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References

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Taking a Closer Look at the Empowerment-Performance Relationship: Evidence from Law Enforcement Organizations

This article examines the influence of empowering leadership practices on police officers' job performance, perceptions of managerial effectiveness, and unit performance. These relationships are examined using multisource survey data collected from 100 law enforcement managers, 446 of their subordinates, and 98 of their direct supervisors. The analysis shows that empowering leadership contributes positively to subordinate officers' job performance and unit effectiveness. Empowering leadership is also positively associated with subordinate but not with supervisor ratings of managerial effectiveness. Task-oriented leadership, however, is positively associated with both subordinate and supervisor ratings of managerial effectiveness. Implications of these results for managerial leadership in law enforcement organizations are discussed.

Empowering leadership practices motivate police officers to perform their work more proficiently and conscientiously. Empowering leadership practices also contribute positively to the effectiveness of work units in police organizations.

Subordinate police officers consider their managers more effective when the managers engage in empowering leadership, whereas both subordinates and supervisors consider the managers more effective when the managers engage in task-oriented leadership.

Managers in law enforcement organizations should try to strike a balance between exercising empowering and task-oriented leadership and carefully allow subordinate police officers to exercise discretion to carry out their tasks and work activities.

Evidence for Practice

Identifying ways that public managers can improve the productivity of employees and the performance of their organizations has been an enduring theme in public administration research (Behn [11]). Scholarly discussion gained momentum with the "reinventing government" initiative in the 1990s, which

emphasized the adoption of market-oriented reforms and innovative management techniques (Gore [36]; Hood [41]; Kettl [47]; Osborne and Gaebler [68]). In the ensuing discussion and debate over the last two decades, empowerment has emerged as a guiding principle for improving the delivery of public services and the performance of public employees and organizations (Lynn [54]; Peters [71]; Petter et al. [73]; Wise [96]).

The benefits of empowerment have also been examined in many prior studies showing that empowering practices can improve public employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to continue working in their organization (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [31], [33]; Hassan et al. [39]; Kim and Fernandez [49]; Peters and Savoie [72]; Petter et al. [73]). Additionally, Langbein ([52]) finds a positive connection between employee discretion, an indicator of empowerment, and perceptions of organizational performance. Fernandez and Moldogaziev ([30]) show a positive relationship between empowerment and federal employees' perceptions of their work group's performance. In a subsequent study, they aggregate individual-level survey data and confirm this relationship at the agency level (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [31]). Several studies also report a positive connection between empowerment and prosocial and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among public employees (Cho and Faerman [19]; Park and Hassan [70]; Taylor [86]).

The aforementioned studies have provided valuable insights. However, the majority of these studies relied on same-source survey data to assess the relationships between empowering managerial practices and public employee, work group, and organizational performance. Research shows that such data are highly susceptible to social desirability biases (Favero et al. [28]; Favero and Bullock [29]). More importantly, self-reported performance data may be inaccurate (Meier and O'Toole [59]), raising questions about the reliability of the extant empirical evidence, especially on the empowerment-performance relationship.

This article contributes to research in public administration in several ways. Using multisource survey data, we first assess the influence of empowering leadership practices on police officers' task performance (Williams and Anderson [93]) and conscientiousness, which is an organization-focused OCB that captures employees' voluntary acceptance and adherence to organizational rules, norms, and protocols (Organ [66]; Smith, Organ, and Near [82]). We posit that both task performance and compliance with unit rules and procedures are critical components of police officers' job performance. To the best of our knowledge, no prior study in public administration has examined the influence of empowering leadership on law enforcement officers' task performance and conscientiousness.

Second, we extend prior research (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [30], [31]; Hassan et al. [39]; Langbein [52]) by examining the connection between empowering leadership and the effectiveness of police units using independent ratings of unit performance from the managers' supervisors. While examining this relationship, we account for the influence of task-oriented leadership, which allows us to isolate the unique influence of empowering leadership—that is, to assess its relative efficacy in improving the police units' performance.

Third, we contribute to the literature by examining the extent to which empowering law enforcement managers are perceived effective, whether they are rated more or less effective than the task-oriented managers, and whether the strength of this relationship varies according to who is rating the managers' effectiveness (i.e., supervisor versus subordinates). We contend that subordinates and supervisors, because of their unique roles and positions in the organization, will use different frames of reference

while evaluating managerial effectiveness (Hassan and Rohrbaugh [40]). Subordinates and supervisors may also have different performance expectations from the focal manager, focus on different aspects of their job responsibilities, or weigh those dimensions differently while considering the manager's effectiveness (Atwater and Yammarino [6]; Bass and Yammarino [9]; Borman and Motowidlo [15]). Such differences, in turn, are likely to affect their ratings of the managers' performance.

Finally, law enforcement serves as a curious context for this research. With frequent media reports of the use of excessive force by police officers against minorities, there is now greater interest among public administration scholars in understanding how police organizations are managed and examining the connection between police management and performance. While police organizations are rule bound and hierarchical, frontline officers exercise considerable discretion (Lipsky [53]; Wilson [95]). Moreover, police organizations now put greater emphasis on officer empowerment (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury [1]). The rationale behind initiatives such as community-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing, for example, is that proactive discretionary behavior of frontline officers can make a big difference in improving community's trust in the police and engagement in policing and preventing crimes (Steinheider and Wuestewald [85]). Considerable research in public administration has examined the behavior of police officers on the street (Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Markel [26]; Lipsky [53]; Maynard-Moody and Musheno [56]; Oberfield [65]; Wilson [94]) and the impact of community-oriented policing (Choi and Choi [20]; Jennings and Rubado [44]). However, there are very few studies on management and leadership practices within police organizations (Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole [63]; Steinheider and Wuestewald [85]). Our research, therefore, provides much-needed insight into the influence of leadership practices on the behavior of police officers, their perceptions of managerial effectiveness, and unit performance.

