

Cumulative Dissertation

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor rerum politicarum (Dr. rer. pol.)

Shared leadership and trust: A two study investigation of the relationship, antecedents and boundary conditions on several levels of an organization

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Dortmund, June 2022

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Dissertationsort: Dortmund

Acknowledgments

Now that my dissertation has been finalized, I would like to thank various people for their support during the development process.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Jens Rowold, who gave me the chance to put my dissertation project into practice and supported me with his high level of expertise in all my questions and concerns throughout the entire time. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Maximiliane Wilkesmann, who provided me with many useful conversations and support during the application process in the run-up to my dissertation. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Andreas Hoffjan and Prof. Dr. Kai Bormann for their time, effort, and high level of expertise as additional members of the examination board.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr. Kai Klasmeier, who supported me as a colleague and mentor throughout the entire doctoral period with great zeal and very distinctive expertise. I would also like to thank Dr. Dominik Stemer and Dr. Catrin Millhoff, who also provided useful advice.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and my girlfriend, who were not able to spend time with me every evening and every weekend due to the high workload, but always showed great understanding for this and motivated and supported me beyond the professional topics.

Summary

In this dissertation, the reciprocal relationship between shared leadership and trust on different levels of an organization (top-management to team members) is investigated in two studies. Furthermore, the focus are antecedents and boundary conditions (empowering leadership, vision communication, voice, feedback seeking and perceived team support) that may shape this relationship.

In study 1, the relationship of organizational trust on shared leadership was examined using a sample of 23 top-managers and 73 mid-level managers from 23 organizations. Incorporating the trickle-down effect and social exchange theory, the indirect relationship of organizational trust on shared leadership via empowering leadership of the mid-level managers was analyzed. Furthermore, it was investigated whether this indirect relationship is positively moderated by top-management's vision communication in the first stage. The results were obtained from a multilevel analysis and concluded that organizational trust has a direct significant positive influence on empowering leadership. The mediation hypothesis (organizational trust via empowering leadership on shared leadership) was also significantly positive. Meanwhile, moderated mediation through vision communication could not be confirmed. Thus, research could be extended regarding the emergence of team's shared leadership by mid-level managers attitude towards the organization (i.e., trust) and their resulting leadership style (i.e., empowering leadership).

Study 2 focused on the indirect relationship between team voice and team trust from the team leader's perspective. Here, shared leadership acted as a mediator of this relationship and feedback seeking from the team leader as the first stage moderator and perceived team support from the team leader's perspective as the second stage modera-

tor. This model was embedded in social exchange theory and followership theory. The sample was 43 team leaders and 125 team members who were surveyed at two measurement time points. Results were obtained using a structural equation model. There was a significant positive relationship between voice of the team and shared leadership. Both the mediation hypothesis (voice of the team via shared leadership of the team on team trust of the team leader) and the moderations by feedback seeking of the team leader and perceived team support of the team leader, including indirect effects in the overall model, could not be confirmed. Through this study, the research regarding the emergence and interaction of shared leadership and trust, including the influence of antecedences and boundary conditions, could be expanded under the consideration of the team level. Also, an extended view on the followership theory is given.

In summary, this dissertation provides a broader view of the relationship between shared leadership and trust including its antecedents and boundary conditions on different levels of an organization by incorporating different statistical and methodological approaches.

Zusammenfassung

In dieser Dissertation wird die reziproke Beziehung zwischen shared leadership und trust auf verschiedenen Ebenen einer Organisation (Top-Management bis Teammitglieder) in zwei Studien untersucht. Darüber hinaus liegt der Schwerpunkt auf den Antezedenzen und boundary conditions (empowering leadership, vision communication, voice, feedback seeking und perceived team support), die diese Beziehung beeinflussen können.

In Studie 1 wurde die Beziehung zwischen organizational trust und shared leadership anhand einer Stichprobe von 23 Top-Managern und 73 Managern der mittleren Ebene aus 23 Unternehmen untersucht. Unter Einbeziehung des Trickle-Down-Effekts und der Theorie des sozialen Austauschs wurde die indirekte Beziehung zwischen organizational trust und shared leadership über empowering leadership aus Sicht der mittleren Führungskräfte analysiert. Darüber hinaus wurde untersucht, ob diese indirekte Beziehung durch vision communication des Top-Managements in der ersten Phase positiv moderiert wird. Die Ergebnisse einer mehrstufigen Analyse ergaben, dass organizational trust einen direkten, signifikant positiven Einfluss auf empowering leadership hat. Die Vermittlungshypothese (organizational trust über empowering leadership auf shared leadership) war ebenfalls signifikant positiv. Die moderierte Mediation durch vision communication des Top-Managements konnte hingegen nicht bestätigt werden. Somit könnte die Forschung hinsichtlich der Entstehung von shared leadership durch die Einstellung von Führungskräften der mittleren Ebene gegenüber der Organisation (organizational trust) und dem daraus resultierenden Führungsstil (empowering leadership) erweitert werden.

Studie 2 konzentrierte sich auf die indirekte Beziehung zwischen voice des Teams und team trust aus der Perspektive des Teamleiters. Hier wirkte shared leadership als Vermittler dieser Beziehung und die feedback seeking durch den Teamleiter als Moderator der ersten Stufe und die perceived team support aus der Sicht des Teamleiters als Moderator der zweiten Stufe. Dieses Modell war eingebettet in die Theorie des sozialen Austauschs und die Followership Theorie. Die Stichprobe bestand aus 43 Führungskräften und 125 Teammitgliedern, die zu zwei Messzeitpunkten befragt wurden. Die Ergebnisse wurden mithilfe eines Strukturgleichungsmodell ermittelt. Es bestand ein signifikanter positiver Zusammenhang zwischen voice des Teams und shared leadership. Sowohl die Mediationshypothese (voice des Teams über shared leadership des Teams auf team trust des Teamleiters) als auch die Moderationen durch feedback seeking des Teamleiters und perceived team support des Teamleiters einschließlich indirekter Effekte im Gesamtmodell konnten nicht bestätigt werden. Durch diese Studie konnte die Forschung zur Entstehung und Interaktion von shared leadership und team trust, einschließlich des Einflusses von Antezedenzen und boundary conditions, unter Berücksichtigung der Teamebene erweitert werden. Außerdem wird ein erweiterter Blick auf die Followership-Theorie geworfen.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass diese Dissertation durch die Einbeziehung verschiedener statistischer und methodischer Ansätze einen breiteren Blick auf die Beziehung zwischen geteilter Führung und Vertrauen einschließlich ihrer Antezedenzen und boundary conditions auf verschiedenen Ebenen einer Organisation ermöglicht.

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List of abbreviations

AIC	Akaike-Information-Criterion
α	Cronbachs Alpha
β/B	Regression Coefficient (beta)
BIC	Bayesian-Information-Criterion
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Confidence Interval
CM	Catrin Millhoff
DAX	German Stock Index
<i>df</i>	Degrees of Freedom
e.g.	for example
et al.	and alii
FIF	Integrative Leadership Questionnaire
H1	Hypothesis 1
H2	Hypothesis 2
H3	Hypothesis 3
H4	Hypothesis 4
ICC	Intraclass Correlations Coefficient

KK	Kai Klasmeier
L1	Team/team Leader Level
L2	Organizational/CEO Level
<i>M</i>	Mean
MM	Maximilian Marschalkowski
<i>N</i>	Sample Size
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
<i>p</i>	Significance Value
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
<i>SD</i>	Standard Deviation
SEM	Structural Equation Model
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
T1	Measuring Point 1
T2	Measuring Point 2

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1 Introduction

In the current time and recent past, a change in the work context is emerging. Drivers of this include the Covid-19 pandemic and the new way of thinking of the younger generations (Bapuji et al., 2020; Supatn, 2020). In the process, organizational structures, leadership styles, and work location and time models are rethought and made more flexible (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Parker et. al, 2020). In leadership research, this is resulting in a change from hierarchical leadership styles to a leadership style at eye level. In the focus is the shared leadership approach (Zhu et al., 2018). In this approach, the tasks and responsibilities of leaders and team members are distributed equally among the entire team, including the leader, which increases the ability of each individual team member to participate and make decisions to achieve goals (Chiu et al., 2016; Morgeson et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2018). As a resulting consequence of shared leadership, team performance is enhanced, and new organizational cultures can emerge (Drescher et al., 2014; Grote, 2012).

The shared leadership approach is mainly used in start-ups or innovation departments in companies (Fitzsimons, 2016). Especially in the development of new ideas, business models or products, a hierarchy is a hindrance and inhibits creativity in the team. A shared leadership approach, on the other hand, increases team creativity, the ability to innovate and thus enables better results (Ali et al., 2020; Hoch, 2013; Nicolaidis et al., 2014).

In this context, recent studies view shared leadership and interpersonal trust as a reciprocal relationship that positively influences each other (see Bligh et al., 2006; Jong et al., 2007; Drescher et al., 2014; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020;

Sheng et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2020). The interaction of these two variables results in higher productivity and faster goal achievement (Carson et al., 2007). When people work together, they need each other's support to accomplish tasks. This dependency relationship results in greater cohesion, which is accompanied by trust among each other (Jong et al., 2007; Sheng et al., 2010). The willingness of individuals to take risks increases and there is a greater willingness to open new responsibilities and tasks. This promotes a shared leadership style and in turn strengthens trust (Drescher et al., 2014; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). This can be observed particularly well in successful commercial enterprises. A current example is SpaceX, which specializes in building rockets and space missions for NASA, among others. It has a high level of trust in its founder (Elon Musk), team members, organization, and technology. This trust resulted in a change in the space industry and the beginning of the privatization of this sector.

Although shared leadership and trust have already been investigated in several studies at the individual and team level, there are still questions that remain unanswered regarding shared leadership and trust in the team and organizational context, in how they emerge and how they are influenced by other variables (antecedents and boundary conditions) (Currall & Inkpen, 2002; Fischer et al., 2017; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2018). The timeliness of these topics is particularly reflected in several recent calls for papers: Pearce et al. (2009) issued in the *Journal of Personnel Psychology* a call for research on new forms of management in the area of shared and distributed leadership in organizations. One of the focal points was the exploration of processes, outcomes, and antecedents and facilitators of shared leadership in organizations (Pearce et al., 2009). Jacquart et al. (2020) issued in the *leadership quarterly* a call for research on leadership and management in relation to exogenous

shocks (like pandemic or natural disasters). One of the main themes was how shared leadership, in the context of exogenous shocks, affects the behavioral patterns of individuals and interpersonal relationships (Jacquart et al., 2020). Mau & Ohemeng (2022) issued in the *International Journal of Public Leadership* a call for research on new leadership styles, such as the shared leadership approach in connection with public administration (Mau & Ohemeng, 2022). In the area of trust, Bachmann et al. (2012) issued a call for papers related to trust in crises from *Organization Studies*.

Through the dissertation presented, I aim to expand the research on shared leadership and trust, focusing on the following two research topics: 1) Understanding trust and shared leadership in team and organizational contexts 2) New perspective on emergence, antecedents and boundary conditions of the shared leadership-trust relationship.

The next chapters provide an overview of the current studies and theories on shared leadership and trust including its influencing and mediating mechanisms, as well as the derivations of the research questions. This is followed by the two studies and an overall discussion.

2 Shared leadership and trust – Theoretical frameworks

Shared leadership

A traditional view of leadership is hierarchical leadership. In it, a leader commands and directs a group of people in a classic top-down approach (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014). The modern conception of leadership is the exact opposite. In this modern form, there is no longer just one leader who delegates tasks top-down to his or her team and retains all responsibility; instead, tasks and responsibilities are shared equally and worked on together, regardless of the level in the team. The responsibility rests on

all team members. Modern leadership is therefore shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Zhu et al., 2018). Zhu et al. (2018) defined shared leadership as “an emergent team phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are distributed among team members”.

Through shared responsibility, each team member receives and feels the same work commitments, enforces them, and independently monitors the results (Chiu et al., 2016). The influence of each team member thus increases significantly (Wu et al., 2020). Characteristics that distinguish a team member in this regard in a shared leadership approach are increased communication, project influence, integration of suggestions into further project progress, and sanctioning of violations by other team members (Aime et al., 2014). According to Morgeson et al. (2010), this results in the following central tasks of shared leadership, which can be divided into a transition and action phase as follows. These phases can be adopted by team members and do not necessarily need to be used in this row. The transition phase describes the process toward shared leadership. The first part is the selection of a team. Here, the focus is on team members who act as a unit, defy unforeseen events, and face any situation that arises through a cooperative and trusting relationship. Building on this foundation, the definition of a mission emerges, to which the entire team aligns and couples its goals and expectations. The next part is the planning and structuring of the project. In this, it is determined who implements what and when. Then the training and further development of the team begins. A quick elimination of arising differences and efficient communication is learned. The transition phase ends with the feedback process, in which they reflect on what has happened and compare it to their earlier expectations of the process. If discrepancies arise, they are resolved, and a new course of action is found for the future. This is followed by the action phase, which is characterized by active intervention in the process.

The entire team, including its processes, is monitored by the team itself in order to maintain sustainable achievement of interim goals and the availability of certain resources. The leader is part of the team and works on a team task. This creates a bond internally that is transported externally to the organization. In this phase, the feedback and exchange process between the team members is also central. Problems arise, are recognized, and eliminated together. The team thus acquires an independent leadership function and can exist autonomously, even in the face of interpersonal conflicts (Morgeson et al., 2010). Informal ways of advancing other task areas of a shared leadership approach result. According to Drescher et al. (2014), these are as follows: Information seeking and structuring, using information to solve problems, and managing material and personal resources. In the first part of information seeking and structuring, the incoming input from the outside is collected, clustered, interpreted, prioritized, and then transmitted to the respective team. Then these teams processed this information in the second part, the use of information to solve problems, and use it to set goals and plans for a project. In this procedure, a communication concept for cooperation is very important, because here the needs of the employees are perceived and satisfied. In the third and last part, the management of material and personal resources, on the one hand the entire material cycle (procurement, allocation, maintenance, use and control) is managed. On the other hand, a focus in the area of human resources is on employee motivation and advancement. To this end, further training is planned, including special coaching programs for specific employees (Klein et al., 2006). Through this collaboration of shared leadership, goals are achieved more efficiently, processes and tasks are rethought, and team performance is enhanced (Drescher et al., 2014).

This shows how shared leadership differs from hierarchical leadership. Morgeson et al. (2010) used a model that divides the locus of leadership into internal (in-

volved in team tasks) and external (not involved in team tasks) and the formality of leadership into formal (manager's responsibility for team performance exists) and informal (manager's responsibility for team performance does not exist). Hence, shared leadership is an internal and informal type of team leadership (Morgeson et al., 2010). Hierarchical leadership can encourage shared leadership, and shared leadership can in principle occur together with hierarchical leadership in a team (Morgeson et al., 2010). The timeliness of the shared leadership variable described in the first chapter is illustrated by research on different forms of shared leadership (distributed leadership, collective leadership, informal leadership, peer leadership and team leadership) and selected meta-analyses (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Nicolaidis et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020; Zhang & Zhou, 2014).

