-Wen Wang, Transworld University, Taiwan

Li-Fen Tsai, Transworld University, Taiwan

ABSTRACT

Team leaders and their leadership styles are the key to improving team effectiveness. In this study, we aim to discuss organization culture, team interactions, team effectiveness and their relationships with leadership styles. Our results showed that overall, there are positive correlations between organization culture, team interactions, team efficiency and paternalistic leadership. In organizational culture, team spirit and innovation have positive effects on reforming leadership. The organization culture of team spirit and innovation have positive effects on team effectiveness. In addition, team interactions and team effectiveness have positive effects on reforming leadership, while vertical interactions have negative effects on reforming leadership. We have further discovered that reforming leadership has a mediating role in organization culture, team interactions and team effectiveness. Thus, to improve team effectiveness, apart from strengthening organization culture and team interactions, one should look for a reforming leader.

Keywords: *reforming leadership, team spirit, team interactions, innovation, team effectiveness*

INTRODUCTION

Research Background and Motive

With the flattening of organizational structure and power divisions becoming more and more apparent, the global competitiveness of information technology has forced many corporations to reconstruct their internal organizations. Many scholars have already begun to notice these changes in management, and are actively discussing team-based organizational structural problems to search for what makes a team a success (Nohria, 1991). Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford (1995) discovered in a survey of 313 American corporations that almost 60 percent of corporate organizations will use teams in the future to face the rapidly changing clientele needs. *Fortune* reported that approximately 68 percent of the 1,000 large corporations in the world use teams to operate (Lawler et al., 1995). Amrit & Ephraim(2005)and Wang (2010) stated different customers had different demand of information system. By team work, brainstorm and opinion exchange, the team shared the professional knowledge with the members and stimulate creativity to solve the customers' problems. Much research has shown that organizations operating in teams will reach appropriate team effectiveness (Parker,1990 ; Wellins, Byham, & Dixon,1994). Thus, the formation and operation of teams becomes key; how to let teams perform to maximum effectiveness in corporation organization cultures and how to make it possible for team members to learn from and cooperate with each other and work to their full potentials and strengths to achieve organizations' goals under different leaderships and styles are important issues for all organizations.

Surprisingly, in past research on team effectiveness, the importance of leadership has often been overlooked (Hirokawa,1983). Wageman (2001) discovered that team leadership is the key influence of team effectiveness. The planning and clear directions of a team leader will make it possible for team members to work together to accomplish set tasks (Parker, 1990 ; Shonk, 1982 ; Zaccaro et al., 2001 ; Huang, 2003).

Many past papers have mentioned that an organization's culture influences its team leaders' leadership styles (Chang, 2004 ; Wu, 2006), and different leadership styles will result in different team atmospheres, interactions and effectiveness. Kahai, Sosik & Avolio (1997) proposed that the communication of "people" is what makes or breaks team operations, and not the skills of the team members themselves. This is why members of a team are chosen from all units and departments. Their interactions, organization and connections are what makes the team work (Lin, 1999). However,

apart from horizontal interactions among team members, team interactions also include vertical interactions between the members and their leader-this is "leadership." Tsai (2000) expresses that "leadership" is a process or action that exists in teams through the leaders' influence and use of resources to accomplish organizations' goals. Thus, in order to structure an effective team and accomplish tasks, it is important for the leader to provide a clear view, actively participate in all affairs, and have good interactions with the team members (Shonk, 1982).

Aims

The main aim of this study is to dissect the correlations between organization culture, team interaction, team effectiveness, and team leaders and their styles from the team leaders' points of view. We also wish to further discuss the relationships of organization culture and leadership styles, and leadership styles and team interactions as well as team effectiveness. To sum up, our aims are: (1) to discuss organization culture and its effect on team interactions and team effectiveness, and (2) to dissect the mediating qualities of leadership styles in and its relationship to organization culture, team interactions and team effectiveness.

LITERARY REVIEWS AND HYPOTHESES

This study aims to discuss leadership styles from team leaders' points of view and dissect organization culture, team interactions, team effectiveness and their relationships with team leaders and their leadership styles. Detailed explanations are provided below.