Next, we review the literature on employee empowerment and formulate our hypotheses based on extant research and theories.

Employee Empowerment

The literature on employee empowerment is vast, and thorough treatments concerning research on empowerment have already been provided (Conger and Kanungo [21]; Thomas and Velthouse [88]). Two separate conceptual approaches have emerged over the past two decades. The first approach conceptualizes empowerment as a relational construct, while the second approach treats it as a motivational construct, focusing on the cognitive states that are empowering (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [30]; Park and Hassan [70]).

The relational perspective of empowerment has roots in social exchange theory (Blau [13]; Emerson [25]), which suggests that power arises when the performance outcomes of an individual depend on the actions and resources of others (Pfeffer [74]). While all organizational members have some power, it varies according to one's dependence on others (Emerson [25]). The key sources of power for individuals in organizations are the formal positions or offices that they occupy, their personal characteristics, such as reputation, charisma, expertise, and knowledge, and their ability to access resources that others value (Bacharach and Lawler [7]). Empowerment in this perspective is a process in which people who hold power in an organization share it with those who are relatively powerless (Conger and Kanungo [21]). In the extensive research on participative management, management by objectives, shared goal setting, and self-managing teams, empowerment has been described from this relational perspective with an emphasis on sharing power with individuals at the lower levels of an organizational hierarchy (Bowen and Lawler [17], [18]; Conger and Kanungo [21]; Kanter [46]).

The empowering leadership practices identified in the early studies involve soliciting feedback from subordinates, including subordinates in decision making, and delegating authority to allow subordinates to make decisions about work on their own without prior approval (Kanter [46]; Vroom and Jago [91]). More recent studies have expanded the boundary of the construct and included other relations-oriented leadership practices, such as coaching, recognizing effective subordinate performance, and providing subordinates with the information and resources necessary to carry out their job duties (Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp [2]; Arnold et al. [5]; Bowen and Lawler [17], [18]; Park and Hassan [70]).

By contrast, the psychological approach focuses on the cognitive states that are empowering. In this perspective, empowerment has been treated as a motivational construct and described as "increased intrinsic task motivation" (Thomas and Velthouse [88], 666) that results from "an enabling, rather than a delegating, process" (Conger and Kanungo [21], 474). The psychological approach has its roots in Bandura's ([8]) work on self-regulation, which identifies the psychological conditions necessary for individuals to feel a sense of control in relation to their work and an active orientation to their work roles. Thomas and Velthouse ([88]), and subsequently Spreitzer ([83]), identified the key indicators of psychological empowerment: (1) meaning, (2) competence, (3) self-determination, and (4) impact. Spreitzer ([83]) notes that for an employee to feel empowered, all four cognitions need to be present; the absence of any one of these cognitions would decrease the level of perceived empowerment.

The relational and psychological perspectives of empowerment are equally important, and research that integrates the two may be more useful than research that relies on any single perspective (Park and Hassan [70]). In this article, we rely on the first approach, operationalizing empowerment as a relational construct, and examine the influence of empowering leadership practices on public employee, manager, and work unit performance. This is consistent with recent public sector studies (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [30], [31], [32], [33]; Hassan et al. [39]; Kim and Fernandez [49]) that have examined the influence of empowerment practices on perceptions of work group performance and employee work attitudes.

Research Hypotheses

Empowering Leadership and Employee Job Performance

Job performance is a complex, multifaceted construct (O'Toole and Meier [69]). In this article, we focus on the influence of empowering leadership on two separate, though related, aspects of police officers' job performance: their task performance and conscientiousness. Task performance refers to the execution of job duties as specified in an employee's job description (Williams and Anderson [93]). Several recent studies in public management have examined the relationship between leadership practices and public sector employees' task performance (Anderson and Stritch [3]; Bellé [12]; Cho and Faerman [19]).

In contrast, conscientiousness, which is an organization-focused OCB (Organ [66]; Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie [67]; Smith, Organ, and Near [82]), has received little attention in studies in public management (Oberfield [65]).[1] Conscientiousness refers to employees' voluntary acceptance of and adherence to organizational rules, policies, and procedures even when they are not closely monitored (Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie [67]). As such, it represents being mindful of what it requires to represent and be a part of an organization. Conscientious employees are dependable and trustworthy. They not only abide by their organizations' norms, rules, and practices but also avoid engaging in behaviors that may undermine the organization's interests and tarnish its reputation (Bateman and

Organ [10]). We contend that in the context of law enforcement, being conscientious is equally, if not more, important than completing specified job duties. Citizens expect police officers to behave in a conscientious manner while they enforce or uphold the law.

We expect that empowering leadership practices of law enforcement managers will have a positive effect on their subordinates' task performance and conscientiousness. Deci and Ryan ([23]) suggest that employee work motivation and performance depend on the fulfillment of some basic psychological needs, such as needs for autonomy and competence. Empowering leadership practices help subordinates to satisfy these psychological needs. For example, empowering leaders can enhance subordinates' sense of competence by assigning interesting duties, encouraging them to take more responsibility, and expressing confidence in their ability to achieve difficult tasks. Subordinates are also likely to feel a heightened sense of autonomy when their managers show confidence in their abilities. Perceptions of higher competence and autonomy, in turn, are likely to motivate the employee to improve their job performance.