Trust

In connection with shared leadership, the variable trust is repeatedly used in current research (compare Drescher et al., 2014 and Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010). Trust is defined as the willingness of one party to be open to another party, to be exposed to actions of that party, and to take risks in that relationship. Trust is a dyadic variable composed of a party to be trusted (trustor) and a party to be trusted (trustee) (Breuer et al., 2020). Here, one party has no control over the actions of the other party (Mayer et al., 1995). Furthermore, Mayer et al. (1995) subdivides the conditions of trust into ability (group of competencies, characteristics and skills that give some party a possibility to influence some selected domain), benevolence (extent that a trustee want to do good things, apart from self-interest to the trustor) and integrity (trustor's perception that the trustee follows a set of principles that the trustor prefer). The extent to which trust is felt and allowed is found in the origin of each individual (Lewicki et al., 1998). When there

is a high level of trust, there is a high level of risk dependence to another party. However, this risk dependency does not cause stress to the individual, but rather strengthens the relationship with the other party (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Kauffeld, 2010). In addition to the perceived risk dependency, the individual determines the benefits possible for them from this trust relationship and, if positive, increases their trust in the other party (Cheng et al., 2016).

The timeliness of the variable trust, explained in the first chapter, is analyzed by recent meta-analyses in the areas of trust and negotiations, trust and investments, trust and job performance, and trust in robots. In all examples, a positive relationship of the variable to trust could be established (Kong et al., 2014; Dirks & Ferrin, 2014; Colquitt et al., 2007; Johnson & Mislin, 2011). An important factor for organizations in this regard is that a high degree of trust in various forms enhances team performance and thus the performance of the entire organization (Drescher et al., 2014; Gaur et al., 2011).

In the following chapter, I will explain the different perspectives of shared leadership and trust.

2.1 Multilevel perspective on the relationship between shared leadership and trust

Shared leadership and trust are concepts that must be considered both from the individual and the team perspective (Carson et al., 2007; Simons & Peterson, 2000). In this regard, shared leadership develops through perceptions and interactions that occur within a team (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Kozlowski, 2015; Kozlowski et al., 2016). Through this, DeRue and Ashford (2010) developed the theory of adaptive leadership. They confirm the assumption that shared leadership emerges through leadership and followership interactions. To this end, a team member may cede, distribute, or claim

leadership. These leadership interactions create follow-on interactions that can follow an example or change dynamically over time (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

In the context of team trust, expectations are made regarding the competence, goodwill, and honesty of other team members (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Shared experiences lead to stronger interpersonal bonds and feelings of cooperation and goodwill between individuals within a team. Likewise, a certain investment of trust in the team takes place (Breuer et al., 2020; Feitosa et al., 2020). This attitude allows team members to take risks without the need for control and supervision. Above all, there is the possibility to influence others in one's own sense or to be influenced by other team members in their sense (Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010).

At the team level, both shared leadership and team trust apply the theory of social exchange (Gergen, 1969; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Here, a social exchange always takes place between two or more actors. It is a reciprocal exchange that can trigger positive or negative actions in the counterpart (Gergen, 1969; Cropanzano et al., 2017). In this context, social exchange is linked to flexibility, openness, and trust compared to economic exchange (Jing-Lih Farh et al., 1990).

In addition to the team view, the variables shared leadership and trust can also be considered in an organizational context. In addition to the theory of social exchange, the upper-echelon theory of Hambrick and Mason (1984) and the trickle-down effect of Bass et al. (1987) serve as a basis here. The upper-echelon theory states that top-management interprets situations based on its personal qualities and characteristics and aligns its actions accordingly, and this thus has an influence on the strategy of the company and its performance (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). The trickle-down effect takes up this view and extends it in that when the second level of management sees the (leader-

ship) behavior from top-management, it adopts it and passes it on to its team. The third management level then takes its cue from the (leadership) behavior of the second management level and passes it on again in its team. This process continues until the last level of an organization is reached. This creates major responsibilities, especially for top-management, for their actions (Bass et al., 1987; Mihalache et al., 2014). Shared leadership can thus be initialized by top-management and spread to the lower level of an organization.

In the process, a new form of trust is developed - organizational trust (Mayer et al., 1995). Organizational trust is defined as the degree to which a person trusts an organization (Mayer et al., 1995; Pirson & Malhotra, 2011). Just as at the individual and intra-team levels, this is also associated with a willingness to take risks and assume responsibility toward the other party, in this case the organization (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Individuals can distinguish between the different forms of trust (individual, group, organizational) (Tekleab & Chiaburu, 2011; Yang & Mossholder, 2010). In organizational trust, the individual observes the organization's behavior and weighs the extent to which the organization confirms the individual's expectations and the extent to which the organization fails to meet expectations (Colquitt et al., 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2013). Moreover, these expectations are also directed toward an individual's key stakeholders, such as top-management or direct leaders (Fombrun & Gardberg, 2000; Gaur et al., 2011). When these expectations toward organizational and stakeholder actions are fulfilled to positive degrees, the level of organizational trust increases (Colquitt et al., 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2013). In terms of the trickle-down effect, this confirms the importance of appropriate behavior and actions by top-management. When top-management acts irresponsibly and embodies an inappropriate leadership culture, the next levels of management adopt this behavior. Individuals at each level of an organiza-

tion evaluate this behavior and conclude that it is not the right course of action for them, thereby decreasing the level of organizational trust among individuals and thus the entire workforce (Gaur et al., 2011). In practice, this would cause dissatisfaction among an organization's employees, higher turnover, and lower job performance.

In summary, the consideration of shared leadership and trust at the individual and partly team level has already been investigated in a few studies (e.g. Burke et al., 2007; Klasmeier and Rowold (2020); Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010). Nevertheless, there are mainly unanswered questions of this relationship at the team level and in the organizational context including its emergence and its antecedents and boundary conditions (Currall & Inkpen, 2002; Fischer et al., 2017; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2018). The next chapter is devoted to these questions about antecedents and boundary conditions and mechanisms of this relationship.

2.2 Antecedents, boundary conditions and mechanisms of the relationship between shared leadership and organizational/team trust

In addition to the relationship of shared leadership and trust at multiple levels (individual, intra-team, and organizational), the influences of different variables on this relationship and the resulting outputs have also been examined (e.g. Drescher et al., 2014; Hoch, 2013; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020).

Voice, the voluntary expression of questions, comments, ideas, and suggestions (Zhu et al., 2015), in particular, occurs in the context and emergence of different forms of leadership like ethical leadership (Chen & Hou, 2016; Huang & Paterson, 2017; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Zhu et al., 2015), empowering leadership (Raub & Robert, 2010), participative leadership and shared leadership (Ali et al., 2020), and transformational leadership (Detert & Burris, 2007; Duan et al, 2017; Liang et al, 2017;

Liu et al., 2010). In this context, voice is seen as a communication tool between team members and leaders that contributes to the expression of criticism, decision-making, and the assumption of responsibility for (leadership) tasks (Carson et al., 2007; Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Wu et al., 2020). However, a high degree of voice only possible when it is desired by the leader and the team and is not penalized (Ali et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2013; Milliken et al. 2003). That a high degree of voice drives a shared leadership approach has already been found by Ali et al. (2020) in their study of multi-source, multi-wave survey data from 382 members of 73 teams. Carson et al. (2007) also recognized that when the voice criterion is fulfilled, it strengthens shared leadership in the team. In the meta-analysis of Wu et al. (2020) on antecedents, consequences, and moderators of shared leadership, a positive relationship between these two variables was also confirmed.

The feedback seeking variable from the leader's perspective, supports the idea of a shared leadership approach. Here, the leader actively seeks feedback from team members. This serves to align one's own and others' perceptions and the resulting benefits for oneself (Ashford, 1986; Ashford, 1989; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Gong et al., 2017; Guo et al., 2020; Lam et al., 2017). These conditions were already recognized by Anseel et al. (2015) in their meta-analysis, Stoker et al. (2012) and Qian et al. (2018) in their studies on transformative or empowering leadership and feedback seeking. In particular, the resulting support and accessibility of the leader, characterizes a shared leadership approach (Lam et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2020). Feedback seeking results in open communication, higher fairness, and more commitment of individual team members to (leadership) tasks (Sherf et al., 2021; Sherf & Morrison, 2020; Vandenberghe et al., 2021). This in turn promotes the degree of shared leadership (Chiu et al., 2016; J. Zhu et al., 2018).

Now that two variables for the possible emergence of shared leadership have been pointed out, it is important to examine the direct influence of the reciprocal relationship between shared leadership and trust on several levels of an organization.

At the team level, the most important factor is perceived team support (in this case from the perspective of the team leader), where the leader perceives how much the team cares about them and values their contribution (Bishop et al., 2000). This perceived support increases the provision of required resources by the leader and the perception of appreciation by the team (Bishop et al., 2000; Bishop et al., 2005; Pearce & Herbig, 2004). This support can come from the organization (see meta-analyses by Riggle et al. (2009); Kurtessis et al. (2017); and Rockstuhl et al. (2020); the leader (see meta-analysis by Edmondson and Boyer (2013)), or the team itself (see Becker et al. (2018), Pearce and Herbig (2004), and Sheng et al. (2010)). Since supportive behavior forms the basis of both shared leadership in the team and team trust, perceived team support strengthens the relationship of these variables (Drescher et al., 2014; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Sheng et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2020).

Another variable that could influence the relationship of shared leadership and trust at the organizational level is empowering leadership of middle managers. In the empowering leadership approach, a decentralization of the leader's power occurs, encouraging team members to intervene in the decision-making process and to act autonomously (Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018). Empowering and treating employees as equals in this way promotes both the degree of shared leadership and (organizational) trust (Ahearne et al., 2005; Han et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2013; Hoch, 2013; Lee et al., 2018; Zhang & Zhou, 2014).

In addition to empowering leadership, another interesting variable to examine the reciprocal relationship between shared leadership and trust in an organizational context is vision communication by top-management. Top-management has a great influence to motivate or demotivate its employees through (vision) communication and to give them a sense of purpose and meaning of the tasks (Brandts et al., 2015; Greer et al., 2012; Stam et al., 2014). When the degree of vision communication is high, this increases team members' initiative to take on tasks independently (Gajendran & Joshi, 2012; Greer et al., 2012; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1981). A positive influence on the reciprocal relationship between shared leadership and trust follows (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020).

In summary, these variables in combination provide an unexplored perspective on the emergence and direct influence of the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust at different levels of an organization. On this basis, I will now outline the research questions and theoretical models in the next chapter.

2.3 Central objectives of the dissertation and research questions

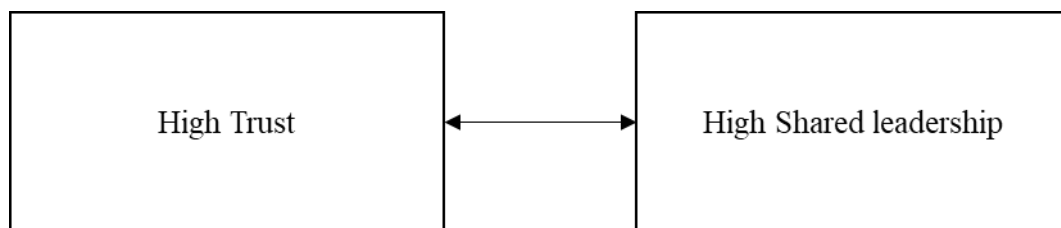
In general, our knowledge regarding the relation of shared leadership and trust is still limited (Zhu et al., 2018). Further research is needed in the context of shared leadership and trust at the team level, as shown by the studies of Ali et al. (2020), Boies et al. (2010), and Nicolaidis et al. (2014). The organizational level of shared leadership and trust also shows a big need for research, which needs to be addressed (Currall & Inkpen, 2002; Fischer et al., 2017; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020; Zhu et al., 2018).

Both in the shared leadership approach and in trust at team and organizational level, there is a certain risk dependency between the parties. Giving up leadership influ-

ence is a risk that requires trust. However, if the shared leadership influence is used constructively (in the sense of a common cause), trust increases (Gergen, 1969; Cropanzano et al., 2017). If this risk dependency is viewed positively, a risk appetite arises which promotes a shared leadership approach on the one hand and team trust or organizational trust on the other. In turn, a practiced shared leadership and a perceived high trust promotes risk appetite among the parties (Breuer et al., 2016). This demonstrated relationship (see Figure 1) can also be seen in a process that can be read both forward and backward:

Figure 1

Relationship between trust and shared leadership



For example, if there is a high level of trust in the team or in the organization, this increases the social exchange with other parties, the acceptance of mutual influence, and joint collaboration, which includes leadership tasks (Breuer et al., 2016; Mathieu et al., 2015; Morgeson et al., 2010). Through this, the parties are open to relinquish control and leadership and meet at eye level (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). The individual commitment of the parties increases, and each party is encouraged to bring new ideas into the joint work process and to contribute to the common goal achievement of its team or organization (Bergman et al., 2012). This behavior promotes a shared leadership approach and enables better work performance (Drescher et al., 2014; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017; Imam & Zaheer, 2021; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Shen & Chen, 2007; Wu et al., 2020). To get to the bottom of this theory on the

reciprocal relationship of the two variables, I pose the following initial research question:

Research Question 1: To what extent is there a reciprocal relationship between shared leadership and trust in the team and organizational context?

Away from analyzing the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust, looking at the antecedents and boundary conditions of these two constructs in particular is an interesting area of research, which is poorly explored at both levels (Fischer et al., 2017; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2018). As described earlier, at the team level, especially the influence of voice of the team and feedback seeking and perceived team support of the leader can have a lasting impact on this reciprocal relationship (Ali et al. (2020), Boies et al. (2010), Feitosa et al. (2020), Nicolaidis et al. (2014), and Qian et al., 2018; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Meanwhile, at the organizational level, a need for research emerges of the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust in conjunction with the boundary conditions of empowering leadership and vision communication of top-management (Ali et al., 2020; Pearce et al., 2019; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015; Venus et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020). Therefore, the second research question addresses the influence of boundary conditions on the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust at the team and organizational levels:

Research Question 2: Are there factors that shape (in terms of boundary conditions) or explain (in terms of mediating mechanisms) the relationship of shared leadership and trust at different organizational levels?

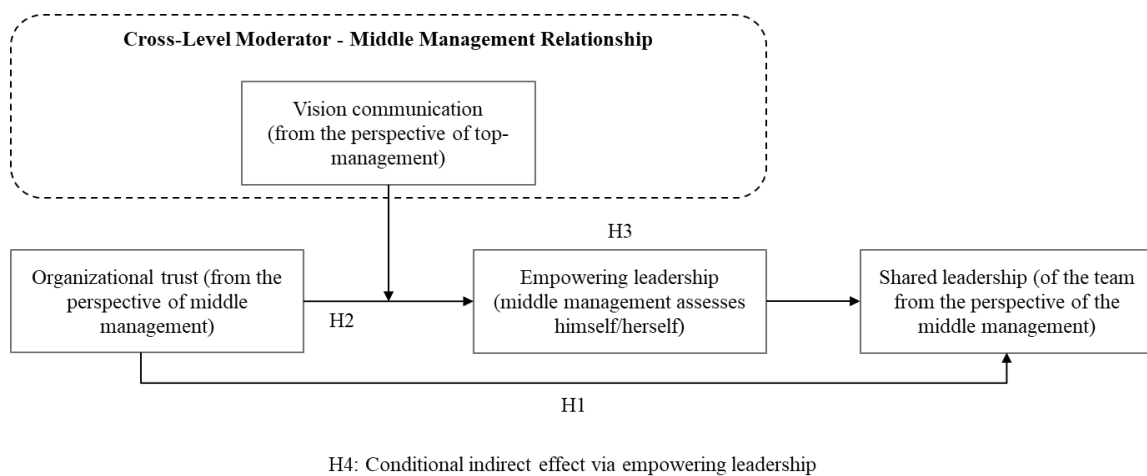
To answer these two research questions, two studies were conducted (see figure 2): The first study addresses research questions 1 and 2 in an organizational context. A

multilevel moderated mediation model is tested, with the indirect relationship between organizational trust and shared leadership mediated by empowering leadership and first-stage moderated by vision communication from top-management as a cross-level moderator. The second study addresses research questions 1 and 2 at the team level. Here, the relationship of voice of the team to team trust is mediated by shared leadership and moderated by a first-stage moderator feedback seeking of the leader and a second-stage moderator perceived team support of the team for the leader.

