Do personal traits of the leader predict differences in leader and subordinate evaluations of leader effectiveness: a study in the banking industry in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine whether the internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy can predict differences in self–other rating agreement on leader effectiveness. First, the authors predicted that the greater the internal locus of a leader the more their self-rating will be in agreement with others' rating of them (1a). Second, the authors proposed that the greater the self-esteem of a leader the more their self-rating will be in discrepancy with others' rating (1b). Third, the authors hypothesized that the greater the self-efficacy of a leader the more their self-rating will be in agreement with others' rating (1c).

Design/methodology/approach – To test the hypotheses, multisource data were collected from 128 banking leaders (who responded about different aspects of leadership self-efficacy, internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership effectiveness) and 344 subordinates (who rated their leaders' effectiveness in performing leadership tasks).Multivariate regression was performed by jointly regressing both leaders' self-ratings and subordinates' ratings as a dependent variable on internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy as predictor variables.

Findings – Self-esteem of a leader the more their self-rating will be in discrepancy with others' ratings.

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Originality/value – The study tried to investigate the leader-subordinate dis(agreement) on leaders' effectiveness taking banking leaders in the Ethiopian Context. The finding of the results is crucial and important for leadership development programs.

Keywords Leadership, Leadership effectiveness, Self–others rating agreement

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The working context demands leaders to present themselves in a favorable light. Hence, leaders may be susceptible to self-enhancement bias and, subsequently, inflate their ratings to present themselves in a favorable light (Atwater *et al.*, 1998). Self–other agreement (SOA) of leadership behaviors is expected to reflect the leader's self-awareness regarding their leadership capabilities (Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Erben *et al.*, 2019). It has also been linked to important performance and training outcomes such as leadership effectiveness to name one. Leadership effectiveness is the standard by which leaders should be judged, with a focus on typical leadership behaviors (Hogan *et al.*, 1994).

There is a considerable evidence indicating that self-ratings can be inflated or biased (Carless and Roberts-Thompson, 2001; Dunning *et al.*, 2004; Mabe and West, 1982; Kass *et al.*, 2021) due to self-enhancement bias or unrealistic optimism (London and Smither, 1995; Yammarino and Atwater, 1997). Further, meta-analytic studies (Harris and Schaubroeck, 1988; Mabe and West, 1982) have shown that there is a weak agreement between self-ratings and ratings made by others. Even though subordinates' ratings are not necessarily accurate (Ostroff *et al.*, 2004), feedback from subordinates may help leaders see themselves (the leaders) as others see them (Atwater *et al.*, 1998; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004).

Building on prior findings, individuals can manage perceptions of others as the result of their personality. The study has investigated whether core self-evaluation traits (internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy) provide a valid explanation why leaders overrate or underrate their effectiveness against their subordinate's ratings.

Leadership is a joint process and a cooperative task established by leaders and followers. Owing to this, leadership models should consider the role of followers and their perception. How leaders see themselves is different from the perception of their followers. For instance, low self-awareness undermines leaders' performance and success in the workplace (Ertürk *et al.*, 2018). Leaders are regarded as more successful if they perceive themselves similarly as they are perceived by others. The reason for this might lie in the awareness of the leaders' strength and weakness. Leaders who overrate or underrate their effectiveness are considered less successful with a higher potential for derailment (Bergner *et al.*, 2016). For example, Cullen *et al.* (2015) reported that overrating and underrating relate to the leaders derailment behavior such as relationship problems, leadership problems, and failure to adapt their behaviors with others.

Overrating is associated with low performance, low motivation, absenteeism, high turnover, low organizational commitment and low self-improvement tendency (Atwater and Brett, 2005; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004; Yammarino and Atwater, 1997). Furthermore, subordinates report that there is low job satisfaction and high turnover intention (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014). Overrating might also ignore negative feedback from others, lacks the awareness that their past behavior as it does not meet expected standards, and see themselves in an unrealistically favorable light (Yammarino and Atwater, 1997). As a result of which the leaders may fail to develop favorable behaviors (Bass and Yammarino, 1991) and consequently lead them to accept challenging tasks with a high risk of failure, setting unrealistic goals and ignoring developmental feedback (Atwater *et al.*, 1998; Bass and Yammarino, 1991).

In contrast, leaders may underrate their leadership as opposed to observers as the leaders do not see the leadership qualities that others observe what is in them. On account of that the leaders may choose easy and unchallenging tasks resulting in decreasing effectiveness ratings by others (Tekleab *et al.*, 2008). Leaders who underrate their effectiveness may not

achieve their full potential as they tend to avoid challenging assignments because they mistakenly assume that their past behavior is unsatisfactory (Sinha *et al.*, 2012; as cited in Cullen *et al.*, 2015). In short, disagreement between a leader's self–other ratings has negative consequences for both the individual leader and the organization.