Moreover, social exchange theory (Blau [13]) suggests that positive social interactions between two people promote trust, respect, and reciprocity, influencing both parties to behave in ways that are mutually beneficial. Research shows that when subordinates feel that their supervisors are supportive, recognize their contributions, and provide opportunities for their professional development, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward the organization, exert more effort in their job duties, follow the organization's rules and procedures, and avoid engaging in behaviors that are harmful to the organization (Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro [24]; Laad and Henry [51]; Wayne, Shore, and Liden [92]).

Research has consistently shown that empowerment improves public employees' work attitudes, such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and willingness to innovate (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [31], [33]; Hassan et al. [39]; Kim and Fernandez [49]; Moon [60]; Peters and Savoie [72]; Petter et al. [73]). Similarly, research on police organizations has shown that participative management practices enhance line officers' job satisfaction, work commitment, and engagement in community-oriented policing (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury [1]; Skogan [81]; Steinheider and Wuestewald [85]). However, the connections between empowering leadership and police officers' task performance and conscientiousness are yet to be examined. Hence, the first hypothesis that we test is as follows: Hypothesis 1 : Empowering leadership practices will have a positive association with subordinate police officers' task performance and conscientiousness.

Empowering Leadership and Perceived Managerial Effectiveness

With greater emphasis on community-oriented policing, law enforcement organizations now recognize the potential benefits of empowerment and allowing police officers to take initiative on their own in preventing crimes (Steinheider and Wuestewald [85]). Research also shows that organizational change initiatives that emphasize frontline officers' work autonomy tend to have broader support and buy-in, whereas externally initiated and top-down reforms that attempt to reduce officers' discretion through rules or procedures often have limited influence (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury [1]; Skogan [81]; Wycoff and Skogan [97]). This suggests that subordinate police officers are likely to perceive their managers more effective when they use empowering leadership practices, though this relationship has not yet been tested empirically.

We expect subordinate police officers to rate their managers as effective leaders when managers demonstrate empowering leadership for several reasons. First, by empowering subordinates, managers provide a positive signal about their confidence in subordinates' ability and competence (Arnold et al. [5]; Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke [84]). Subordinates are likely to feel respected and valued when their managers recognize their contributions and performance, consult with them on decisions that may affect their work, and support them during challenging periods (Arnold et al. [5]; Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke [84]). Such feelings, in turn, are likely to positively influence their perceptions of the manager's effectiveness (Kanter [45]). Accordingly, the second hypothesis that we test is as follows: Hypothesis 2 : Empowering leadership practices will be associated positively with subordinate police officers' ratings of managerial effectiveness.

Steinheider and Wuestewald ([85]) note that in spite of the growing evidence that participative management practices improve frontline officers' morale, work commitment, and quality of their day-to-day interactions with citizens, senior leaders in law enforcement organizations continue to rely on a military-like "command and control" style. The mismatch can be partly attributed to the scrutiny and external pressure that senior managers face for indiscretion, misbehavior, and poor decisions of individual line officers (Mastrofski [55]; Sklansky [79]). It could also be attributed to generational differences between the senior leaders and junior leaders and frontline officers. Regardless of the underlying cause, there is some evidence suggesting that line supervisors and senior managers vary in their dispositions about effective management practices in law enforcement organizations (Skogan [80]).

The broader organizational behavior literature provides additional insights into why such differences may exist. Considerable research on multisource feedback ratings has shown that while providing performance ratings, the raters may sample different behavior, use different cues, and apply different weighting systems (Atwater and Yammarino [6]; Bass and Yammarino [9]; Borman and Motowidlo [15]). Supervisors and subordinates, due to their positions and unique job roles, are likely to have different interaction goals with the focal manager (Hassan and Rohrbaugh [40]). As such, they may focus on different dimensions of the manager's job when assessing their effectiveness. Subordinates may consider empowering leadership practices more important because such practices contribute directly to their development. Supervisors, by contrast, may be more interested in the manager's effectiveness in accomplishing his or her own priorities. Moreover, because task-oriented practices are more easily observable than relationship-oriented practices (Yukl [98]), the supervisor may focus or put more weight on task-oriented behaviors while evaluating the manager's effectiveness. This suggests that the connection between empowering leadership and managerial effectiveness will be weaker when supervisor as opposed to subordinate ratings are used. Hypothesis 3 : The connection between empowering leadership and managerial effectiveness will be stronger when subordinate as opposed to supervisor ratings are used.

Empowering Leadership and Perceived Work Unit Effectiveness

Our final hypothesis concerns the relationship between empowering leadership and performance of police units. Prior research suggests that empowering leadership practices can improve work group performance in several ways. For example, by sharing information with group members in a timely manner, a manager can improve subordinates' decision making, which may improve the group's performance (Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke [84]). By coaching subordinates to develop necessary skills and confidence in order to create an enabling work environment where they feel their efforts and contributions are appreciated, a manager can help attract and retain top talents (Seibert, Wang, and Courtright [78]) as well as improve cohesion and teamwork in the group (Hackman [37]). There is also

some empirical evidence connecting empowering leadership practices with higher work group performance in government organizations (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [30], [31]; Hassan et al. [39]; Langbein [52]). However, these studies, as we previously noted, did not use independent ratings of perceived unit performance, nor did they control for the influence of task-oriented leadership practices. Hence, we retest this relationship in the law enforcement context. Hypothesis 4 : Empowering leadership practices will be associated positively with unit effectiveness rated by the manager's supervisor/boss.

Data and Measures

Sample and Procedures

We use data collected using three separate questionnaires from 101 managers in law enforcement organizations in Ohio, their subordinates, and their supervisors (appendix A in the Supporting Information online provides more information about the data structure) to test the four hypotheses. We collected the data while the law enforcement managers participated in an 11-week-long training. The training program referred to as the Public Safety Leadership Academy (PSLA) is funded by the Ohio Department of Public Safety and offered by a large public university in Ohio. The purpose of the training is to enhance Ohio law enforcement managers' leadership skills. The program started in 2013. Data for this project were collected from participants of PSLA cohorts 1–3.