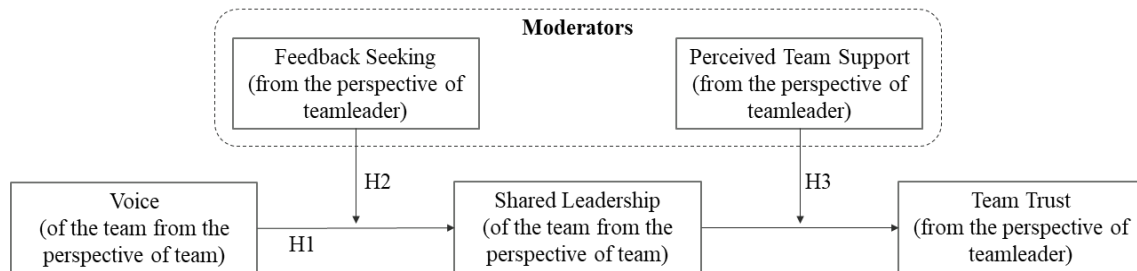
Figure 2

Research model of the dissertation

Study 1



Study 2



H4: Conditional indirect effect via shared leadership

Because these two studies were conducted with co-authors, a contributor role taxonomy on the roles and contributions of all authors (see table 1) is provided below (Brand et al., 2015). Both studies are currently in the process of submission to journals.

Table 1

Roles and contribution of the (co-)authors according to the contributor roles taxonomy

Team	Study 1			Study 2	
	MM	KK	CM	MM	KK
Conceptualization	X			X	
Methodology	X			X	
Formal Analysis	X			X	
Investigation	X			X	
Data Curation	X			X	
Writing – Original Draft	X			X	
Writing – Review & Editing	X	X		X	X
Supervision	X	X	X	X	X

Note. MM = Maximilian Marschalkowski, KK = Kai Klasmeier, CM = Catrin Millhoff.

2.4 Publication details

Study 1 (Chapter 3):

Organizational trust and shared leadership – A moderated mediation model at the top-management level (unveröffentlicht)

Authors:

Maximilian M. Marschalkowski, Kai N. Klasmeier, Catrin Millhoff

Abstract:

For organizations, the shift towards a modern leadership style is of great importance for organizational success. By integrating social exchange theory and upper echelon theory in a trickle-down model, we examine the indirect relationship between organizational trust and shared leadership via empowering leadership. We further predict that this indirect relationship is first-stage moderated by articulated vision of the top-management. The sample consist of 23 from top-managers and 73 from middle-level leaders from 23 organizations. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a multilevel analysis. We found significant positive associations between organizational trust and empowering leadership, and empowering leadership and shared leadership. In addition, there was a significant positive mediation of empowering leadership for the relationship between organizational trust and shared leadership. Moderated mediation by the addition of vision mediation could not be confirmed. Implications for theory, practice, and future research are presented.

Keywords: shared leadership, empowering leadership, organizational trust, vision communication, trickle-down-effect, top-management

Study 2 (Chapter 4):

Strengthening team trust through shared leadership: The role of voice, feedback seeking, and perceived team support (unveröffentlicht)

Authors:

Maximilian M. Marschalkowski, Kai N. Klasmeier

Abstract:

The rapidly changing times present organizations with new challenges. A leadership style that adapts to the circumstances is of high importance for organizational success. Drawing on followership theory and social exchange theory, we analyze the indirect relationship of team voice with leader trust in the team. Additionally, we assumed that this indirect relation will be first-stage moderated by leader feedback seeking and second-stage moderated by leader perceived team support. Our sample consists of 43 leaders and 125 team members. Data collection took place at two measurement points. We used a structural equation model to test our doubly moderated mediation model. We found a significant positive relation of voice on shared leadership. However, the two moderations and the conditional indirect effects in the overall model could not be confirmed. Implications for theory, practice and approaches for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Shared leadership, voice, team trust, feedback seeking, perceived team support, followership-theory

3 Study 1 – Organizational trust and shared leadership – A moderated mediation model at the top-management level

Authors: Maximilian M. Marschalkowski, Kai N. Klasmeier, Catrin Millhoff

Author contribution:

Maximilian M. Marschalkowski: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing, Supervision

Kai N. Klasmeier: Writing – Review & Editing, Supervision

Catrin Millhoff: Supervision

3.1 Introduction

Transformations are ubiquitous in the economic environment. Particularly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, organizations operating both nationally and internationally have sensed that their structures are outdated and that they need more flexibility with respect to organizational structures and leadership styles (Bapuji et al., 2020; Parker et. al, 2020). In order to meet these challenges, new types of leadership concepts are constantly emerging. One of these is the use of flattened hierarchies, as exemplified by the shared leadership approach (Zhu et al., 2018). In a shared leadership approach, the responsibility and leadership functions of a single leader are equally shared among all team members (Morgeson et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2018). With this approach organizations have the possibility to rethink their existing leadership style and develop a new corporate culture (Grote, 2012). Shared Leadership ensures the continued productivity and efficiency of team members by engaging each team member in decision making

processes, thus blurring the traditional distinction between the formal leader role and the follower role (Chiu et al., 2016; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

There has been an abundance of research about shared leadership and its antecedents in recent years. However, within the context of shared leadership antecedents, a significant research gap remains in the key area of organizational-level influence factors (Zhu et al., 2018) limiting our understanding about shared leadership antecedents beyond individual-level factors and team processes (Fischer et al., 2017; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020).

Recent theoretical and empirical work (e.g. Bligh et al., 2006; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020) has focused on interpersonal trust as important antecedent for shared leadership. Trust between team members and shared influence leads to higher productivity and faster achievement of the set goals (Carson et al., 2007). Whether the same is true for trust between the individual and the organization as a whole is not clear at the present. This highlighted the reference to organizational trust. It is defined as the degree to which an individual trusts an organization (Mayer et al., 1995; Pirson & Malhotra, 2011). Through this, as in the shared leadership approach, the risk taking and responsibility taking of an individual and a team is reinforced (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). For this reason, organizational trust of leaders is very important because leaders can either positively or negatively influence their team through their behavior. This reveals another research gap in connection with shared leadership (Currall & Inkpen, 2002; Fischer et al., 2017). Thus, trust needs to be analyzed in context of organization. To understand the relation between organizational trust and shared leadership, we consider the team leaders' empowering leadership style as mediating mechanism. In this context, little research has been done (Pearce et al., 2019; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015; Wu et al., 2020).

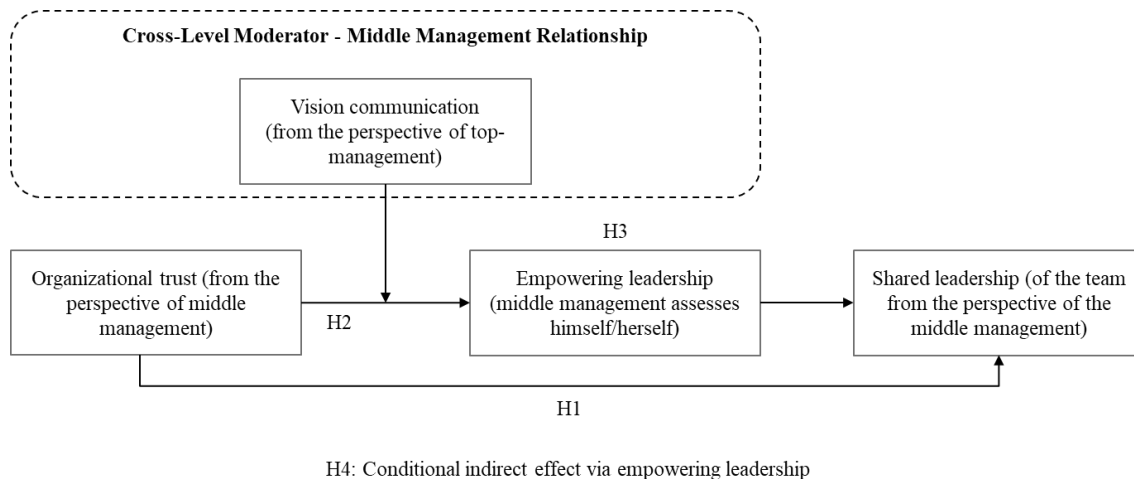
An empowering leadership style decentralizes the power of the leader and focuses on the team first (Wong & Giessner, 2018). The team is given more autonomy to take on responsibility themselves and thus various leadership functions (shared leadership) (Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018). As leader's organizational trust allows team leaders to relinquish more influence and control and be more risk-taking, can the team leader decentralize his/her power more easily and granting team members more autonomy, this reinforces the degree of empowering leadership. Therefore, this promotes the initiative in the team to take on more (leadership) tasks themselves and to act on an equal footing, which shared leadership increases (Hoch, 2013; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018).

Furthermore, we assume that vision communication at the top-management level is an important boundary condition for our mediation model (Venus et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2014). When a vision is well communicated, this motivates employees and solidifies their sense of purpose and meaning in their actions (Greer et al., 2012; Stam et al., 2014). Only when this good vision communication (here of the top-management) is present is the relationship between (organizational) trust and empowering leadership (here of the middle management itself) one level below strengthened and the team is willing to take more responsibility and allow a shared leadership approach. (Gajendran & Joshi, 2012; Greer et al., 2012; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1981). In this context, the inclusion of vision communication reveals another research gap. (Ali et al., 2020; Beyerlein et al., 2000; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus & De-Church, 2009; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Wang et al., 2014). In this context, vision communication sets the framework for higher-level leadership behavior. A common purpose and a sense of identity and connection create an influence on shared leadership, empowering leadership, and organizational

trust. This makes vision communication into a relevant contextual factor (Ahearne et al., 2005; Brandts et al., 2015; Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018). Thus, we consider vision communication to be a first-stage cross-level-moderator of the indirect relation between organizational trust and shared leadership via empowering leadership.

In this context, our study makes three important contributions to the shared leadership literature. First, it will enhance the understanding of trust and shared leadership in an organizational context, building on the studies by Klasmeier and Rowold (2020), Engel Small, and Rentsch (2010), and the meta-analysis by Uslu and Oklay (2015), which have focused primarily on the individual or team level. Second, this study provides a new perspective on the antecedents and boundary conditions of shared leadership and organizational trust, extending those the research of Fischer et al. (2017), Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo (2020), and Zhu et al. (2018). Third this study focuses on the antecedents of empowering leadership and vision communication in organizational contexts to extend previous research in this field (Pearce et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020; Venus et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2014).

The theoretical model is given below (see figure 3):

Figure 3*Theoretical model***3.2 Theory, hypotheses, and research question****3.2.1 Shared leadership**

In contrast to the formerly widespread basic idea of leadership as unidirectional influence from a single individual, shared leadership forms the counterpart in the modern era and describes leadership as an emergent team interaction, where the leadership tasks and influence in the team are shared among the team members (Zhu et al., 2018). Both control and enforcement of work commitments rest with each team member (Chiu et al., 2016). Employee development and motivation is placed first, with the management of employee resources also included in the area of shared leadership. This includes employee training and coaching by experienced team members. The procurement, allocation, and coordinated use of material resources is also divided among the team members (Drescher et al., 2014; Klein et al., 2006). Morgeson et al. (2010) list the central tasks of shared leadership in a transition and action phase as follows: The transition phase describes the process toward shared leadership. In it, the selection of a team comes first. The focus is on team members who can function as a unit, defying unfore-

seen events and confront any situation that arises through a cooperative and trusting relationship. Building on this foundation, the definition of a mission emerges. The next step is the planning and structuring of the project and the development of the team. The transition phase ends with the feedback process, in which they reflect on what has happened and compare it to their earlier expectations of the process. This is followed by the action phase, which is characterized by active intervention in the process. Here, the manager is part of the team and collaborates on a team task. In this way, a bond is created internally, which is transported externally to the organization. This phase also focuses on the feedback and exchange process between the team members. The team thus acquires an independent leadership function and can exist autonomously, even in the case of interpersonal conflicts (Morgeson et al., 2010). The character and behavior of team members in a shared leadership team are characterized by active influence on the project, accountability in case of non-compliance with rules, intensive communication (information search, structuring, and interpretation) between team members, and acceptance of suggestions for improvement of the common project (Aime et al., 2014). This approach to working enables the team to develop new processes and reach goals in more efficient ways (Drescher et al., 2014) more quickly. Intense research on various forms of shared leadership (informal leadership, distributed leadership, collective leadership, team leadership, and peer leadership) in recent years highlight the relevance of these topics, e.g. the better performance resulting from shared leadership (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Nicolaidis et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Zhang & Zhou, 2014).

3.2.2 The relation between organizational trust and shared leadership

The relationship between shared leadership and trust at the individual and team level has previously been examined in several studies (Burke et al., 2007; Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010). For example, Klasmeier and Rowold (2020) found a positive rela-

tionship between interpersonal trust and shared leadership at the individual and team level. In this context, trust increases the behavior of risk-taking and thus increases shared leadership. A high degree of trust in the team strengthens the commitment of the individual to take on more processes in the collaboration independently, which is a characteristic of the shared leadership approach. This in turn promotes the work performance and the output of a team (Drescher et al., 2014; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017; Shen & Chen, 2007; Wu et al., 2020).

The same phenomenon of risk taking and assumption of responsibility at both the individual and team level arises when an individual has a high trust in their organization (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Organizational trust is defined as the degree to which an individual trusts an organization (Mayer et al., 1995; Pirson & Malhotra, 2011). All positive perceptions regarding the behavior of an organization from the individual's point of view are included in the concept of organizational trust, which also includes a risk of non-fulfillment (Colquitt et al., 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2013). As research could show, individuals can differentiate the various forms of perceived trust (individual, group, organizational) for themselves (Tekleab & Chiaburu, 2011; Yang & Mossholder, 2010). The degree of organizational trust is linked to the behavior of individuals in the organization, such as the direct manager or top-management (Gaur et al., 2011). The behavior of these actors thereby forms a reputation in relation to the organization (Fombrun & Gardberg, 2000). If an organization's behavior can be judged as correct from the individual's perspective, the level of organizational trust increases (Colquitt et al., 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2013). This highlights the responsibility placed on key stakeholders (direct managers and top-management) for determining organization behavior (Gaur et al., 2011). If the organizational trust of these stakeholders is not high, they will pass this feeling on to their team members and a negative spiral will result. If these ac-

tors behave sincerely and have a high degree of organizational trust themselves, the overall organizational trust increases (Gaur et al., 2011).