Literary Reviews

1. The meaning of "teams"

A "team" is a supplementary group of people with the same aim and responsibility toward a group of people. The members of a team must work together and solve problems as well as plan and control their work. Shonk (1982) labeled a team as "two or more people that influence and depend on one another to accomplish the same task." The most important thing for teams is to gather a group of people with similar capabilities so that their collective capabilities may be gathered and shown through group operations and sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences. In other words, a team is a group of people who can trust each other, share information and make decisions together through communication to accomplish a task.

2. About "leadership styles"

When discussing the issue of a team leader's main job, Posey & Klein (1990) think that: 1) affirmation of correct use of resources, 2) training and leading members to solve problems, 3) inspiring members to reach goals, and 4) allowing members to grow and mature should be included. Leaders must play a different role to traditional managers in that leaders must not only take care of complicated internal situations, but also overcome external changes by cooperating, communicating and negotiating with, pushing, and listening to others (Thomas & Kenneth, 1996). This is why the ability to communicate and guide others is essential for successful team leaders.

Hypothetical Inferences

1. Organizational culture, leader leadership style, and team interaction

Schultz & Yang (1997) and Flamholtz & Randle (1998) believed that successful organizations have good organizational cultures with values that provide norms and common beliefs for organization members (Chang, 2004). Ebert & Griffin (2000) suggested that organizational culture can direct organization members and facilitate new members' learning towards the accomplishment of a common organizational goal. Lee & Tsai (2005) found that organizational cultures that tend to have mutual learning, interaction and participation by personnel, power-sharing, and internal cooperation are of great benefit to organizational performance; Schein (1985) believed that organizational culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin. Leaders must understand that organizational culture is highly important, particularly in providing a clear direction for organizational culture (Debbie, 2005). Under such an organizational culture, members understand, communicate with, and trust each other.

A study by Lin (2005) suggested that greater sharing in organizational culture allows members to trust and rely on each other and to innovate and learn. Dirks (2000), Wu (2003) and Tung (2006) each suggested that organizational culture and leadership form are significantly and directly related. Chang (2004) noted that organizational culture and manager leadership form are mutually connected. In addition, Chen (1997) raised the point that different leadership styles are closely tied to different organizational cultures. The studies described above demonstrate the impact of organizational culture on leaders' leadership form and style as well as interaction between members. Therefore, this study establishes the following hypotheses:

H1: Organizational culture has a significant effect on team interaction.

H3: Organizational culture will affect team interaction through the mediating effect of leaders' leadership style.

2. Organizational culture, leaders' leadership styles, and team effectiveness

The leadership will straight influence organizational effectiveness (Hung, 2010). Leaders are the key factor influencing team effectiveness (Parker, 1990). Leaders' leadership forms will affect organizational culture and organizational performance and that organizational culture will also affect leaders' leadership styles and organizational performance. In other words, organizational culture, leaders' leadership forms, and organizational performance mutually affect each other. Peter & Waterman (1982) believed that organizational culture will affect employee behavior and organizational performance. Robbins (2001) also noted that employees will have subjective perceptions of organizational characteristics; these subject perceptions will form organizational culture. The positive or negative perceptions of employees will affect employee performance and job satisfaction.

Sarros, Gray & Densten (2003) suggested that after organizational culture reflects leaders' leadership style, the mutual influence between organizational culture and leadership style will improve organizational performance. In addition, Sosik, Avolio, and Kahai (1997) suggested that different leaders' leadership styles will have varying impacts on different organizational effectiveness. Paternalistic leadership and reforming leadership have the influence of difference for team effectiveness (Tang, 2009). A study by Lin (2000) showed that organizational culture has a significant impact on team effectiveness; Xie(2001) noted that organizational culture is the key to success or failure of organization effectiveness. The studies described above demonstrate the impact of organizational culture on leaders' leadership form, style, and effectiveness. As such, this study establishes the following hypotheses:

H2: Organizational culture has a significant impact on team effectiveness.

H4: Organizational culture has an impact on team effectiveness through the mediating effect of leaders' leadership style.