All law enforcement officers in Ohio who have supervisory responsibilities are eligible to take part in the training. The vast majority of the law enforcement officers (about 75 percent) nominated themselves and obtained their departments' approval, while about one-fourth were nominated by their departments. The ranks of the managers varied from sergeant to deputy police chief and represented both rural and urban counties and small and large police departments, county sheriff offices, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

At the beginning of the training, each manager took part in a 360-degree leadership assessment. The purpose of this assessment was to provide the managers feedback about their leadership practices and skills. While this assessment was not required for the successful completion of the training program, nearly all of the managers (100 out of 101) participated in the assessment. We obtained the data for the 360-degree assessment from the managers' direct supervisors, subordinates, and themselves. To gather necessary data, we asked the managers to provide the email addresses of their supervisors and subordinates. Managers who supervised more than five subordinates were asked to select up to six subordinates to provide data about their leadership practices and skills. We asked the managers to select subordinates with whom they interacted on a frequent basis and whom they considered would provide honest assessments about their leadership practices and skills. We did so to obtain more accurate data to provide feedback to the managers. Moreover, a greater opportunity to observe a ratee has been shown to lower rating errors in surveys (Conway [22]).

In this article, we use the data collected for the 360-degree leadership assessment as well as additional data that we collected from the managers during the training. We obtained data for the managers' task-oriented and empowering leadership practices and ratings of managerial effectiveness from their subordinates using a survey that we distributed electronically to them. We informed the subordinates that their participation in the survey was voluntary. To encourage the subordinates' participation, we emphasized in the recruitment email that we would use the data to provide their managers with performance feedback. We also noted to the subordinates that we would only disclose the aggregated ratings in the form of a 360-assessment report. We did so to reduce potential response bias and obtain

accurate data about the trainees' leadership behaviors. The online survey remained open for three weeks, during which time we sent up to three individualized email reminders to maximize the response rate. Altogether, we received a total of 446 subordinate surveys, for a response rate of 88 percent. For each manager, we received at least three and a maximum of six subordinate surveys.

After gathering data about the managers' leadership practices from their subordinates, we distributed a second survey to their direct supervisors to gather data about their managerial effectiveness and the performance of their work units. We administered this survey electronically using Qualtrics. Similar to the first survey, the managers' supervisors had three weeks to complete the second survey. We sent up to three individualized reminders to boost the response rate. Altogether, 98 surveys were completed and returned, for an overall response rate of 97 percent.

We distributed a paper-and-pencil survey to the managers during the training to collect data about their subordinates' (i.e., the 446 subordinates who completed the first survey) job performance. This survey, which was not part of the 360-degree assessment, was solely for the purpose of this study. We asked the law enforcement managers to report separately about each subordinate's job performance. We did so by placing each subordinate's name above the items for task performance and conscientiousness. We distributed the last survey one month after gathering data from the managers' supervisors and their subordinates. The response rate for this survey was 99 percent. Our matched data set consisted of 100 manager surveys (for subordinate performance), 98 supervisor surveys (for unit effectiveness and managerial effectiveness), and 446 subordinate surveys (for leadership practices and managerial effectiveness).

Fifty-six percent of the managers were working in local police departments (both urban and rural), while 27 percent were working for the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and 17 percent were working in county sheriff's offices throughout Ohio. The vast majority of the managers were Caucasian (87 percent) and male (92 percent). Their average age was between 36 and 45 years, and their tenure in a law enforcement career ranged widely from 7 to 32 years, with a mean of 19.7 years. The most frequently reported education level was some college (30 percent), followed by a bachelor's degree (26 percent), high school diploma (16 percent), and graduate degree (14 percent).

Among the subordinates, 93.0 percent identified themselves as Caucasian. Three percent identified themselves as African American, 1.6 percent as Hispanic, and 0.9 percent as Native American. A vast majority of the subordinates were male (85.4 percent). The average age of the subordinates was between 40 and 49 years, and their tenure in law enforcement ranged from 0 to 40 years, with a mean of 16.2 years. The most frequently reported education level for subordinates was some college (37.3 percent), followed by a bachelor's degree (27.3 percent), associate's degree (19.5 percent), high school diploma (12.1 percent), and graduate degree (3.8 percent).

Measures

We measured *empowering leadership* using four behavior scales of the Managerial Practice Survey (MPS) instrument developed by Yukl and associates (Kim and Yukl [48]; Yukl, Gordon, and Taber [99]; Yukl, Wall, and Lepsinger [100]). The four practices are sharing power, supporting, coaching, and recognizing, and all are key components of the relationship-oriented behavior meta-category identified by Yukl, Gordon, and Taber ([99]). A close inspection of the definitions of various leadership practices offered by Yukl and associates ((Kim and Yukl [48]; Yukl, Gordon, and Taber [99]; Yukl, Wall, and Lepsinger [100]) shows that these four practices are also key elements of various existing empowering

leadership scales (Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp [2]; Arnold et al. [5]; Boudrias et al. [16]). These four managerial practices correspond closely to the measure used by Fernandez and Moldogaziev ([30], [31], [32], [33]) to operationalize empowerment. The respondents were shown three items for each behavior and asked to provide one overall rating for the behavior scale. The items had five response choices (1 = "not at all" to 5 = "a very great extent"). Respondents also had the option to choose "Don't know or not applicable." The internal reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the measure was 0.86.

We measured *task-oriented leadership* with four behavior scales of the MPS instrument. The four practices are clarifying, planning, problem-solving, and monitoring. Similar to the empowering leadership items, respondents were shown three items for each of the four task-oriented practices and asked to provide one overall rating for the component behavior scale. The items had five-point response format (1 = "not at all" to 5 = "to a very great extent") and a "Don't know or not applicable" option. The Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.85.