Social exchange theory states that social interaction occurs sequentially as an exchange between two or more actors (Cropanzano et al., 2017). A reciprocal exchange of resources occurs, with one actor repaying the positive or negative acts of the other (Gergen, 1969). Unlike economic exchange, social exchange is endowed with accompanying openness, trust, and flexibility (Jiing-Lih Farh et al., 1990). Furthermore, Hambrick and Mason's (1984) upper-echelon theory states that the characteristics and experiences of top-management affect various strategic decisions and outcomes of an organization (Neely et al., 2020). In this context, the factors of social exchange theory and upper-echelon theory form the cornerstone of the trickle-down effect of team leaders' trust in their organization on their teams' shared leadership behavior. This states that the lower level in a hierarchy adopts the behavior of the upper hierarchy level (Bass et al., 1987; Mihalache et al., 2014).

We hypothesize a positive relation of organizational trust with shared leadership that spans multiple levels in the organization and can be illuminated using a trickle-down lens: When team leaders experience their organization as trustworthy, they should likely engage in risk-taking behavior (see Mayer et al., 1995). Based on social exchange, upper-echelon theory, and the research of Dirks & Ferrin (2001), this readiness for risk-taking behavior and assumption of responsibility should further extend towards the team, which in turn should engage in shared leadership and thus reinforces this leadership style. This leads to the following first hypothesis:

H1a: Organizational trust of the team leader is positively related to shared leadership behavior of the team on level 1 (team/team leader level).

H1b: Organizational trust of the team leader is positively related to shared leadership behavior of the team on level 2 (organizational level).

3.2.3 Mediation through empowering leadership

Given that organizational trust is an important prerequisite for team leaders to release control and share influence, this risk-taking behavior should increase the level of empowering leadership and thus may lead to more shared leadership (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Like organizational trust and shared leadership, the construct of empowering leadership has already been dealt with several times in recent research at the individual and team level (e.g. Hoch, 2013; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). In the empowering leadership approach, the power of the leader is decentralized. Team members help shape the decision-making process and are encouraged to contribute their own ideas to the workday and to act autonomously in their tasks (Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018). This strengthens trust in the team and makes the working process more efficient (Ahearne et al., 2005). Positive outcomes that also result from practicing empowering leadership are seen at both the individual and organizational levels (Keller & Dansereau, 1995; Raub & Robert, 2010; Srivastava, 2006; Zhang, 2010). The involvement of employees on an equal footing with the manager, which is a cornerstone of the shared leadership approach, evokes a positive correlation between empowering leadership and shared leadership. This positive correlation was also recognized by Hoch (2013). In order to further explore shared leadership, other antecedents and boundary conditions, such as empowering leadership, need to be included in the consideration (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015; Wu et al., 2020). As a facilitator, empowering leadership has been used more often in research related to shared leadership (Ensley et al., 2006; Gao et al., 2011; Magni & Maruping, 2013; Mathieu et al., 2007; van Dijke et al.,

2012), this makes it interesting to consider the use of empowering leadership as a mediator.

In terms of leadership and trust, the construct trust can be seen as a key mechanism that reinforces a positive impact of leadership (including empowering and shared leadership) on an output such as performance (Legood et al., 2020). Forms of empowering leadership, such as decentralizing power and engaging team members, create greater trust, which makes processes more efficient (Ahearne et al., 2005; Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018).

As the available studies show, there is a reciprocal influence between empowering leadership and shared leadership and between empowering leadership and trust, partly organizational trust (Han et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2018; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). Given that in the leader's organizational trust the team leader is more risk-taking, therefore decentralizing his power more easily and granting team members more autonomy, these characteristics of the empowering leadership style promote the initiative in the team to take on more (leadership) tasks themselves and to act on an equal footing. This should consequently increase the degree of shared leadership in the team. Therefore, we arrive at the following two hypotheses:

H2a: Organizational trust of the team leader is positively related to empowering leadership behavior of the team leader on level 1 (team/team leader level).

H2b: Organizational trust of the team leader is positively related to empowering leadership behavior of the team leader on level 2 (organizational level).

H3a: Empowering leadership of the team leader mediates the positive relation of organizational trust of the team leader and shared leader behavior of the team on level 1 (team/team leader level).

H3b: Empowering leadership of the team leader mediates the positive relation of organizational trust of the team leader and shared leader behavior of the team on level 2 (organizational level).

3.2.4 Moderation through vision communication

A good communication by the leader (e.g. of one's own vision) is motivating for one's own team and thus conveys a sense of purpose and meaning of the tasks (Greer et al., 2012; Stam et al., 2014). In this context, a top-manager's communication of vision has a great influence of desirable behavior in the organization (Brandts et al., 2015). The leader uses communication as a strategic tool and controls their own team with what he/she says (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Gerpott et al., 2019). When this communication works, a higher level of trust is created in the team and in the manager (Joseph & Winston, 2005). In case of poor communication (e.g. of the vision), among other things, this can lead to confusion and worse output of the team (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; House & Howell, 1992). Information cannot be exchanged in a target-oriented manner and team members do not take the initiative to take on tasks independently (Gajendran & Joshi, 2012; Greer et al., 2012; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1981). Consequently, the degree of shared leadership is significantly reduced (Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020). Through a shared purpose in vision communication, which is an important component of the shared leadership approach (Bligh et al., 2006; Pearce & Conger, 2003), the level of shared leadership will be enhanced (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Above all, the communication of a vision is critically important. The vision describes a picture of the future that is tangible for an organization, a team, and every employee. It should motivate employees to follow it and support it (Ateş et al., 2020; Griffin et al., 2010; Stam et al., 2014; Westley & Mintzberg, 1989). In this context, the vision includes strategic components, higher-level

goals, and ambitions that are not always fulfilled (Stam et al., 2014). By properly good communicating a vision, it can connect with the team, increase performance and attitude (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Stam et al., 2010a, 2010b; Venus et al., 2013), and create a sense of identity (Venus et al., 2019). By properly bad communicating it can be seen as redundant (Gerpott et al., 2019; Greer et al., 2012). Through this sense of identity and connectedness, a readiness to decentralize the leader's power and support team members' autonomy emerges from the leader's organizational trust (Ahearne et al., 2005; Pearce et al., 2003; Wong & Giessner, 2018), which contributes to a higher level of empowering leadership.

Therefore, we argue that through the communication of the vision through the top-management, a shared/organizational purpose is disseminated and thus the middle-level leaders receive a clear goal to which they can align their actions. If this goal is clear, they can also align their leadership behavior more closely to it, so that the combination of organizational trust and vision results in more empowering leadership and, accordingly, more shared leadership. This creates rewarding interdependent transactions and strengthens teamwork in the sense of social exchange theory. In the wake of the preceding hypotheses, the following final hypothesis emerge:

H4a: Vision communication by the top-management is a first-stage cross-level-moderator of the indirect relation of organizational trust and shared leadership via empowering leadership. In case of higher/stronger vision communication, this positive indirect relation should be stronger on level 1 (team/team leader level).

H4b: Vision communication by the top-management is a first-stage cross-level-moderator of the indirect relation of organizational trust and shared leadership via empowering leadership. In case of higher/stronger vision communication,

this positive indirect relation should be stronger on level 2 (organizational/CEO level).

3.3 Method

3.3.1 Sample and research design

We invited representatives of the top-management as well as leaders from the middle-level management (i.e., team leaders) to fill-in an online survey at one measurement point. Participants were informed about the purpose of the data collection and could receive a feedback report as an incentive. If the participants had not yet responded after three and seven days, we sent e-mail reminders to participants who had not responded to the survey after three and additionally seven days. In the survey of the top-management, participants were asked about their own vision communication and demographic variables. In the second survey, the team leaders were asked about the degree of organizational trust, their own empowering leadership, shared leadership behavior of their team, and demographic variables. Of 26 invited top-managers and 82 team leaders, we received 23 responses from top-management and 73 responses from middle management.

The respondents from top-management were 86 % male ($M = 1.86$, $SD = .36$), and were on average 47 years old ($M = 47.29$, $SD = 7.42$). A majority had a university degree (78 %) and 97 % were employed full-time. Organizational tenure was 8 years on average ($M = 7.64$, $SD = 5.68$).

Middle management respondents were 72 % male ($M = 1.72$, $SD = .45$) and had a mean age of 42 ($M = 42.45$, $SD = 8.48$). A university degree had 78 % and 100 % were employed full-time. Organizational tenure averaged 6.75 years ($M = 6.75$, $SD = 6.69$) and team tenure averaged 4.5 years ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 7.35$). The teams consisted of

an average of 4.13 members and came from various nationally and internationally active organizations headquartered in Germany.

The most frequently mentioned industry is electronic data processing and IT services with 43 %, followed by energy industry/utilities, insurance and financial services and consulting services with 14 % each, followed by manufacturing with 10 % and healthcare with 5 %. The respective organization size of the respondents was between 10 and 49 employees in 10 % of the cases, between 50 and 249 in 5 %, between 250 and 5000 in 76 % and larger than 5000 in 10 % of the cases.

3.3.2 Measures

Organizational trust. The 7 items of Robinson & Rousseau (1994) scale were used to measure organizational trust. Team leaders indicated their organizational trust on a 5-point likert scale ranged from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). An example item was "My employer is open and sincere with me." The internal consistency of the items here was $\alpha = .89$. Finally, we calculated the intraclass correlations (ICC). This measured the degree of agreement between the team leaders in the same organization (Bliese, 2000). For organizational trust, the ICC1 value was .26 and ICC2 value was .53.

Shared leadership. The 10 items of Morgeson et. al (2010) scale were used to measure shared leadership. Team leaders rated shared leadership behavior of their team on a 5-point likert scale ranged from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). An example item was "My team plans and structures its work.". The internal consistency of the items here was $\alpha = .86$. For shared leadership, the ICC1 value was .30 and ICC2 value was .59.

Empowering leadership. To measure the degree of empowering leadership, the 14 items of Arnold et. al (2000) were used. Team leaders rated their own empowering leadership behavior on a 5-point likert scale ranged from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). An example item was "I work as hard as any other person on my team.". The internal consistence of the items here was $\alpha = .85$. For empowering leadership, the ICC1 value was .43 and ICC2 value was .71.

Vision communication. To measure vision communication, we used 5 items from Rowold & Poethke's (2017) transformational leader scale (i.e., subscale "vision"). Top-managers rated the items on a 5-point likert scale ranged from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). An example item was "I inspire others through my vision of the future.". The internal consistency of the items here was $\alpha = .79$.

3.3.3 Statistical analysis strategy

The software R (Version 4.1.2, R Core Team, 2021) was used to analyze the data. We used multilevel analysis to account for the nested data structure of team leaders (level 1) nested within top-managers (level 2) (see Hox et al., 2010). To examine the cross-level-interaction effect, we estimated a random-slope of the relation of organizational trust on empowering leadership at level 1 on which we analyzed the cross-level influence of vision (see Aguinis et al., 2013). For the mediation analysis, we applied a quasi-Bayesian Monte-Carlo estimation for significance testing of the indirect effect using the mediation-package (Tingley et al., 2014).

Following recommendations of Enders & Tofighi (2007), we centered the level 1 data on the respective group mean, and added the aggregated group means of our level 1 variables at level 2. Both descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix were created

with two control variables (age and team size) and the model constructs of organizational trust, shared leadership, empowering leadership, and vision communication.

3.4 Results

Table 2 shows the mean values, standard deviations and intercorrelations. All main variables correlate significantly and positively with each other, which provides an initial supportive basis for our hypotheses. In the following illustrations and calculations, the control variables are not listed, as they have no significant influence on the main variables and hypotheses (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
Organizational trust	4.30	.68		.40***	.36**
Empowering leadership	4.43	.38	.79***		.55***
Shared leadership	4.26	.45	.64**	.67***	
Vision communication	4.26	.45	.41'	.44*	.38'

Note. Team-level correlations are presented below the diagonal ($N = 23$); individual-level correlations are presented above the diagonal ($N = 73$). ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

3.4.1 Direct effects

By using multilevel analysis, a significant positive influence of organizational trust on shared leadership (H1a and H1b) could not be confirmed at L1 and L2 level (see results in table 3). A significant positive influence of organizational trust on empowering leadership (H2a and H2b) was demonstrated at both L1 and L2 levels, which confirms hypothesis 2 (see results in Table 6). It is noticeable that the influence at the

organizational level (L2) is significantly stronger than at the team/team leader level (L1).

Table 3

Results of multilevel analysis on the direct influence of organizational trust and empowering leadership on shared leadership (Hypothesis tested on L1 and L2 level)

Parameter	β	(SE)
Fixed effects		
Intercept	1.28	(.78)
Organizational Trust L1	.10	(.08)
Organizational Trust L2	.19	(.18)
Empowering Leadership L1	.62***	(.16)
Empowering Leadership L2	.49	(.28)
Random effects		
AIC		72.95
BIC		88.98
Log. Likelihood		-29.47
Residual variance		.10
Residual intercept		.02

Note. AIC = Akaike-Information-Criterion; BIC = Bayesian-Information-Criterion; L1 = team/team leader level; L2 = organizational/CEO level. $N = 22$ teams. Results are standardized coefficients. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

3.4.2 Moderating and mediating effects

The mediation hypothesis that organizational trust is mediated by empowering leadership from the middle manager's self-assessment and has a positive influence on

shared leadership from the middle manager's perspective was significantly confirmed at L1 and marginal support at L2 levels (see table 4 and 5 for results).

Table 4

Results of multi-level analysis on the dynamic relationship of organizational trust, empowering leadership, and shared leadership at L1 level

Parameter	Estimate	95 % CI Lower	95 % CI Upper	p-value
ACME	.12	.03	.24	.00**
Total effect	.23	.06	.40	.01**
Prop. Mediated	.53	.15	1.52	.01*

Note. ACME = Indirect effect of organizational trust via empowering leadership on shared leadership; $N = 22$ teams. Results are standardized coefficients. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5

Results of multilevel analysis on the dynamic relationship of organizational trust, empowering leadership, and shared leadership at L2 level

Parameter	Estimate	95 % CI Lower	95 % CI Upper	p-value
ACME	.25	-.02	.57	.07'
Total effect	.23	.21	.68	.00***
Prop. Mediated	.53	-.05	1.58	.07'

Note. ACME = Indirect effect of organizational trust via empowering leadership on shared leadership; $N = 22$ teams. Results are standardized coefficients. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The moderation hypothesis (top-management's vision communication moderates the positive relationship between organizational trust from the middle manager's per-

spective and empowering leadership from the middle manager's self-assessment) could not be significantly confirmed as the cross-level interaction effect was not significant (see results in table 6, $B = -.11$, $p > .05$). This also results in a rejection of the overall model hypothesis 4.

Table 6

Results of multilevel analysis on the dynamic relationship of organizational trust, vision, and empowering leadership (Hypothesis tested on L1 and L2 level)

Parameter	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)	β	(SE)
Fixed effects								
Intercept	2.22***	(.38)	2.40***	(.35)	2.52***	(.39)	2.49***	(.39)
Organizational Trust L1	.20**	(.06)	.14	(.08)	.11	(.08)	.11	(.08)
Organizational Trust L2	.51***	(.09)	.47***	(.08)	.45***	(.09)	.46***	(.09)
Vision					.03	(.04)	.04	(.04)
Organizational Trust L1 X Vision L2							-.11	(.07)
Random effects								
AIC	44.54		43.13		47.78		51.30	
BIC	56.00		59.17		65.76		71.54	
Log. Likelihood	-17.27		-14.57		-15.89		-16.65	
Residual variance	.07		.06		.06		.06	
Residual intercept	.01		.02		.01		.01	
Diff. residual variance			.01		.00		.00	
Diff. residual intercept			-.01		.01		.00	

Note. AIC = Akaike-Information-Criterion; BIC = Bayesian-Information-Criterion; L1 = team/team leader level; L2 = organizational/CEO level.