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter established the research framework for this study based on the research motivations, purposes and literature examination described above. Then, data is collected using the survey method to demonstrate whether the research hypotheses are valid. The research framework, research hypotheses, research subjects, and measurement of research variables are described below.

Research Framework

As a result of the literature examination and hypothetical inferences described above, this study uses team members as the subjects of study in the examination of the connections between organizational culture, team interaction, team effectiveness, and team leaders' leadership style. The concept framework is shown in Figure 1. In figure 1, "→" indicates the direction of impact. Figure 1 shows that team interaction and team effectiveness are influenced by organizational behavior. Team leaders' leadership styles act as a mediating variable in the connections between organizational culture, team interaction, and team effectiveness.

Research Subjects

This study focuses on teams as a subject of research. As the unit of analysis is the team, the completeness of surveys retrieved from the entire team is of considerable importance. Based on the consideration of this factor, this study employed snowball sampling and used personnel visits, telephone communication, or introductions to confirm the

participation of highly cooperative teams in this investigation. The numbers of visited teams and team members were ascertained prior to the distribution of the surveys. In addition, in order to ensure the completeness of team data, each team member in every team was used as a respondent for the survey. Following the completion of the surveys, surveys were requested to be returned in different envelopes by each team.

Measurement of Research Variables

Team leaders' leadership style: primarily referenced leaders' leadership style scales of Cheng (1988), Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990), and Larry & Cheng (2000) and was measured in terms of transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and patriarchal leadership with a total of 40 questions. Organizational culture: based on the organizational culture scales of Cheng (1995) and Zhong (1998), measured in terms of innovation excellence and team spirit with a total of 15 questions. Team interaction: based on the cooperation scale of Tjosvold (1988) and the internal team communication scale of Cheng, Jen, & Cheng (1993) with a total of 19 questions. Team effectiveness: referenced the studies of Jeremy and Mahesh (2001) and Tseng (2001) and measured with a total of 10 questions.

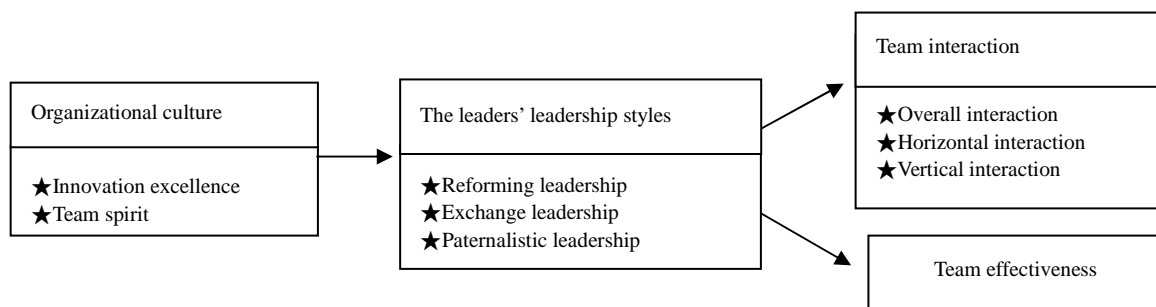


Figure 1: Research Framework

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Basic Sample Characteristics

This study distributed 800 surveys to 70 teams in 20 different companies. After subtracting incomplete or unanswered surveys, 642 effective surveys remained from 62 teams in 16 different companies. The team retrieval rate was 88.57% and the personal retrieval rate was 80.25%. In 62 teams, the average number of individuals per team was 4-6 people. Most teams were assigned with research and development-related tasks and had existed for 1-2 years. Among retrieved personal samples, 424 individuals were male (66.04% of the total sample) and 218 were female (33.96% of the total sample). A large number of the sampled individuals were between the ages of 26-30, for 41.74% of the total sample; most individuals had bachelor's or master's degrees, for 30.84% and 28.97% of the total sample, respectively. Most respondents had backgrounds in business management and science/engineering, with 42.05% and 38.78% of the total sample, respectively.