We measured subordinates' *task performance* using four items from Williams and Anderson's ([93]) scale for in-role behavior. The items are: [This employee] (1) "Adequately completes assigned duties and responsibilities," (2) "Fulfills responsibilities specified in the job description," (3) "Does not neglect any aspect of the job he or she is obligated to perform," and (4) "Meets performance requirements of the job." Ratings were provided on six-point scales, with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 6 = "strongly agree." The Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.91.

We measured subordinates' *conscientiousness* with four items used by Podsakoff et al. ([75]) to measure the conscientiousness dimension of OCB. The items are: [This employee] (1) "Follows unit rules, regulations, and formal procedures even when no one is watching," (2) "Is always punctual," (3) "Does not take unnecessary or long breaks," and (4) "Attendance is above the norm." Ratings were provided on six-point scales, with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 6 = "strongly agree." The Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.77.

We assessed *managerial effectiveness* with two items used by Kim and Yukl ([48]) to measure leadership effectiveness. The items were included in both the supervisor and subordinate surveys in order to capture their unique perspectives about the focal manager's leadership effectiveness. The items are: (1) "Please indicate the overall effectiveness of this subordinate (or the supervisor) in carrying out managerial roles" and (2) "Please rate the subordinate (or supervisor)'s effectiveness as a manager." Both items had a nine-point response choice (1 = "least effective" to 9 = "most effective"). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 for the supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness measure and 0.97 for the subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness measure. Because multiple subordinates provided ratings for the same manager, we aggregated individual ratings to develop a composite measure of subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness.

We used a perceptual measure for *work unit performance*. While an objective measure would be preferable over a subjective measure (Meier et al. [58]), objective measures are not necessarily without errors (George and Pandey [35]). However, subjective measures tend to be more inaccurate when self-ratings of performance are used. Favero and Bullock ([29]) suggest using independent perceptual ratings whenever objective performance data are not available. Accordingly, we obtained ratings of unit performance from the managers' direct supervisors. The four items used to measure unit performance were developed by Hackman and Oldham ([38]) to measure work group performance. The items are: (1) "How would you rate the quality of work performed by the unit?," (2) "How would you rate the

quantity of work performed by the unit?," (3) "How would you rate the overall commitment of this unit's members in accomplishing the unit's mission?," and (4) "How would you rate the overall performance of the unit?" The items were measured using a five-point response scale (1 = "far short of expectations" to 5 = "far exceeds expectations"). The internal reliability of this measure was high (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93).

While assessing the influence of empowering leadership on subordinate officers' task performance and conscientiousness, we control for manager and subordinate gender, race, age, education, and unit tenure and organization type (sheriff's office, local/city police, and highway patrol).[2] In our analysis for managerial and unit effectiveness, we control for manager gender, race, age, education, unit tenure, unit size, and organization type. We also include subordinate- and supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness as controls in the analysis for unit performance.

Findings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We conducted multilevel confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the validity of the key measures. The work-group-level (level 2) variables were empowering leadership, task-oriented leadership, work unit performance, subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness, and supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness. The level 1 variables were subordinate task performance and conscientiousness. Following the recommendations of Hu and Bentler ([42]), we relied on the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the weighted root mean square residual (WRMR) to assess the models' fit to the data.

The proposed seven-factor model provide an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2(356) = 479.75$, $p < .01$, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.03, within-level (level 1) SRMR ($SRMR_{within}$) = 0.05, between-level (level 2) SRMR ($SRMR_{between}$) = 0.10, and WRMR = 0.74. The multilevel CFA results showed that all scale items had statistically significant factor loadings ($p < .01$) for their respective latent constructs at the level at which they were measured. As shown in appendix B online, the standardized factor loading (λ) ranged from 0.61 to 0.98 at level 1 and ranged from 0.66 to 1.00 at level 2. The estimated composite reliability coefficients for each variable were acceptable, exceeding the 0.70 value recommend by Nunnally ([64]). The average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure was also above 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker [34]). These results suggested the measures have construct validity.

Reliability of the Aggregated Measures

Because multiple subordinates reported about each manager's leadership practices and managerial effectiveness, we aggregated the individual ratings to create measures for empowering leadership, task-oriented leadership, and subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness. When data collected at the individual level are aggregated to the group level, there needs to be sufficient within-group agreement and between-group variation for the aggregated measures (Bliese and Hanges [14]; Klein and Kozlowski [50]). We examined within-group agreement for the three measures by calculating the r_{wg} statistic (James, Demaree, and Wolf [43]). The median $r_{wg(j)}$ values were 0.88, 0.92, and 0.91 for empowering leadership, task-oriented leadership, and managerial effectiveness, respectively. These values exceed the suggested cutoff value of 0.70, indicating there was sufficient within-group agreement for all three measures.

We also calculated the intraclass correlation coefficients to determine the extent of within-group agreement for the measures. The intraclass correlation coefficients were 0.64, 0.62, and 0.63 for empowering leadership, task-oriented leadership, and managerial effectiveness, respectively. Finally, we performed a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine between-group variability for the measures. The *F*-ratios from the ANOVAs were 2.79, 2.62, and 2.72 for empowering leadership, task-oriented leadership, and subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness, respectively. All of the *F*-ratios were statistically significant ($p < .01$). Together, these results suggest that the measures had adequate within-agreement and between-group variability to proceed to hypothesis testing.