N = 22 teams. Results are standardized coefficients. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

3.5 Discussion

In our model, we assumed a direct positive influence of organizational trust on empowering leadership and shared leadership. This could only be confirmed in the case of empowering leadership. This showed, on the one hand, that the relationship of organizational trust and shared leadership was mediated by empowering leadership on both levels (team and organization). On the other hand, a significant positive moderation of the relationship of organizational trust on empowering leadership through vision communication could not be confirmed. The overarching moderated mediation of the overall model was thus also not confirmed.

3.5.1 Theoretical implications

First, this study extends the research of the antecedents of shared leadership in the organizational context. By confirming the mediation hypothesis, we found an indirect positive effect of organizational trust on shared leadership via empowering leadership. This relationship between organizational trust and shared leadership confirms previous research between trust or team trust and shared leadership than was previously known at the individual or team level (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010). As Uslu and Oklay's (2015) meta-analysis showed, our study also demonstrates a positive relationship between organizational trust and shared leadership. Furthermore, the boundary conditions empowering leadership and vision communication receive an expanded consideration in the organizational context through this study, filling the research gaps raised by Pearce et al. (2019), Wu et al. (2020), Venus et al. (2019), and Wang et al. (2014).

Second, the choice of sample is important. Both Klasmeier and Rowold (2020) and Engel Small and Rentsch (2010) referred to the individual or team level of shared

leadership antecedents. Our study extends these research by including top-management (i.e., CEOs) and middle management (i.e., team leaders). This provides a new view on the higher-level antecedents of shared leadership. We found a mediation effect at both team and organizational levels. Especially at the organizational level, this extends the research, as it is now obvious that high organizational trust overall leads to higher degrees of shared leadership across different teams in an organization. Furthermore, the industry is relevant, as e.g. Joseph and Winston (2005), Pearce et al. (2005) and Engel Small and Rentsch (2010) conducted their research on (organizational) trust, (shared) leadership and communication of leadership in an educational institution. Our sample, on the other hand, consists of individuals in the private sector in both national and international contexts, thus providing an economic view of these variables.

Third, this study extends research on the trickle-down effect. This has been little studied so far, such as in the study by Bormann and Diebig (2021). Although no cross-level moderation could be confirmed in the present study, there was still a significant correlation of the variables at both levels. Therefore, the present study represents an added value in the traceability of the trickle-down effect in the direct relationship between top-management and middle management. This study also extends the current research on shared leadership and organizational trust in terms of extended social exchange. A social exchange at the top-level addresses a response at lower organizational levels, which in turn influences the following levels below (Cropanzano et. al, 2017; Jiing-Lih Farh et al., 1990).

3.5.2 Practical/Managerial implications

Through the results of this study, several implications can be derived for organizations and leaders, especially those at the upper levels. Top-management must be

aware that their actions have a major impact on the employees of the organization. It is not only their direct environment that is affected, but several levels below them due to the trickle-down effect (Bormann & Diebig, 2021). Furthermore, leaders need to be aware that a high degree of organizational trust climate promotes an empowering leadership style at lower hierarchical levels (e.g. team level). By empowering their teams in terms of decentralization and autonomy, team leaders can facilitate shared leadership in their teams. This type of leadership (including shared leadership) in turn promotes the work performance of their teams (Drescher et al., 2014). Thus, leaders should not only focus on goal achievement, but should give equal weight to task- vs person-oriented, such as organizational trust and empowering their team members in terms of task and leadership responsibilities.

3.5.3 Limitations and future directions/research

There are also limitations in this study that provide starting points for future research. First, this study used a sample consisting of 23 individuals from top-management and 73 from middle management. This sample was collected from six different industries in the private sector and had a proportion of academics and a male gender of 80 % on average, which may limit external validity and generalizability of our findings. Future studies may replicate our findings with larger and more heterogeneous sample to proof their robustness. Another way is to conduct the survey in a single organization (e.g. Kukenberger and D'Innocenzo (2020)) to get a more nuanced view of an industry. To further analyze the trickle-down effect in a sample, there is the possibility for future research to include one or more additional levels of an organization in the survey as well (Bormann & Diebig, 2021). This results mainly from the fact that the assessment of the degree of shared leadership was made from the perspective of middle

management, which reduces self-serving bias, but informal leadership behavior is not always perceived by the formal manager (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Second, our research design of a cross-sectional study strictly precludes the possibility to draw causal inferences. Due to the questionnaires conducted at one point in time of measurement, there is a possibility that individuals will incorporate events from the near present into their answers to a greater extent than events from the more distant past (recency effect) (Atkinson et al., 1968). In addition, the paper-pencil method used, with subsequent receipt of a feedback report, creates the possibility for participant deception (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although anonymity of participants is guaranteed, after reviewing the questions, participants can guess the logic of the answer choices and positively manipulate them for their own personal benefit, creating a common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Klapper et al., 2009). To address these issues in future research, it is advisable that surveys be distributed at multiple measurement points for a temporal consideration of the mediational framework (see Chen et al., 2011; McArdle, 2009). Also, one option is to use a simulation game like the one used by Engel Small and Rentsch (2010) to analyze the interaction of participants over a longer period of time. Through these deeper analyses, a behavioral observation of the individuals is possible, which not only allows the conclusion of the expression of the variables organizational trust, empowering leadership, vision sharing and shared leadership, but likewise its emergence and individual commitment to e.g. the pursuit of leadership responsibility in projects (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Last, the relationship of variables provides another opportunity for future research. In this study, the influence of organizational trust on shared leadership including mediation and facilitation effects was investigated. There is an opportunity here to take a closer look at other organizational variables, such as the need of power, the need of control and the efficiency of the leader (Sharma & Kirkman 2015; Zhu et

al., 2018) or the personality of the top-management (e.g. big five personality traits by Rammstedt & John (2005)).

3.6 Conclusion

This study adds to the understanding higher-level antecedents and boundary conditions of shared leadership. Particularly, we found that organizational trust has a significant positive and indirect relation with shared leadership via empowering leadership. Although our work did not confirm the effect of vision communication as a cross-level moderator. Thus, this study offers new insights into the research on organizational trust as organizational-level correlate of shared leadership and contributes to our understanding of shared leadership from a multilevel perspective.

4 Study 2 – Strengthening team trust through shared leadership: The role of voice, feedback seeking, and perceived team support

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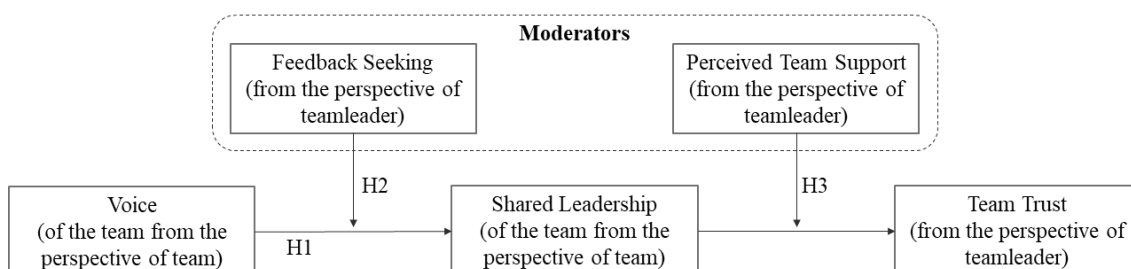
4.1 Introduction

Collaboration in teams and organizations has evolved. The Covid-19 pandemic in particular was greatly accelerated the flexibility of work location and working time models (Bapuji et al., 2020). As a result, hierarchical leadership models have been replaced by collaborative and more lateral team settings (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Alongside these developments, the shared leadership approach becomes increasingly important. This approach describes a leadership setting in which leadership responsibilities are equally shared among all members of a team parallel to the formal leadership authority of the team leader (Zhu et al., 2018). Each team members is given the opportunity to help shape their team's work processes and outcomes (Chiu et al., 2016). In this context, the consequences of shared leadership have already been analyzed, yet there is still a gap in research on the antecedents of shared leadership (Zhu et al., 2018). Notably, Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) addressed these antecedents in their study considering the followership theory. In followership theory, one party follows another party, regardless of its level, and supports it in achieving its goals (Carsten et al., 2014; Baker, 2007).

If followers can also influence their leader, further research is needed to determine the extent to which they influence the leader and how this affects leadership style and its antecedents (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In context Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) divided antecedents of followership into five categories: Followership and leadership characteristics, followership and leadership behaviors, and followership outcomes. In doing so, they developed two theoretical framework models (reversing the lens and the leadership process) and recommended that these be examined in specified or modified form in future studies (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). We focus on an adaptive type of the leadership process, which is a dynamic process, where leaders and followers act together to followership, leadership, and its outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In our study, we chose voice of the team and feedback seeking of the leader as constructs for the followership and leadership behaviors. Voice describes the active expression of the team towards the leader (Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). Feedback seeking is the active search and action of a person to deal with his or her self-image and external image to use this for further action (Ashford, 1986; Ashford, 1989; Gong et al., 2017; Lam et al., 2017). Both of these constructs encourage sharing behaviors and stepping out of the actual work role (Detert & Burris, 2007; van Dyne et al., 2003). Team members become more engaged and take on more tasks in the team. In these circumstances shared leadership approaches can be particularly effective. However, if team members show voice but the leader is not interested in feedback, engagement, or the opportunity to take a shared leadership approach will not result (Carson et al., 2007; Chiu et al., 2016; Detert & Burris, 2007; Lam et al., 2017; Qian et al., 2018; Stahl et al., 2010; Vandenberghe et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2018). Nicolaidis et al. (2014) have also recently highlighted these two constructs as possible antecedents of shared leadership. Qian et al. (2018) further suggest that asking for feedback more frequently causes the leader to

relinquish autonomy and power which may manifest in shared leadership (Qian et al., 2018). As Leader Characteristics (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), we choose perceived team support from the leader's perspective. Here, the team leader perceives the team as supportive, values the input of each team member and helps satisfy individual needs (Bishop et al., 2000; Bishop et al., 2005). This perceived state helps the team leader voluntarily engage in a dependency relationship, thus relinquishing control and sharing tasks (Jong et al., 2007; Sheng et al., 2010). In order for a team leader to complete his or her tasks, he or she needs support from his or her other team members. This creates a benevolent relationship, which relates to higher team trust from the leader's perspective (Jong et al., 2007; Sheng et al., 2010). So, we choose team trust from the leader's perspective as our followership outcome.

In this context, our study makes three important contributions to the literature on shared leadership. First, this study provides a new perspective on shared leadership antecedents and boundary conditions and illuminates the interplay of team voice behaviour and feedback seeking of the team leader (compare Ali et al. (2020), Boies et al. (2010), Feitosa et al. (2020), Nicolaidis et al. (2014), and Qian et al., 2018). Second, it extends the approach of Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) and integrates shared leadership into followership theory. By adopting this theoretical lens, we can provide new insights about the relation of leaders and their teams in a shared leadership setting. Third, we can expand previous research regarding the shared leadership-trust relationship by focussing on the team leader as trustor. This can provide new insights about how leaders react to shared leadership on a relation level and whether their reaction hinges on further conditions (i.e., perceived team support). Our theoretical model is summarized in Figure 4.

Figure 4*Theoretical model*

H4: Conditional indirect effect via shared leadership

4.2 Theory, hypotheses, and research question

Our theoretical basis for our research model is grounded in followership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This theory states that leaders and followers assume roles created by specific individuals or a team in an organization. In this process, multiple individuals actively follow a leader in a reciprocal social process (Baker, 2007). In this context there does not always have to be a hierarchical relationship between the leader and the team, but a leader can also follow the team members as in the shared leadership approach (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2018). Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) echo this theory in their paper and develop two theoretical frameworks (reversing the lens and the leadership process) for analyzing followership. In this study, we focus on an adaptive type of leadership process. This states that followers and leaders act together to shape followership, leadership, and its outcomes in a dynamic process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Leading and following behaviors thereby actively affect the output of a joint effort and are mediated by leadership style. In our study, we take this model from Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) and extend it with the leadership characteristics also listed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) as a second moderator between leadership style and the output.

4.2.1 Shared leadership

The shared leadership approach describes a mutual, evenly distributed, and collective influence process of members of a team (Wu et al., 2020). Leadership and responsibility in the team are shared among each other and this informal source of team leadership can occur parallel to hierarchical leadership (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Morgeson et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2018). Both the completion of tasks and its control are now the responsibility of the entire team (Chiu et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2018). This single-level exchange results in specific tasks in the team, which can be divided into a transition and action phase. Here, both team selection, mission definition, project planning and structuring, further development, and counteracting problematic situations through open communication and regular feedback cycles are important (Morgeson et al., 2010). Another task is the handling and management of intangible (including team member development) and tangible resources (including procurement, utilization, and control) (Drescher et al., 2014). Above all, the tracking of common processes and tasks and the responsibility drawing (including application) of improvement suggestions distinguish a team with a shared leadership approach (Aime et al., 2014). Through this approach, a higher efficiency is created to achieve the envisioned goals and to evoke a new way of thinking about work (Drescher et al., 2014). The amount of meta-analyses published in recent years on this topic highlight the increasing interest in shared leadership and its root causes (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Nicolaidis et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020; Zhang & Zhou, 2014).

4.2.2 The relation between voice and shared leadership

Previous research has already examined various leadership styles (ethical leadership (Chen & Hou, 2016; Huang & Paterson, 2017; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Zhu et al., 2015), transformational leadership (Detert & Burris, 2007; Duan et al, 2017;

Liang et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2010), participative leadership and shared leadership (Ali et al., 2020), traditional Chinese leadership (Li & Sun, 2015), empowering leadership examined in the context of voice (Raub & Robert, 2013).

In this context, voice is seen as a means of communication between the team and the team leader and allows the team to constructively criticize the way they work or to drive decision-making together with the team leader and to take on leadership tasks themselves (Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Wu et al., 2020). Leaders in particular are focused on promoting the level of voice in their own team (Morrison, 2011). In this context, voice is a voluntary good that is mainly exercised by committed team members who want to improve the work situation (Frese & Fay, 2001). In a team environment, voice describes team members' influence on their own performance of their tasks and goals. It is often combined with participative and exchange-related behaviors (Seers, 1996). These exchanges succeed in incorporating team members personal knowledge into the work process (Liu et al., 2013), improving team engagement and decision making, among other things (Carson et al., 2007). In addition, voice can also elicit a negative response, especially from the leader. When a leader or work style is criticized, the leader may feel personally attacked and consequently respond with interpersonal rejection and workplace sanctions (Milliken et al., 2003). One leadership style that benefits from such behavior itself is the shared leadership approach (Ali et al., 2020). Especially the internal interaction within the team is of high significance. This interaction in the team was defined by Carson et al. (2007) in three criteria: social support, common goal, and voice. When there is a high level of these three criteria, it reinforces the degree of shared leadership (Carson et al., 2007; Daspit et al., 2013; Serban & Roberts, 2016). This relationship is also confirmed by Stahl et al. (2010). In the latter's study, positive team interaction resulted in

higher levels of shared leadership. The meta-analysis by Wu et al. (2020), which deals with the antecedents, consequences, and moderators of shared leadership, also confirms a positive relationship between voice and shared leadership. Likewise, Ali et al. (2020) confirm that a high level of voice in the team promotes the decision to adopt a shared leadership approach. Based on this previous work, we argue that a high level of voice in a team is related to a high level of shared leadership in a team. This generates to the following first hypothesis:

H1: Voice of the team is positively related to shared leadership of the team.