Factor Analysis Results and Reliability and Validity Analysis

There were a total of nine aspects in this study. Reliability was measured using the Cronbach α value; each aspect had a value exceeding 0.75 (overall interaction = 0.76; horizontal interaction = 0.88; vertical interaction = 0.94; transformational leadership = 0.98; transactional leadership = 0.94; patriarchal leadership = 0.85; team spirit = 0.92; innovation excellence = 0.94; team effectiveness = 0.94), demonstrating that each aspect possessed considerable reliability. This study used the largest variation axis method for factor analysis and extracted the factors with attribute values greater than 1 in each scale while removing the questions with excessively low factor loads. Results showed that the factor loads of questions composed by factor aspects extracted in factor analysis were each greater than 0.65; the net explained variances were all greater than 68.22%. The questions composed from factor aspects extracted using factor

analysis were consistent with the original design of this study, demonstrating that the research aspects of the survey possessed considerable construction validity.

Correlation Between Research Variables

According to the correlation analysis of Table 1, “team spirit,” “innovation excellence,” and “transformational leadership” showed direct correlation. In other words, when the organizational culture consisted of team spirit and innovation excellence, it was better for the leadership styles of leaders to be transformational leadership. “Transformational leadership” and “overall interaction” as well as “horizontal interaction,” “vertical interaction,” and “team effectiveness” also showed direct correlation. In other words, transformational leadership style led to better overall team interaction, horizontal interaction, vertical interaction, and team performance. “Vertical interaction” and “transactional leadership” were significantly negatively related. In other words, transactional leadership style leads to poor vertical interaction. “Vertical interaction” and “patriarchal leadership” were directly related. In other words, vertical interaction in a team would be better when the leadership style of leaders was patriarchal.

Table 1: Pearson correlation analysis Table

| Research Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1.Team spirit | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| 2.Innovation excellence | .54** | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| 3.Reforming leadership | .51** | .28** | 1.00 | | | | | |
| 4.Exchange leadership | -.01 | .06 | -.34** | 1.00 | | | | |
| 5.Paternalistic leadership | -.01 | -.08 | .34** | .12 | 1.00 | | | |
| 6.Overall interaction | .56** | .30* | .30* | .02 | .24 | 1.00 | | |
| 7.Horizontal interaction | .70** | .54** | .37** | .05 | .00 | .54** | 1.00 | |
| 8.Vertical interaction | .39** | .25 | .78** | -.44** | .40** | .46** | .41** | 1.00 |
| 9.Team interaction | .90** | .58** | .56** | -.12 | .04 | .62** | .82** | .56** |

Annotation : “*” means p<0.1 ; “**” means p<0.05 ; “***” means p<0.01

Table 2: Hierarchical regression analysis of team interaction, Team spirit & Reforming leadership(N=62)

| Variable Model | Overall interaction | | Horizontal interaction | | Vertical interaction | | Team effectiveness | |
|--|---------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|--------------------|----------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
| Dependent variable Team spirit | 0.30* | 0.01 | 0.70** | 0.69** | 0.39** | -0.007 | 0.90** | 0.83** |
| Mediating variable Reforming leadership | | 0.56* | | 0.02 | | 0.78** | | 0.13** |
| ΔR^2 | 0.31 | 0.30 | 0.49 | 0.48 | 0.14 | 0.59 | 0.80 | 0.81 |
| F value | 5.78* | 13.80** | 58.90** | 28.98** | 10.78** | 44.67** | 250.31** | 133.83** |

Annotation : “*” means p<0.1 ; “**” means p<0.05 ; “***” means p<0.01

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was applied to understand the relationships between organizational culture, team interaction, and team effectiveness. Data in Tables 2 and 3 show that, in organizational culture, team spirit and innovation excellence had significant impacts on overall interaction, horizontal interaction, and vertical interaction in teams (β values were 0.30, 0.70, 0.39, 0.29, 0.54, and 0.25), as shown in Models 1, 3, 5, 9, 11, and 13. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Data in Tables 2 and 3 show that team spirit and innovation excellence had significant impacts on team effectiveness (β values were 0.90 and 0.58), as shown in Models 7 and 15. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