Bivariate Analysis

Table presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients among the variables in our study. The composite scale scores for the measures are negatively skewed. The average ratings for both manager and subordinate performance are slightly higher than the scale midpoints. Looking at Table , we find that empowering leadership is positively associated with subordinate task performance conscientiousness ($r = 0.25$ and 0.21 , respectively, $p < .01$) and subordinate perceptions of managerial effectiveness ($r = 0.71$, $p < .01$). At the work group level, the correlations between empowering leadership and supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness and unit performance are positive but statistically insignificant ($p > .10$). However, task-oriented leadership is related positively to supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness ($r = 0.20$, $p < .05$).

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	M	SD	Min.	Max.	1	2	3	4	5
Level 2									
1. Empowering leadership	3.93	0.58	2.40	4.75	(.86)				
2. Task-oriented leadership	4.03	0.48	2.75	4.88	.68	(.85)			
3. Supervisor-rated unit performance	3.30	0.80	1.75	5.00	.14	.03	(.93)		
4. Supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness	6.84	1.08	4.00	9.00	.10	.20	.30	(.84)	
5. Subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness	7.10	1.01	3.60	8.88	.73	.82	.02	.19	(.97)
Level 1									
1. Empowering leadership	3.92	0.86	1.00	5.00	(.83)				
2. Task-oriented leadership	4.02	0.71	1.00	5.00	.66	(.80)			
3. Employee task performance	4.98	0.80	2.00	6.00	.25	.13	(.91)		
4. Employee conscientiousness	5.01	0.78	1.75	6.00	.21	.15	.70	(.77)	
5. Subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness	7.09	1.52	1.50	9.00	.71	.71	.25	.22	(.93)

1 Notes: $N = 100$ managers, 446 subordinates, 98 supervisors. Cronbach's alphas are on the diagonal.

2 ** $p < .01$;

3 * $p < .05$;

4 † $p < .10$.

Regression Analysis

We relied on hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to test the connection between empowering leadership and subordinate task performance, conscientiousness, and perceptions of managerial effectiveness. For each outcome variable, we estimated two separate HLM models. The first was a baseline or null model, followed by a model with personal characteristics as covariates and task-oriented leadership and empowering leadership as the two level 2 predictors.[3] We centered the composite/average item

scores for empowering leadership and task-oriented leadership before estimating the HLM models. Table presents HLM results.

HLM Results for Subordinate Task Performance, Conscientiousness, and Perceptions of Managerial Effectiveness

Predictors	Model 1: Subordinate Task Performance		Model 2: Subordinate Conscientiousness		Model 3: Managerial Effectiveness	
(a)	(b)		(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
Fixed effects						
Intercept	4.98 (0.05)		5.02 (0.06)		5.01 (0.10)	7.09 (0.06)
Empowering leadership			0.41 (0.12)		0.32 (0.13)	0.64 (0.15)
Task-oriented leadership			-0.20 (0.16)		-0.09 (0.19)	1.18 (0.14)
Random effects						
Residual (τ_β)	0.45 (0.03)		0.43 (0.03)		0.33 (0.20)	1.67 (0.17)
Intercept (τ_π)	0.19 (0.04)		0.14 (0.05)		0.20 (0.18)	0.64 (0.11)
Model deviance	1003.36		961.54		886.11	1587.81
					1587.81	1439.89

5 Notes: $N = 100$ managers, 446 subordinates. The regression estimates for the controls are not shown in the table. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses.

6 ** $p < .01$;

7 * $p < .05$;

8 † $p < .10$.

Hypothesis 1a suggested a positive relationship between empowering leadership and subordinate task performance. As shown in model 1a, the intercept and variance components of the baseline model for task performance are statistically significant ($p < .01$). We find that 29.7 percent of the total variance in subordinate task performance is at the work group level, and 70.3 percent of the variance is at the individual level. The results for the mixed model are shown in model 1b in Table . We find that the relationship between empowering leadership and subordinate task performance is positive, significant, and substantively large ($\gamma = 0.41$, 95 percent confidence intervals (CIs) [0.18, 0.64]). A change in the composite score for empowering leadership by one standard deviation is associated with a 0.41 point ($p < .01$) increase in the score for subordinate task performance.

Hypothesis 1b suggested a positive relationship between empowering leadership and subordinate conscientiousness. As shown in model 2a in Table , the intercept and variance components of the baseline model for subordinate conscientiousness are statistically significant ($p < .01$). We observe that 40.3 percent of the total variance in subordinate conscientiousness is at the work group level, and 59.7 percent of the variance is at the individual level, suggesting again that multilevel analysis was the right

approach for testing this hypothesis. The results of the mixed model are shown in model 2b, which indicate a significant positive correlation between empowering leadership and subordinate conscientiousness ($\gamma = 0.32$, 95 percent CIs [0.06, 0.58]). Specifically, a change in the composite score for empowering leadership by one standard deviation is associated with a 0.32 point ($p < .05$) increase in the composite scale score for subordinate conscientiousness.

Hypothesis 2 suggested a positive relationship between empowering leadership and subordinate perceptions of managerial effectiveness. As illustrated in model 3a in Table , the intercept and variance components of the baseline model for subordinate perceptions of managerial effectiveness are statistically significant ($p < .01$). We observe that 27.71 percent of the total variance in subordinate perceptions of managerial effectiveness is at the work group level, and 72.29 percent of the variance is at the individual level, suggesting again that multilevel analysis was the right approach for testing this hypothesis. The results of the mixed model are shown in model 3b, which indicate a positive and strong association between empowering leadership and subordinate perceptions of managerial effectiveness ($\gamma = .64$, $p < .01$, 95 percent CIs [0.35, 0.93]). We also observe a positive and stronger connection between task-oriented leadership and managerial effectiveness ($\gamma = 1.18$, $p < .01$, 95 percent CIs [0.91, 1.46]). The magnitude of this effect is quite large considering the mid-point and variation in the scale for the measure.