4.2.3 Moderation through feedback seeking

When voice is exercised in a team, feedback is always exchanged (Detert & Burris, 2007). The term feedback seeking is understood to mean an independent effort to discuss and reflect on one's own actions. In this process, individuals find out the degree to which their effectiveness and performance is perceived by the other person and can thus compare their self-image with the external image (Ashford, 1986; Ashford, 1989; Gong et al., 2017; Lam et al., 2017). Individuals can learn from feedback and optimize their future actions (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Guo et al., 2020). Feedback can be sought in both actively soliciting and passively observing forms. In the active form, a person actively asks for feedback from another person about him- or herself. In the passive form, the person receives feedback but has not actively requested it previously (Sherf & Morrison, 2020). Feedback seeking may be bidirectional between team members and leaders, with each seeking feedback from the other. In both cases, problems of limited attention and limited information can be improved in leadership behavior (Auh et al., 2019). The leader can subsequently be more responsive to the needs of his/her team members, increase fairness in the team, and optimize the work process (Sherf et al., 2021; Sherf & Morrison, 2020). For team members, the resulting feedback process is another means of

personal development (Dimotakis et al., 2017). In the absence of appropriate feedback seeking, organization engagement decreases and turnover rate increases (Vandenberghe et al., 2021). In this study, we turn to feedback seeking by the leader.

If voice promotes stepping out of the actual work role in order to improve the organization or the team by conveying thoughts (van Dyne et al., 2003), this activates the process of feedback seeking (Detert & Burris, 2007). Nevertheless, it is true that raising one's voice also carries risks, which may come to light through negative reception of what is said by the team leader and the resulting sanctions against the team member, among others (Detert & Burris, 2007; Qian et al., 2018). Therefore, we argue that if a leader himself views voice insertion as positive and himself actively engages in feedback seeking with his team about himself, that this behavior will further increase the shared leadership in the team. A positive correlation of feedback seeking, and voice was already found in the study by Qian et al. (2018).

If feedback seeking is now placed in the context of leadership, especially the accessibility and support by the leader leads to a strengthening of this relationship (Lam et al., 2017), which characterizes the shared leadership approach (Wu et al., 2020).

In summary, voice stimulates intra-team exchange and stepping out of one's work role. Consequently, exchange for feedback seeking is thereby favored (Detert & Burris, 2007; van Dyne et al., 2003). The leader's feedback seeking increases fairness in the team and promotes commitment among individual team members (Sherf et al., 2021; Sherf & Morrison, 2020; Vandenberghe et al., 2021). A reinforcement of shared leadership in the team occurs, where team members become more engaged and step out of their team role to take on additional tasks (Chiu et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2018). If there is no feedback seeking from the leader, the engagement of individual team members will decrease, and some team members will not feel heard. Consequently, the level of

shared leadership in the team will be decreased (Chiu et al., 2016; Sherf et al., 2021; Sherf & Morrison, 2020; Vandenberghe et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2018). This generates the following second hypothesis:

H2: Feedback seeking by the leader moderates the positive relationship between voice of the team and shared leadership of the team. In case of high (low) feedback seeking, the positive relationship will be stronger (weaker).

4.2.4 The relation between shared leadership and leader's team trust

Trust describes the willingness of one party to expose itself willingly to the actions of another party. In this context, the first party has neither control nor supervision over the actions of the second party (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust in this context encompasses various forms: Trust in an individual, trust in a team, and trust in an organization. However, the origin of trust for one always rests on one's own perceived feelings (Lewicki et al., 1998). Trust is thereby viewed as a dyadic construct consisting of a trustor (trusting party) and a trustee (party to be trusted) (Breuer et al., 2020). Team trust is defined here as the expectations that include the honesty, goodwill, and competence of other team members (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Team members develop emotional caring for and investment in one another through shared experiences (Breuer et al., 2020; Feitosa et al., 2020). This expectancy allows individuals within an organization to take risks without having control or oversight over them. Through this behavior, it is possible to influence other team members or to be influenced oneself (Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010). Contrary to prevailing opinion, this risk dependency does not create stress; rather, the team structure solidifies trust within the team (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Kauffeld, 2010). A complement to risk dependency theory was developed by Cheng et al. (2016). In their research on the sample of virtual teams, they discovered that team members not only include the probability of risk in their evaluation on the trust meas-

ure, but also the benefits from their team relationship that are calculable for them. As a result, trust is no longer defined only by risk, but also by a weighed gain from its trust relationship.

The risk-affirming behavior enables an acceptance of mutual influence, social exchange, and joint collaboration (Breuer et al., 2016). Furthermore, this behavior also embraces leadership tasks (Mathieu et al., 2015; Morgeson et al., 2010), whereby a high level of team trust reinforces a shared leadership approach, and a high level of shared leadership reinforces team trust (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Due to the addressed risk affinity of team members (also team leaders) in a trust relationship, they are more open to another team member to relinquish leadership and control and to act as equals (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Leadership tasks are shared from the team leader among the team and individual commitment among team members is created to achieve and actively influence common goals (Bergman et al., 2012). Through this, the responsibility of dealing with, controlling, and improving tasks (processes) belongs to all team members (Aime et al., 2014; Chiu et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2018). This behavior is also emphasized by the followership theory. In this case, it is possible that the leader follows other team members rather than leading them as a strong leader (Baker, 2007; Uhl-Bien et al.). Social exchange theory and adaptive leadership theory also clarify the derivation (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). A reciprocal relationship of cooperation and trust within the team promotes shared leadership within the team (Drescher et al., 2014; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Engel Small and Rentsch (2010) also confirmed this thesis. They found that team trust promotes a team's/team leader's acceptance of the risk of a shared leadership approach. High levels of team trust strengthen joint teamwork and increase work performance (Drescher et al., 2014; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017; Imam & Zaheer, 2021; Shen & Chen, 2007; Wu et al., 2020). However, we assume that the

positive relation of shared leadership and team trust from the leader's perspective will be influenced by perceived team support, which will we explain in the following section.

4.2.5 Moderation through perceived team support

In followership theory, following (whether team members follow the leader, or the leader follows the team members) describes a support of the followers for the leading parties to achieve their goals. Here, both the work of the followers and the work of the leading party to have motivated the followers to achieve the goal, is appreciated (Carsten et al., 2014).

Through social exchange theory, it is also known that individuals help those with whom they have a supportive relationship (Becker et al., 2018; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Therefore, if a team leader experiences team support, he or she will establish a supportive relationship with his or her team members and mutual influence can occur (Becker et al., 2018; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In this study, we focus on perceived team support of the team for the leader (see Becker et al., 2018; Pearce & Herbig, 2004; Sheng et al., 2010). Here, this supportive relationship is described as the team's regard for individual team members, the team leader and the provision of available resources, such as an appropriate leadership system (Bishop et al., 2000; Bishop et al., 2005; Pearce & Herbig, 2004). In this context, leader behavior is influenced by perceived team support, team commitment, and team behavior (Pearce & Herbig, 2004). In order to accomplish his or her own tasks, a team leader needs the support of the other team members and thus enters into a dependency relationship, which is only possible under the condition of shared trust (Jong et al., 2007; Sheng et al., 2010). Now, when the team leader feels a high level of perceived team support, trust in the team increases significantly (Sheng et al., 2010). Now, if there is a strong shared leader-

ship approach in a team, which promotes risk-taking, responsibility-taking, and supportive behaviors, resulting in an increase in team trust, perceived team support of the team for the leader strengthens this relationship, as perceived team support fosters interdependence and team cohesion. However, if perceived team support of the leader is weak, this will weaken the relationship between shared leadership and leader's team trust, as the shared leadership influence of the team is not beneficial for the leader (Drescher et al., 2014; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Jong et al., 2007; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Sheng et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2020). Consequently, our third hypothesis results:

H3: Perceived team support of the leader moderates the positive relationship between shared leadership of the team and team trust from the leader's perspective. In case of high (low) perceived team support, the positive relationship will be stronger (weaker).

Furthermore, this results in the overarching hypothesis for the overall model:

H4: Feedback seeking from the leader's perspective is a moderator of the first stage and perceived team support from the leader's perspective is a moderator of the second stage of the indirect relationship of voice and team trust via shared leadership. With higher (lower) feedback seeking and higher (lower) perceived team support, this positive indirect relationship should be stronger (weaker).

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Sample and research design

The data collection was carried out with an online questionnaire, which was sent via SoSci-Survey by e-mail to team leader and their teams. This was done at two measurement points with time-lag of one week. Prior to their participation, team leader and their teams were informed about the purpose of the data collection. To ensure a high

level of willingness to participate as a whole team at two measurement points, participants could receive a feedback report. If a participant had not completed the questionnaire in the first or second measurement point after 3 and after 5 days, he or she was reminded of his or her participation by a reminder e-mail containing the participation link. In addition to selected demographic variables, the team leaders were asked about their own feedback seeking at measurement time point 1. At measurement time point 2, they were asked about the level of team trust and perceived team support of their team. In the first measurement point, the team members were asked about shared leadership and voice in their team, in addition to selected demographic variables.

In the first measurement point, 45 team leaders and 132 team members participated in the survey. The average team size was 3.93 members. In the second measurement point, 43 team leaders and 125 team members participated in the survey. The average team size was 3.91 members. The organizations in the teams were active both nationally and internationally and were based in Germany. Excluded from the sample was one person who resigned after the first measurement point as well as 7 people who were involved in a cross-departmental project as they were affiliated to more than one leader. These individuals were identified as significant outliers on their teams and were therefore removed.

Leaders averaged age was 40 years ($M = 40.79$, $SD = 7.10$) and they were 78 % male ($M = 1.78$, $SD = .42$). 93 % of the executives were employed full-time and 87 % of them had a college degree. Organizational tenure averaged 5.5 years ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 4.86$), team tenure averaged 4.5 years ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 4.39$), and the employee span to lead was 6 people ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 2.27$).

Team members averaged age was 36 years ($M = 36.52$, $SD = 10.83$) and they were 75 % male ($M = 1.75$, $SD = .43$). 79 % of team members were employed full-time,

and 56 % of them had college degrees. Organizational tenure averaged was 4.5 years ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 4.09$) and team tenure averaged was 3.5 years ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 3.36$).

The industry in which most participants were employed was computer and IT services with 89 %, second was insurance and financial services with 4 %, and third was consulting services and manufacturing with 2 % each. The company sizes of the surveyed teams are distributed as follows: 3 % of the teams are employed in a company smaller than 10, in 4 % between 50 and 249, in 89 % between 250 and 5000 and in 4 % larger than 5000.

4.3.2 Measures

Team trust. The 9 items of the German Workplace Trust Survey (Team trust) by Lehmann-Willenbrock & Kauffeld (2010) with a 6-point likert scale were used to measure team trust. The likert scale ranges from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 6 (*I strongly agree*). An example item is "My teammates deal with me honestly." The internal consistency of the items is $\alpha = .77$ (team leader survey) at the second measurement point. No ICC value could be calculated for the team leader survey because it was measured at the highest (i.e., team) level.

Voice. To measure the degree of voice, the 6 items of van Dyne & LePine (1998) with a 7-point likert scale are used. The likert scale ranges from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 7 (*I strongly agree*). An example item is "We develop and make recommendations on issues that affect our work group." The internal consistency of the items here is $\alpha = .88$. Finally, we calculated the ICC. This captured the degree of agreement between team members' ratings (Bliese, 2000). For voice, at the first measurement time point when team members were surveyed, the ICC1 value was .28 and ICC2 value was .54.

Shared leadership. The 10 items of Morgeson et al. (2010) with a 5-point likert scale are used to measure shared leadership. The likert scale ranges from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). An example item is "We as a team plan and structure our work together." The internal consistency of the items here amounts to $\alpha = .88$ at the first measurement time point. For shared leadership, at the first measurement time point when team members were surveyed, the ICC1 value was .13 and ICC2 value was .30.

Feedback seeking. To measure feedback seeking, 5 items from Ashford & Tsui (1991) with a 7-point likert scale are used. The likert scale ranges from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 7 (*I strongly agree*). An example item is "I directly ask my team for information about my behavior." The internal consistency of the items is $\alpha = .84$ at the first measurement point. No ICC value could be calculated for feedback seeking in the survey of team leaders, as it was measured at the highest level.

Perceived team support. To measure perceived team support, 6 items from the FIF by Eisenberger et. al (2001) with a 7-point likert scale are used. The likert scale ranges from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 7 (*I strongly agree*). An example item is "My team is proud of my achievements." The internal consistency of the items is $\alpha = .72$ at the second time of measurement. No ICC value could be calculated for perceived team support in the survey of team leaders, as it was measured at the highest level.

4.3.3 Statistical analysis strategy

Data were analyzed using R software (version 4.1.2, R Core Team, 2021). We use a structural equation model (SEM) to analyze the data. This allows us to control for measurement error and to model complex processes like doubly moderated mediation in one statistical model (Kline, 2011).

In the first step, the outliers were removed from the sample and the data from the two measurement time points were allocated according to team leaders and team members, respectively. This was followed by a readability analysis of the items to determine Cronbach's alpha. In the second step, we aggregated the team members rating of voice and shared leadership to run the analysis on the team level. Aggregation is justified by ICC values (see Bliese, 2000). Descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix with three control variables (age, gender, educational level) and the model constructs team trust, shared leadership, voice, feedback seeking, and perceived team support were created. The demographic variables were determined separately for the team leaders and the team members, and the ICC values of the individual constructs were determined. The third step involved testing the doubly moderated mediation model using bootstrapping with 5,000 bootstrap resamples (Preacher et al., 2007).

4.4 Results

The mean values, standard deviations and intercorrelations are shown in table 7. The surveyed main variables of the team member correlate significantly positively with each other and the surveyed main variables of the team leader correlate significantly positively with each other. No significant correlation can be found between the team member variables and the team leader variables. Since the surveyed control variables do not have a significant influence on the main variables and the hypotheses, they were omitted from the following representations (Bernerth et al., 2018).

Table 7*Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Shared leadership T1	4.27	.46		.36***		
2. Voice T1	5.66	.73	.54***			
3. Feedback seeking T1	5.60	.82	-.01	-.08		
4. Team trust T2	5.49	.36	-.17	-.21	.35*	
5. Perceived team support T2	6.06	.52	.02	-.17	.33*	.41**

Note. T1 = Measuring point 1, T2 = Measuring point 2. Team-level correlations are presented below the diagonal ($N = 43$); individual-level correlations are presented above the diagonal ($N = 125$). ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

4.4.1 Direct and moderating effects

The results of the structural equation model analysis (model fit: $\text{Chi}^2 = 6.46$, $df = 5$, $p = .26$, CFI = 94, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .08) show that voice has a direct significant positive influence on shared leadership, confirming Hypothesis 1 (see results in table 8, $\beta = .52$, $p < .001$). Meanwhile, a significant positive moderation of the relationship of voice on shared leadership by feedback seeking of the leader could not be confirmed, leading to a rejection of hypothesis 2 (see results in table 8, $\beta = -.14$, $p > .10$).