1. Organizational culture and team interaction – the mediating effect of team leader leadership styles

According to Baron & Kenny (1986), a mediating effect must meet the following requirements to be established: first, the independent variable must have a significant impact on the mediating variable; second, the mediating variable must have a significant impact on the dependent variable; finally, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable should be weaker following the introduction of the mediating variable than before. The

correlation analysis found in Table 1 shows that there is a significant correlation between team spirit, innovation excellence, and transformational leadership; a significant direct correlation also exists between transformational leadership and overall interaction, vertical interaction, horizontal interaction, and team effectiveness. These correlations satisfy the first two conditions determined by Baron & Kenny. As for whether the third condition is met, please see the following explanation:

To test for whether transformational leadership is the mediating variable between team spirit and team interaction (overall interaction, horizontal interaction, and vertical interaction), team interaction was used as a dependent variable; team spirit was introduced as the independent variable, after which the transformational leadership variable was finally introduced. Results showed that team spirit was significantly directly related to overall interaction and vertical interaction (β values were 0.56 and 0.78), as shown in models 2 and 6. The β values of team spirit decreased from 0.30 ($p < 0.05$) to 0.01 (insignificant) and from 0.39 ($p < 0.01$) to -0.007 (insignificant), fulfilling the third condition required by Baron & Kenny. As a result, this study found that transformational leadership does perform a mediating effect in the correlation of team spirit with overall interaction and vertical interaction. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

In order to test whether transformational leadership is the mediating variable between innovation excellence and team interaction (overall interaction, horizontal interaction, and vertical interaction), team interaction was used as a dependent variable; innovation excellence was introduced as the independent variable, after which transformational leadership was introduced. Results showed that innovation excellence was directly related to overall interaction, vertical interaction, and horizontal interaction (β values were 0.23, 0.24, and 0.77), as shown in Models 10, 12, and 14. The β values of innovation excellence were reduced from 0.29 ($p < 0.05$) to 0.23 ($p < 0.01$), from 0.54 ($p < 0.01$) to 0.48 ($p < 0.01$), and from 0.25 ($p < 0.1$) to 0.04 (insignificant), meeting Baron & Kenny's third condition. As a result, this study found that transformational leadership does possess a mediating effect in the connection of innovation excellence with overall interaction, vertical interaction, and horizontal interaction. Hypothesis 3 was therefore partially supported.

2. Organizational culture and team effectiveness – the mediating effect of team leader leadership styles

In order to test whether transformational leadership was the mediating variable between team spirit and team effectiveness, team effectiveness was used as a dependent variable; team spirit was introduced as an independent variable, after which transformational leadership was introduced as a variable. Results showed that team spirit and team effectiveness were significantly directly related (β value was 0.13), as shown in Model 8. The β value of team spirit was reduced from 0.90 ($p < 0.01$) to 0.83 ($p < 0.01$), fulfilling the third condition set by Baron & Kenny. As a result, it was found that transformational leadership has a mediating effect in the connection between team spirit and team effectiveness. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

Also, in order to test whether transformational leadership is the mediating variable between innovation excellence and team effectiveness, team effectiveness was set as a dependent variable; innovation excellence was introduced as an independent variable, after which transformational leadership was introduced as a variable. Results showed that there was significant direct correlation between innovation excellence and team effectiveness (β value was 0.43), as shown in Model 16. The β value of innovation excellence was reduced from 0.58 ($p < 0.01$) to 0.48 ($p < 0.01$), fulfilling the third condition required by Baron & Kenny. It was thus found that transformational leadership has a mediating effect between innovation excellence and team effectiveness. Hypothesis 4 therefore received partial support.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The key to whether a team can succeed lies in the leadership style of team leaders. The leadership styles of leaders can facilitate internal team interaction and the improvement of overall team performance; this topic has become an important one. We explain the results and suggestions of this study below:

Table 3: Hierarchical regression analysis of team interaction, innovation excellence**& Reforming leadership (N=62)**

| Variable Model | Overall interaction | | Horizontal interaction | | Vertical interaction | | Team effectiveness | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| | Model 9 | Model 10 | Model 11 | Model 12 | Model 13 | Model 14 | Model 15 | Model 16 |
| Independent variable Innovation excellence | 0.29* | 0.23 ⁺ | 0.54** | 0.48** | 0.25* | 0.04 | 0.58** | 0.48** |
| Mediating variable Reforming leadership | | 0.23 ⁺ | | 0.24* | | 0.77** | | 0.43** |
| ΔR^2 | 0.07 | 0.11 | 0.28 | 0.32 | 0.05 | 0.59 | 0.33 | 0.49 |
| F value | 5.78* | 4.71* | 24.88** | 15.60** | 3.99* | 44.93** | 30.89** | 30.47** |

Annotation : " ⁺ " means p<0.1 ; "*" means p<0.05 ; "**" means p<0.01

Conclusions

1. The relationship between organizational culture and team interaction

This study found that both team spirit and innovation excellence have a significant and positive impact on overall team interaction, horizontal interaction, and vertical interaction. In other words, an organizational culture emphasizing overall team spirit will improve overall interaction, team interaction, and vertical interaction within the team. Encouragement of innovation excellence will also be beneficial to overall interaction, horizontal interaction, and vertical interaction within a team. As can be seen, organizational cultures of team spirit and innovation excellence can improve overall interaction, horizontal interaction, and vertical interaction within a team.

2. The relationship between organizational culture and team effectiveness

Data analysis showed that both team spirit and innovation excellence have a significant impact on team effectiveness. In other words, an organizational culture emphasizing team spirit and innovation excellence can improve overall team effectiveness. As can be seen, a greater value placed on team spirit and innovation excellence in organizational culture will lead to greater team effectiveness.

3. The mediating effect of team leader and leadership styles

The results of this study show that transformational leadership does indeed have a mediating effect on the relationships of team spirit and team interaction with team effectiveness and innovation excellence. A transformational leadership style has a significant positive impact on team interaction and team effectiveness in an organizational culture emphasizing team spirit. In other words, a transformational leadership style facilitates the improvement of overall, horizontal, and vertical interaction in an organizational culture of team spirit. In addition, team members will have a greater recognition of a team spirit organizational culture under a transformational leadership style; team effectiveness will be improved as a result. Furthermore, transformational leadership also exerts a significant and positive influence on team interaction and team effectiveness in an organizational culture of innovation excellence. As can be seen, when the leadership style in a team is that of transformational leadership and the organizational culture exhibits values of innovation excellence, overall, vertical, and horizontal interaction as well as team effectiveness are improved.

Suggestions

Based on the discussions above, this study presents the following suggestions to aid in improvement of group advantage:

1. Establish belief in team spirit and innovation excellence in organizational culture

Organizational culture is the primary factor influencing the success of company operations; it is constituted by the values, beliefs, norms, and motivations commonly held and shared by organization members. Generally speaking, greater overall team spirit in organizational culture will lead to greater team interaction. Consequently, this study suggests the creation of valuing team spirit or innovation excellence in organizational culture in order to improve overall organizational effectiveness. For example: allow organizational members to believe other members are their partners; use a team model of mutual cooperation to pursue improvement of overall effectiveness. Alternatively, allow team members to have an innovation thought model of grand imaginations and create values of emphasis on innovation excellence in organizational culture.

2. Strengthen the leadership styles of team leaders

Leader leadership styles as well as team spirit and innovation excellence in organizational culture will impact team interaction. The first element of leaders' leadership style is to create a transformational leadership style. We suggest that leadership should plan, on a local basis, organizational vision, effective communication and establishment of common vision, use of positioning and establishment of trust, and self-development as a way of strengthening transformational leadership style. Doing so will facilitate the establishment of organizational culture with team culture and innovation excellence and increase interaction between members and the organization, leaders, and peers, thereby improving team effectiveness.

3. Research limitations and directions for future research

This study was limited by the number of samples and so only employed hierarchical regression analysis to test the research hypotheses. If future studies can overcome the problem of sample quantity, they can use the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis method to test models. Further, this study used snowball sampling and was thus unable to meet the demand for randomness; the external validity of the research results may have been limited as a result.

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