To estimate the influence of empowering leadership on supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness and unit performance, we conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. The results are reported in Table . Looking at the first model in Table , we observe that empowering leadership is not related to supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness. This confirms hypothesis 3, which suggested that the connection between empowering leadership and managerial effectiveness would be stronger when subordinate as opposed supervisor ratings of managerial effectiveness are used. Additionally, we find that task-oriented leadership has a significant positive association with supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness ($b = 0.71$, $t = 2.14$, $p < .05$).

OLS Results for Supervisor-Rated Managerial Effectiveness and Unit Performance

Predictors	Model 1: Managerial Effectiveness	Model 2: Unit Performance
Task-oriented leadership	0.71	-0.26
(0.33)	(0.29)	
Empowering leadership	-0.23	0.42
(0.28)	(0.20)	
Constant	5.20	1.38
(1.33)	(0.99)	
F-ratio	2.60	2.02
R ²	0.13	0.17

9 Notes: $N = 98$. The regression estimates for the controls are not shown in the table. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses.

10 ** $p < .01$;

11 * $p < .05$;

12 † $p < .10$.

Hypothesis 4 suggested a positive connection between empowering leadership and unit performance rated by the managers' supervisor. In our analysis for this hypothesis, we controlled for supervisor-rated managerial effectiveness, subordinate-rated managerial effectiveness, and task-oriented leadership in

addition to manager personal characteristics, unit size, and organization type. Consistent with the hypothesis, we find a positive association between empowering leadership and unit performance (see model 2 in Table). A change in the composite scale score for empowering leadership of one point is associated with a 0.42 point increase ($b = 0.42$, $t = 2.04$, $p < .05$) in perceived unit performance.

Discussion

Implications for Research and Practice

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the ongoing research in public administration on employee empowerment by assessing the influence of empowering leadership on the performance of public employees, perceptions of their managers' leadership effectiveness, and work unit performance. The prior studies have shown that empowerment leads to more satisfied, engaged, and committed public sector employees (Fernandez and Moldogaziev [30], [31], [32], [33]; Kim and Fernandez [49]). The current study provides additional evidence about the benefits of employee empowerment. Consistent with social exchange theory, we find that empowering leadership practices contribute positively toward police officers' task performance and conscientiousness and the overall effectiveness of their work unit. As noted previously, no previous study in public administration has examined the relationship between empowering leadership and police officers' task performance and conscientiousness. These new findings, therefore, are noteworthy.

Our study also contributes to the public administration literature by examining the extent to which empowering leadership is related to perceptions of managerial effectiveness and whether this relationship depends on the sources of the effectiveness ratings. These relationships have not been examined in prior public administration studies on employee empowerment. We find that subordinate police officers consider their managers more effective when they exercise empowering leadership. However, empowering managers are not perceived more effective by their supervisors. These findings are consistent with our expectations as frontline police officers and senior managers have varying expectations due to job roles and interaction goals with the focal manager.

An interesting finding of our study is that the task-oriented managers are perceived as much more effective than the empowering managers by both their subordinates and supervisors. The implication of this finding is that task-oriented managerial practices are important, particularly in the law enforcement context, in which clarifying rules and policies and monitoring performance are likely to be critical in preventing incidences of indiscretion and misbehavior. The considerably stronger association between task-oriented leadership and managerial effectiveness that we find could also be due to an implicit belief among police officers (regardless of rank) that in order to be effective, a law enforcement leader needs to be directive and task oriented. This explanation is plausible because police work is masculine and officer's personal identity is influenced strongly by shared occupational norms and assumptions (Maynard-Moody and Musheno [56]; Oberfield [65]; Van Maanen [90]).

Our findings also have implications for the management of law enforcement organizations. Despite the growing evidence of the benefits of participatory practices in law enforcement organizations, police organizations remain fairly hierarchical (Steinheider and Wuestewald [85]). The success of proactive and preventive policing strategies (such as community-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing) requires empowering frontline officers and hierarchical police management has been noted as a major impediment to officer empowerment (Sklansky [79]; Skogan [80], [81]). Our study shows that empowering managerial practices contribute positively toward police officers' task performance and

conscientiousness and their unit's effectiveness. These findings highlight once again the benefits of officer empowerment and the need to decentralize power within police organizations.

While we found no association between task-oriented leadership and job performance of subordinate police officers, we cannot conclude from our analysis that task-oriented leadership practices are not necessary in police organizations. On the contrary, we consider that task-oriented practices, particularly monitoring and clarifying policing rules and procedures, are likely to be important in reducing unwarranted uses of force. A recent study by Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland ([4]) shows that higher monitoring using body-worn cameras reduces the use of force and complaints against police officers. This suggests that line supervisors in police organizations need to be flexible and balance between the need for empowering versus directive leadership styles, depending on the outcome (e.g., increasing motivation versus reducing misbehavior) they wish to tackle in a particular situation. Line supervisors may empower officers for certain tasks while, at the same time, holding them accountable for others.

Research Limitations

The contributions of this study should be considered in light of the limitations of our research design. We used data collected from select law enforcement managers while they took part in a training program. The vast majority of these managers were white men. Research shows that higher representation of minorities and women leads to better policing outcomes, whereas their underrepresentation can result in serious negative consequences (Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Markel [27]; Nicholson-Crotty, Nicholson-Crotty, and Fernandez [62]; Riccucci, Ryzin, and Lavena [76]; Theobald and Haider-Markel [87]). We were unable to check whether the demographic makeup of the law enforcement officers in our sample matches that of their respective agencies and the communities that they serve. It is possible that nonwhite and female managers (as well as subordinates) are underrepresented in our sample. This raises the possibility of selection bias in our data and limits our ability to generalize the findings to all police officers in Ohio. However, the managers in our sample represented law enforcement organizations throughout Ohio. The ranks of the managers also ranged considerably from sergeants to deputy police chiefs, and they were working in both rural and urban counties.