Table 8

Results of structural equation model analysis on the direct influence of voice on shared leadership and the moderation of feedback seeking this relationship

Parameter	B	(SE)	95 % CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Main Predictors				
Voice T1	.52***	(.14)	.21	.74
Feedback seeking T1	-.01	(.14)	-.30	.24
Interaction				
Voice T1 X Feedback seeking T1	-.14	(.18)	-.48	.25

Note. T1 = Measuring point 1, T2 = Measuring point 2. $N = 43$ teams. Results are standardized coefficients. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The second moderation hypothesis (H3), that perceived team support of the team leaders moderates the positive relationship between shared leadership of the team and team trust from the team leader's perspective, cannot be confirmed either (see results in table 9, $\beta = .20, p > .10$).

Table 9

Results of structural equation model analysis on the moderating effect of perceived team support on the relationship of shared leadership on team trust

Parameter	B	(SE)	95 % CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Main Predictors				
Shared Leadership T1	-.20	(.17)	-.54	.15
Perceived Team Support T2	.43***	(.12)	.22	.68
Interaction				
Shared Leadership T1 X Perceived Team Support T2	.20	(.16)	-.05	.61

Note. T1 = Measuring point 1, T2 = Measuring point 2. $N = 43$ teams. Results are standardized coefficients. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

4.4.2 Conditional indirect effects

The rejection of the two moderation hypotheses H2 and H3 also leads to a rejection of hypothesis 4 regarding the conditional indirect effects of the overall model (see results in table 10).

Table 10

Results of the structural equation model analysis on the conditional indirect effects in the overall model

Moderator 1	Moderator 2	Indirect Effect	95 % CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High Feedback seeking T1 (+1 SD)	High Perceived team support T2 (+1 SD)	.03	-.14	.21
	Low Perceived team support T2 (-1 SD)	-.18	-.48	.04
Low Feedback seeking T1 (-1 SD)	High Perceived team support T2 (+1 SD)	-.03	-.28	.18
	Low Perceived team support T2 (-1 SD)	-.24	-.67	.06

Note. CI = confidence interval. bootstrapping repetition $n = 5.000$. T1 = Measuring point 1, T2 = Measuring point 2. ' $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

4.5 Discussion

In our model, we assumed a positive relation of voice on shared leadership, which has been supported by our data. A moderation of this relationship through feedback seeking by the leader could not be confirmed. Furthermore, we assumed a positive relationship between shared leadership of the team and team trust from the team leader's perspective, which has been not supported by our data. Also, no significant moderation of the relationship shared leadership on team trust by perceived team support could be confirmed. The conditional indirect effects in the overall model could therefore also not be confirmed.

4.5.1 Theoretical implications

First, this study extends the research of Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) in the context of the adapted leadership process and the followership theory. The results indicate a significant positive influence of follower behaviors (voice) on leadership (shared leadership). Through this we provide new insights about the relation of team leaders and their teams in a shared leadership setting. This confirms the research of Wu et al. (2020) and Ali et al. (2020), who also found a positive influence of voice on shared leadership.

Second, the focus is on the sample and the relationship of trust and shared leadership in a team context. Although research on this has been conducted by Drescher et al. (2014), Engel Small and Rentsch (2010), Klasmeier & Rowold (2020), and Wu et al. (2020), for example, Engel Small and Rentsch (2010) conducted their research on trust and shared leadership in the education sector. In contrast, our sample is focused on the private business sector and consists of individuals (team leader and team member) in national and international contexts. This sample allows for an economic perspective on the constructs under study. Furthermore, through this sample we can expand previous

research regarding the shared leadership-trust relationship by focusing on the team leader as trustor and the team as trustee. This provides new insights about how leaders react to shared leadership on a relation level and whether their reaction hinges on further conditions. In our case we have no positive relationship between shared leadership and team trust and no positive moderating effect on this relationship through perceived team support, which is opposite to the research of Drescher et al. (2014), Engel Small and Rentsch (2010), Klasmeier & Rowold (2020), Sheng et al. (2010) and Wu et al. (2020). As a result, the team leader does not react to the team's shared leadership with a change in trust. In addition, the manager does not react negatively to the shared leadership of the team, even though the team takes on leadership responsibilities and tasks that partly fall within the team leader's area of responsibility. No dispute arises over competence and responsibilities.

Third, this study offers a new perspective on the emergence, antecedents, and boundary conditions of shared leadership. In particular, the research design of the structural equation model at two measurement time points extends the research of the antecedents and boundary conditions of shared leadership (voice, feedback seeking, and perceived team support) and fills the research gaps of Ali et al. (2020), Boies et al. (2010), Feitosa et al. (2020), Lam et al. (2017), Nicolaidis et al. (2014), and Qian et al. (2018). A high degree of Voice increases a shared leadership in the team. Team members therefore appreciate an open exchange and the introduction of suggestions and criticisms. Feedback seeking from the team leader as a moderator of this relationship does not significantly strengthen this relationship. The implication here is that a team can have a high degree of shared leadership using voice even without the active feedback seeking of the team leader.

4.5.2 Practical/Managerial implications

Several practical implications for leaders and team members can be derived from the results of this study. First, followership theory shows that not only leaders can influence their team from above, but team members can also influence the leader with their actions (Baker, 2007). Therefore, both leader and team members must be aware that their actions can each influence the other party and thus proceed thoughtfully. In this context, team leaders need to be screened for responsible work and leadership practices as early as the selection process. One possibility for this is an assessment centre, which analyzes not only intelligence tests but also the soft skills of an applicant. Furthermore, a high degree of voice in the team promotes the shared leadership approach practiced in the team. Thus, a leader should promote both voice and shared leadership in the team, as this increases work performance in the team (D’Innocenzo et al., 2016; Drescher et al., 2014). In addition, it has been shown that perceived team support from the team leader directly strengthens team trust, which creates a higher level of team cohesion and in turn leads to better work results (De Jong et al., 2016). In order to further increase the level of voice in the team and the perceived team support and thus increase the level of shared leadership and team trust, several team-building measures should be implemented. For this purpose, the team members and the team leader could, for example, travel away from the daily work routine to a location that is not related to the workplace (e.g. a house in the mountains). Here, in various workshop formats, the strengths and weaknesses of the team's own collaboration can be written down and translated into measures that will make future collaboration more efficient and successful. To ensure that this is not forgotten in the subsequent day-to-day work, monthly meetings should be arranged to track progress and answer any questions that arise.

4.5.3 Limitations and future directions/research

Due to some limitations, this study offers starting points for future research. First, the sample in this study includes 43 team leaders and 125 team members, 89 % of them are from the computing and IT services industry. This offers future studies the opportunity to conduct the same research on a larger scale in an industry heterogeneous setting or in a single organization, as in Kukenberger and D'Innocenzo (2020). Second, by using a time-lagged design with multisource data (i.e., ratings from team members and team leaders), our study can reduce many common biases in methodology. Nevertheless, there is the possibility of a recency effect (Atkinson et al., 1968), whereby events from the near past are given more weight in one's own perception than more distant events, whereby a bias in the answers is possible. Furthermore, although the anonymity of the participants is preserved in the survey, there is a possibility of predictability of the answers and a resulting deception due to the paper-pencil method and the final receipt of a feedback report for the entire team (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The resulting common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Klapper et al., 2009) can only be minimized if the survey is administered at further measurement time points at regular intervals (e.g. Chen et al., 2011; McArdle, 2009). Engel Small, and Rentsch (2010) developed another way to minimize this error. They ran a simulation game with participants, whereby not only the final answer was available for evaluation, but also the interaction and behaviors of the participants could be analyzed in detail. Through this, the constructs and its emergence of voice, shared leadership, feedback seeking, perceived team support and team trust can be analyzed in more detail.

Despite the methodological strength of the study design, the results cannot be interpreted in a causal or temporal direction (see Antonakis et al., 2010). Especially omit-

ted variables may influence the results. Thus, the selection and relationship of the constructs offers an opportunity to expand the research in the future. In addition to the direct relationships and mediation and moderation effects of the listed constructs, the approaches of Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) offer further interesting variables, such as followership behaviors (e.g. obedience or resistance), followership characteristics (e.g. goal orientation or motivation to lead), or followership outcomes (e.g. leader derailment or follower effectiveness), which require further research. Also, a possibility for additional variables is measuring a leader's effectiveness (Sharma & Kirkman 2015; Zhu et al., 2018) and the resulting social influence in a team or on a leader (Oc & Bashshur, 2013).

4.6 Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of the emergence and relationship of shared leadership and team trust. In doing so, it extends the research on its antecedents and boundary conditions. A significant positive relation of voice with shared leadership was found. Although our work did not confirm the effect of feedback seeking and perceived team support as moderators. Furthermore, the study offers an extension of understanding of the constructs in the context of team-level followership theory.

5 Overall discussion

The focus of this dissertation was to extend the research on the reciprocal relationship of the variables shared leadership and trust on different levels of an organization (team and organizational level). In order to examine this relationship more closely and to see which antecedents and boundary conditions influence this relationship at the different levels of an organization, two research questions were set up, which were answered in two studies.

In study 1, I analyzed the relationship between organizational trust and shared leadership in a multilevel model to answer both research question 1 and research question 2 in an organizational context. This showed a positive influence of organizational trust on the antecedent empowering leadership, but not directly on shared leadership. Furthermore, it could be shown that the relationship of organizational trust to shared leadership is positively mediated by empowering leadership. However, a significant positive moderation of the first stage of this mediation by vision communication of top-management could not be confirmed.

In study 2, I examined the relationship of shared leadership and team trust at the team level to answer research questions 1 and 2 in the team context. A positive relationship between voice of the team and shared leadership was found. The positive moderation of this relationship by feedback seeking of the leader was not given. Also, no significant positive relationship of shared leadership and team trust from the team leader's perspective could be identified. The positive moderation of this relationship by perceived team support from the perspective of the leader could not be confirmed, which resulted in a rejection of the indirect effects in the overall model.

In the remaining chapters, I will further frame the findings of the two studies in relation to the research questions, provide limitations and outlooks for future research, identify theoretical and practical implications for research and the corporate world, and provide an overarching summary of my dissertation.

5.1 Summary of findings and theoretical contribution

Study 1 of my dissertation addressed research questions 1 - To what extent is there a reciprocal relationship between shared leadership and trust in the team and organizational context? - and 2 - Are there factors that shape (in terms of boundary conditions) or explain (in terms of mediating mechanisms) the relationship of shared leadership and trust at different organizational levels?. In relation to research question 1, this study extends the research on shared leadership and organizational trust. A positive relationship known so far mainly on the individual or team level (compare Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020; Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010) could be established in this study via the mediation hypothesis of organizational trust on shared leadership via empowering leadership. This is also confirmed by the results of the meta-analysis by Uslu and Oklay (2015). Regarding the boundary conditions in the organizational context (research question 2), this study mainly extends the knowledge on the boundary conditions of shared leadership and the influences of top-management and middle management. Especially the research gaps identified by Pearce et al. (2019), Wu et al. (2020), Venus et al. (2019), and Wang et al. (2014) on the antecedents and boundary conditions (vision communication of top-management and empowering leadership) of the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust in the organizational context could be closed with this study.

Furthermore, the choice of the sample of top-management (i.e., CEO's) and middle management (i.e., team leaders) further consolidates the organizational view on both research questions. Research by, e.g. Klasmeier and Rowold (2020) as well as Engel Small and Rentsch (2010), focused on examining the lower levels of an organization (team leaders and/or individual team members). The sector is also of central importance, as Engel Small and Rentsch (2010), Joseph and Winston (2005), and Pearce et al. (2005), among others, focused on the education sector in their studies on (organizational) trust and (shared) leadership, and thus no direct reference to the free economy could be made. My choice of a sample consisting exclusively of business organizations in a national and international context further broadens the perspective of all variables.

The second study of my dissertation answers research questions 1 and 2 at the team level. In doing so, it extends the research on shared leadership and team trust in terms of the related sample. In my study, team leaders and teams from the private sector from organizations operating nationally, as well as internationally, were interviewed, which provides additional research value. Although Drescher et al. (2014), Engel Small and Rentsch (2010), Klasmeier and Rowold (2020), and Wu et al. (2020), among others, have also studied the variables shared leadership and (team) trust, they have focused on the education sector (compare Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010). By focusing on the team leader as trustor and the team as trustee, the research could be extended on the relational level of shared leadership and team trust. In relation to research question 1, no significant positive influence (in contrast to the studies of Drescher et al. (2014), Engel Small and Rentsch (2010), Klasmeier and Rowold (2020), and Wu et al. (2020)) of shared leadership on team trust from the team leader's perspective could be identified. Thus, the team leader's reaction does not depend on the degree of shared leadership in the team, and thus a high or low degree of shared leadership does not result in positive or

negative consequences of the team leader on team trust. This result also extends the findings of the research mentioned above on the two variables.

Regarding the influence of the antecedents and boundary conditions of shared leadership and trust at the team level (research question 2), the research could be extended to address the research gaps of Ali et al. (2020), Boies et al. (2010), Feitosa et al. (2020), Lam et al. (2017), Nicolaidis et al. (2014), and Qian et al. (2018) by surveying the antecedents and boundary conditions of voice, feedback seeking, and perceived team support at two measurement time points. In this context, the analyses revealed that a high level of voice in the team significantly positively influences the degree of shared leadership in the team and that the accompanying expression of criticism and suggestions promotes an exchange at eye level. Moderation of this relationship through feedback seeking by the team leader could not be confirmed. This shows that a team does not necessarily need feedback seeking from the team leader but can advance the shared leadership approach in the team on its own through a high degree of voice. The moderation of the relationship from shared leadership to team trust through perceived team support of the team leader could also not be confirmed.

In summary, both studies present the relationship of shared leadership and trust at different levels of an organization in a multi-level perspective. Starting from top-management and middle management (study 1) down to the team leader and the team (study 2), thus providing an all-encompassing view of the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust and its antecedents and boundary conditions, contributing to an extension of current research (Zhu et al., 2018).

Based on the results of studies 1 and 2 and the research questions 1 and 2 answered in different contexts in each case, two theories could be further developed: The trickle-down effect and the followership theory.

A trickle-down effect could be identified through the sample used in study 1 of people from top-management, the middle managers assigned to them and their assessment of the variables of their own team. Although no cross-level moderation could be detected, there was a significant relation between the variables at both hierarchical levels. Thus, this study extends the research on the traceability of the trickle-down effect, which has only been investigated in a few studies so far (see Bormann & Diebig, 2021). Social exchange theory corroborates these findings, as a social exchange in top-management triggers a reaction in middle management and this is transmitted to the further levels (Cropanzano et. al, 2017; Jiing-Lih Farh et al., 1990). Thus, for example, top-management can signal the value of shared leadership to the middle-level management. The next level down in turn recognizes this leadership style and applies it accordingly in its team. This gives top-management the opportunity to shape the entire organization through a trickle-down effect (Bormann & Diebig, 2021).

In study 2, by examining team leaders and their teams, it was possible to take another look at the followership theory. The theory examined by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) and its established model of an adapted leadership process showed, after adaptation, in the results that follower behavior (high level of voice) significantly influences team leader behavior. By raising the voice of the team, the team leader is induced to give more tasks and responsibilities to his/her team and to allow a shared leadership style. This gives the team members the opportunity to exert more influence on the leadership. Although both the team leader and the followers have their own competencies and tasks

in the classic theory of hierarchical leadership (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014), these are shared based on the results achieved. This supports the assumptions of the followership theory in which the followers can significantly influence the leader (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Thus, in addition to the research of Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), the research of Ali et al. (2020) and Wu et al. (2020) on voice and shared leadership is taken up and extended with the help of incorporating followership theory.

5.2 Limitations

Since this research, like any research, comes with limitations, in this chapter I will detail the methodological and theoretical limitations of my work and discuss them in the context of current research possibilities.

The first limitation, which appears in different forms in both study 1 and study 2, is the composition of the sample. In study 1, I collected a sample of 23 individuals from top-management and 73 individuals from middle management from six industries in the business sector. The industry diversity is a plus here, as it allows for a broader view of different organizations in a wide variety of industries. However, the sample is too small to make a valid generalization across all organizations in the business context. Also, the high proportion of male academics (80 %) in the sample reduces the diversity of the results. In study 2, I analyzed a sample composed of 43 team leaders and 125 team members, 89 % of whom were from the computer and IT services industry. Due to the large number of teams (team leaders and team members), a good focus on the computer and IT services industry can be established. However, since mainly medium-sized companies were surveyed, no generalized overview of the entire industry can be given. Furthermore, it is not possible to adapt the survey to other industries because the percentage of other industries is too small (11 %).

The second limitation is the research design of the respective studies. In study 1, a cross-sectional design was used. A questionnaire was distributed to the respondents at one measurement point. This makes it impossible to draw causal conclusions over time and may bias the results. Study 2 included a longitudinal study with two measurement points, which can partially reduce methodological bias. Due to the paper-pencil method used in both studies, including the subsequent receipt of a feedback sheet, there is nevertheless the possibility of deception in the accuracy of the assessments (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Respondents may understand the logic of the questions and thus answer in an imagined desired way, thus biasing the results and the method (common-method bias) (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Klapper et al., 2009). Also, in both studies it is possible that subjects give the answers to the questions as they feel at that moment. Here, the persons partly weight the events from the near past higher than reality might show. An example of a positive way is: A person receives a promotion and is motivated accordingly. He/She is likely to rate the positive categories higher than a person who has just received bad feedback from his/her leader. This phenomenon is called the recency effect (Atkinson et. al, 1968).

The third limitation relates to the relationship between the variables and the selected antecedents and boundary conditions. Both study 1 and study 2 examined the direct or indirect relationship of shared leadership and trust at multiple levels of an organization. However, a direct mediation or moderation relationship of the shared leadership and trust constructs was absent. Furthermore, the relationship was analyzed only in one direction (e.g. shared leadership on team trust), but the complete reciprocal relationship was not considered. Also, because only a certain number of antecedents and boundary conditions were included in the analysis in both studies (two boundary conditions in study 1: empowering leadership and vision communication) and one antecedent

and two boundary conditions in study 2: voice, feedback seeking, and perceived team support), there is a risk that omitted variables exist that also influence this relationship.

The fourth and last limitation refers again to the sample of the first study. By including the responses of top-management, middle management, and the assessment of them to the level below, a third-party assessment of the third level of the organization is created. This fosters a self-serving bias of middle management to the results from their own teams (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

5.3 Directions for future research

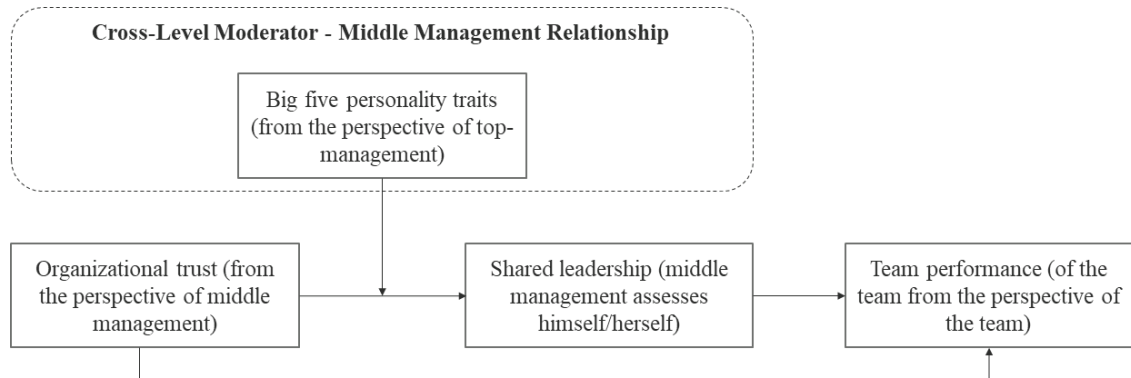
To learn from the results and limitations of my dissertation, I set directions for future research in this chapter.

With respect to the limitation of the two studies on the sample, in the case of the first study a test of robustness can be performed by using a more heterogeneous and larger sample. For this purpose, the goal can either be to analyze an industry in more depth (compare Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2020) or to extend the generalization across several industries. In doing so, the results of this study should be merged with additional samples from other industries, offering potentials for future research on the described variables. In the case of the second study, the sample can be further deepened, like the research of Kukenberger and D'Innocenzo (2020), and thus further surveys of the same variables can be conducted in startups and large corporations in the computer and IT services industry. These results can then be compared or merged with the results of this study in future research.

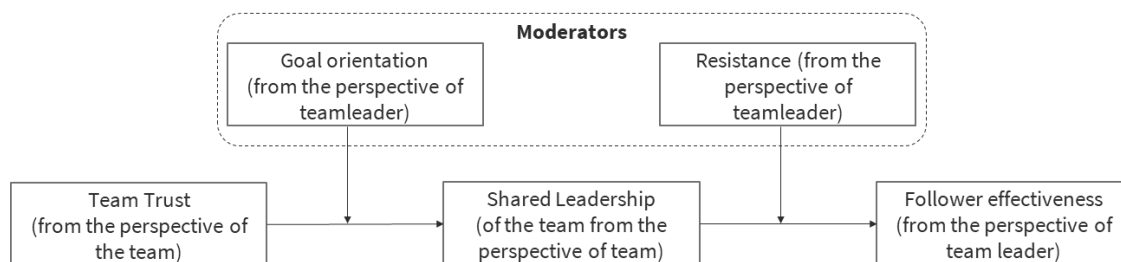
The limitations of the research designs from both studies can be compensated in the case of the first study by including additional measurement points. Also in the sec-

ond study, a third measurement point can improve the temporal consideration of the variables (see Chen et al., 2011; McArdle, 2009). Through this, a reduction in common method bias, among other things, takes place (Chen et al., 2011; McArdle, 2009). To be able to explore the variables even deeper and to analyze the respondents' behavior when answering, experimental or observational studies can be conducted in future studies (Aguinis & Edwards, 2014; Antonakis et al., 2010; Cook et al., 2019). Through this, micro-processes in leadership and followership can also be included, for example, the variable shared leadership (Klonek et al., 2019). An already practiced example of such a study is the simulation game by Engel Small and Rentsch (2010). Here it is possible to observe the behavior of a person over a longer period of time. In this way, it is possible to better understand both the emergence of variables and the reasons for their manifestations (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020).

Regarding the existing limitation in the relationships of the variables and the selection of the antecedents and boundary conditions, the organizational consideration in study 1 in particular provides the opportunity for future research to further analyze top-management and thus, in connection with the reciprocal relationship of shared leadership and trust, to include personality (e.g. big five personality traits of Rammstedt and John (2005)), efficiency, or the need for control of top-management (Sharma & Kirkman 2015; Zhu et al., 2018). By including the personality of the top-management leader, their leadership behavior can be further illuminated and a better understanding of the resulting actions of the top-management leader can be created. To get more practical relevance for the organizations, we can use team performance as an output, like in the study of Drescher et al. (2014), to extend its research at an organizational level (compare Figure 5).

Figure 5*Advanced research model*

From the perspective of study 2 and the team-level consideration, it is advisable in future research to examine other variables proposed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) in the context of followership theory. For example, for the listed categories of Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), followership outcomes (e.g. follower effectiveness, to calculate the influence of a high trust and shared leadership relationship on the follower effectiveness), followership characteristics (e.g. goal orientation, because goal orientation is an important factor for organizational success (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014)), and followership behavior (e.g. resistance, to calculate how high is the resistance to change processes in a shared leadership environment (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014)) offer potential for new research (compare figure 6). Complementary to follower effectiveness, leader effectiveness and its influence on the team or on its leader is also of importance for further studies (Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Sharma & Kirkman 2015; Zhu et al., 2018).

Figure 6*Advanced research model*

The limitation to external assessment in the trickle-down model by middle management for their team can be contained in future work by including further levels below the first two management levels, as Bormann and Diebig (2021) have already demonstrated in their study. Expanding the sample to include an entire organization, starting with top-management, and working down to the last level, is also a possible research opportunity, since, for example, there are more than three levels of hierarchy in a DAX company.

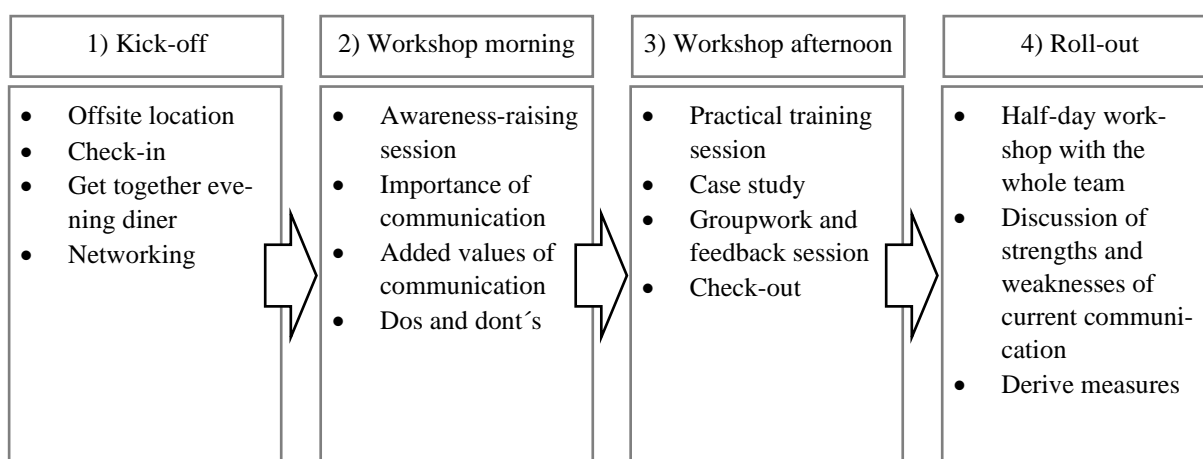
5.4 Practical implications

Through its findings, the dissertation presented several practical implications for various organizations and levels of leadership. In both study 1 and study 2, a high degree of shared leadership and trust are positive reciprocal influences at the team and organizational levels. In study 1, implications for upper management levels (top- and middle management) can be derived in particular. Here it is shown that a high degree of organizational trust mediated by empowering leadership leads to a high degree of shared leadership. A pronounced shared leadership results in a higher work performance of the teams (Drescher et al., 2014). Since a trickle-down effect was also demonstrated in study 1, upper management levels need to pay particular attention to the way they act. For example, if top-management treats its direct lower management level badly, the

latter will pass this behavior on to the next level below (Bormann & Diebig, 2020). This thus results in a low level of organizational trust throughout the workforce, which in turn causes a low level of shared leadership and ultimately causes low work performance of teams (Drescher et al., 2014). Therefore, it is especially important for all leaders in the company to keep the level of organizational trust high. This is achieved primarily through open and honest communication from the leader to his or her direct team members and from top-management to the entire organization (Joseph & Winston, 2005). For this reason, leaders at different levels of the organization should receive special communication training that strengthens their social skills. Such training could look like the following (see figure 7):

Figure 7

The communication training process



In the first step, the leaders come together for a kick-off away from their daily work environment. After a relaxed evening event for networking among themselves, a full-day workshop follows the next day. In the morning, an awareness-raising session will be held on the topic of communication (e.g. Why is communication important? What added value does good communication create for leaders, the team and the organ-

ization as a whole? What are dos and don'ts when communicating with team members and other leaders?). After the leaders have internalized this message and discussed any anecdotes from their daily work, a practical training session follows in the afternoon. In this, the leaders are confronted with various case studies in role plays, prepare these in small groups and then present their results in the plenary session. An example of a case study could be that the leaders are informed of the company's new goals and now have to communicate these to their team members in a way that is both relevant and motivating. After each presentation, each small group receives feedback from the facilitator and the other leaders from the plenary. At the end of the day, a check-out takes place, where each leader is allowed to distribute a sticky dot on a graph (X-axis = degree of understanding of the importance of communication, Y-axis = degree of satisfaction with the workshop day) and explain the position of his dot. So that the team members of the executives are also picked up on this topic, each executive is also given the task of conducting a half-day workshop with his team members, in which he tells them about the offsite event and openly discusses with his/her own team which parts of the current communication are running well and which need improvement. Based on this, measures are derived together, and these are reviewed, supplemented or adjusted, if necessary, in a monthly meeting.

Study 2 further shows implications especially for the lower levels of an organization (team leader and team). It becomes apparent that a high degree of voice can increase the shared leadership in the entire team and thus, resulting from the followership theory, the team members have the power to influence the leader (Baker, 2007). Thus, in addition to the leader, team members should also pay attention to their actions and act responsibly. Both the leader and the team members should also have a focus on a high degree of voice in the team, as this and a high degree of shared leadership also increase

work performance in the team (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Drescher et al., 2014). For this to succeed, attention must be paid to these character traits as early as the selection of new employees. The best way to find this out is an assessment center, as Rowold & Mönninghoff (2007) already recognized in their study on call centers. Here, candidates are involved in various case studies (for example, a group discussion) and analyzed by outside observers. In the case of the group discussion, the candidates' level of participation in the group discussion can be analyzed here. The measure used in this process is based in advance on the candidate's later required involvement in the team event/team communication.

Furthermore, the results of study 2 showed a significant positive correlation between perceived team support of the leader and team trust. For this reason, it is also important in the selection process to choose a leader and team members with these two characteristics. A high level of both variables creates a strong team cohesion, which in turn leads to an improvement in work performance (De Jong et al., 2016). Team-building measures such as team outings or the joint solution of a problem that arises outside of everyday work (e.g. increasing the sustainability of one's own company) also strengthen perceived team support and ultimately trust in the team.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to further explore the reciprocal relationship at team and organizational level between shared leadership and trust and to highlight the antecedents and boundary conditions affecting it. Organizational trust was found to have a direct significant positive influence on empowering leadership and an indirect (mediation by empowering leadership) significant positive influence on shared leadership. However, top-management vision communication did not have a significant influ-

ence on this relationship. Furthermore, voice of the team had a significant positive influence on shared leadership in the team. The influences of feedback seeking and perceived team support on the mediation of voice via shared leadership to team trust of the team leader could not be proven. Thus, this dissertation highlights the importance of shared leadership and trust on different levels of an organization and enables teams, leaders, and entire organizations to benefit from the results and to incorporate them into their future actions.

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