To measure empowering and task-oriented leadership practices, we relied on data that were collected for a leadership assessment. To collect the necessary data for the leadership assessment, we asked the managers to select up to six subordinates and provide us with their contact information. Because the subordinates were not selected randomly, their ratings of their supervisors' leadership practices and managerial practices could also be biased. We took some precautionary measures to guard against this problem. We asked managers to select subordinates whom they considered would provide honest assessments of their leadership skills and practices. We informed the subordinates in our recruitment email that we would use their reports to provide the managers with performance feedback. We also noted that the managers would not have access to their individual ratings. This was done to encourage the subordinates to provide honest assessments of their supervisors' leadership practices. We believe that these precautionary steps reduced the potential for response bias in the subordinate survey.

We used existing scales to measure subordinate police officers' job performance, but the items did not focus specifically on policing, e.g., whether the officers were procedurally fair and treated citizens with dignity and respect (Tyler and Huo [89]). It is possible that, while providing ratings about their subordinates' performance, particularly on conscientiousness, the managers considered the subordinate's behavior on the street. However, we do not have any evidence supporting this argument.

The connection between empowering leadership and police officers' job performance that we report, therefore, is tentative and needs further investigation.

Another limitation of our study is that we used a perceptual measure of unit performance. We asked the managers' direct supervisor to provide ratings of their units' performance effectiveness. While supervisor ratings are considered superior to managers' self-ratings of unit performance (Favero and Bullock [29]), we are unable to rule out the possibility that the supervisor ratings were not influenced by interpersonal factors such as the manager's likability and quality of the manager's personal relationship with the supervisor. Our analysis controls for supervisor and subordinate ratings of managerial effectiveness in an attempt to tease out these interpersonal influences. Even so, it remains uncertain to what extent the perceptual unit performance measure captured the unit's effectiveness in reducing crimes or was related to the trust and confidence of the community members, particularly minorities. Future studies should verify our results using objective measures of police officers' job and their unit's performance. Finally, we rely on a cross-section observational design, which limits considerably our ability to infer any causal association between the study measures. Future research should consider using a longitudinal design or employing a leadership intervention to assess the causal effects of empowering and task-oriented leadership in police organizations and other public agencies.

Directions for Future Research

Many important questions need to be pursued in the future to examine the effects of empowerment on police officers' work behavior. One such question that is yet to be explored is whether empowerment increases deviant behavior such as rule breaking (Morrison [61]) and mistreatment of citizens (Robinson and Bennett [77]) by police officers. It is possible that empowering leadership may increase opportunities for some police officers to deviate from their organizations' rules and protocols and engage in behaviors that undermine both their organizations' and public interests. It is also possible that these effects may be moderated or accentuated by certain personality traits (e.g., duty orientation versus narcissistic orientation) and situational factors (e.g., workload, job stress, and frequent exposure to violent crimes). Future studies should also consider investigating the variables that may mediate the effects of empowering leadership on subordinate police officers' rule-abiding and rule-breaking behavior (e.g., perceptions of psychological empowerment and the leader-member exchange relationship).

Finally, future studies similar to this one should consider assessing the relative effects of empowering and other leadership styles in other similar types of organizations, such as fire departments and the various branches of the military, and compare and contrast the results with surveys conducted in less masculine and hierarchical organizations, such as elementary education, nursing, and social work. While we cannot generalize our results to other public service professions, it is worthwhile to investigate whether empowering leadership is more important for individual performance and work group effectiveness than task-oriented leadership. Intuitively, we suspect this to be the case. Public sector practitioners, whether they are uniformed or not, and whether they are street-level bureaucrats, mid-level managers, and higher-level leaders, all appreciate the trust that comes with empowerment. Trust and empowerment also are likely to be more important in public than in private organizations because the outputs of public organizations are often difficult, if not impossible, to measure. Indeed, we think that empowering leadership, without losing sight of task-oriented responsibilities, will be honored by subordinates through better performance and, upon a possibly naive belief in trust, that very few subordinates will succumb to below-quality performance and abuse the discretion given.

GRAPH: Appendix A. Data Structure and Sources Appendix B. Multilevel CFA Results

Footnotes

1 Unlike McCrae and John ([57]), we do not operationalize conscientiousness as an individual trait. Rather, our study focuses on behaviors that capture the extent to which employee abide by an organization's rules, policies, and protocols. Our approach is analogous to that of Smith, Organ, and Near ([82]) and Organ ([66]), who suggest conscientiousness as one of five categories of OCBs. The other four categories are sportsmanship, civic virtue, altruism, and courtesy.

2 We measured gender and race with separate dummy variables (1 = female, 0 = male for gender, and 1 = yes, 0 = no for nonwhite). We measured manager age with a single survey item in the first survey: "What is your current age?" The item had five response choices (1 = 25 or younger to 5 = 55 or older). Unit tenure was measured with a single item each that asked, "How long have you worked in your current unit?" The item had six response choices (1 = less than six months to 6 = more than five years). Education was measured with a single item that asked, "What is your highest level of education?" The item also had six response choices (1 = high school to 6 = professional degree). Organization type was measured with two dummy variable (1 = yes, 0 = no for sheriff; 1 = yes, 0 = no for city police); the reference category for this variable was highway patrol.

3 The regression estimates for the control variables are not shown in tables 2 , 3.

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