The study extends its prior work in two ways. First, it uses a comprehensive theory-driven measure of leadership self-efficacy and leadership effectiveness (Anderson *et al.*, 2008) that have been conceptualized but not yet empirically investigated. Second, the study is conducted in Ethiopia, where the culture is large power distance. The study is in response to a call made by some investigations (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014; Atwater *et al.*, 2009; Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Mosson *et al.*, 2018) which asserts that most prior studies that examine self-other rating agreement take place in the USA (e.g. Kass *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, Atwater *et al.* (2009) pointed out that the role of cultural characteristics and the importance of researching outside the USA to understand potential cultural differences and their implication for SOA. Moreover, House *et al.* (2002) argued that power distance, assertiveness, collectivism and human orientation have different implications on the self-other rating agreement in different cultures. For example, in high power distance cultures, leaders may be unreceptive of feedback from their subordinates, leading them in to a discrepancy in self-other ratings. Therefore, the study on Ethiopian leaders where the culture is large power distance is such an overriding contribution.

More specifically the main interest of the study is to examine whether a leader's self-perception of effectiveness and the perception of their subordinates may match or mismatch as a function of the leader's self-efficacy, self-esteem and internal locus of control.

Self–other agreement (self-awareness) and leadership effectiveness

Atwater and Yammarino's (1997) model of self-other rating agreement provided the theoretical framework for the current study (McKee *et al.*, 2018; Hasson *et al.*, 2020). Leaders' effectiveness is largely determined by the way they are perceived by others in their organization (Higgs, 2009) and hence it is essential for leaders to develop self-awareness (Gentry *et al.*, 2007). According to Atwater and Yammarino (1997) there are four patterns of self-other rating agreement in-agreement and high, in-agreement and low, overrating or self-enhancement and underrating or self-diminishments.

According to Tekleab *et al.* (2008), a leader's self-awareness is the degree of similarity between the leader's self-description and his or her subordinates' description of his/her behavior. Self-other rating agreement typically is defined as the degree of agreement between self-ratings and ratings of others, such as subordinates (Fleenor *et al.*, 1996). When it is compared with the ratings of others, self-ratings may provide an indication of a leader's level of self-awareness. Specifically, leaders whose self-ratings agree with the ratings of others may be seen as more self-aware than leaders whose self-ratings are not in agreement with others' ratings (Fleenor *et al.*, 2010).

Self-other rating agreement enhances a target leader's awareness of his/her strength and weakness by providing the feedback about their leadership behavior and skills from others. It is important to understand and acknowledge others' perception of oneself to make changes in important leadership behaviors, since these perceptions often influence one's leadership success (Ostroff *et al.*, 2004).

Leaders who provide self-ratings that are in agreement with others' ratings are more successful leaders than those who provide self-ratings that are inflated as opposed to others (Fleenor *et al.*, 1996, 2010). A number of recent studies suggest that individuals who provide inflated self-ratings relative to the ratings of others are poor performers and less effective than individuals whose self-ratings are in greater congruence with others' ratings (Yammarino and Atwater, 1997). According to Atwater and Yammarino (1992) and Vecchio and Anderson (2009) if there are gaps between self-appraisals and the appraisals obtained from others, then differences in these appraisals may pose a potential problem for leader effectiveness.

Atwater and Yammarino (1992) argue that the relationship between behavior and performance are expected to be positive for self-aware individuals and zero for over-estimators. Leaders' self-other discrepancy in evaluation will be correlated with internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy, whereby in congruence rating of effectiveness by the leaders will be greater for leaders who are internal oriented, lower in self-esteem and higher in leadership self-efficacy. These relationships are discussed in the following section.

In conclusion, the literature indicates that leaders who provide self-descriptions that are similar to the descriptions of others (i.e. subordinates) are more successful leaders than who provide self-ratings that are inflated relative to others. Reducing discrepant perceptions between self and others (self-awareness) is important for leaders' success (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004; Tekleab *et al.*, 2008; Vecchio and Anderson, 2009; Yammarino and Atwater, 1997).

Factors affecting self-ratings and congruence between self and others' ratings

According to Yammarino and Atwater (1997), there are a number of factors that influence the way individuals rate themselves, and these factors may result in differences between self-ratings and ratings by others.

Different factors predict differences in self–other rating agreement. For example, studies (Fleenor *et al.*, 1996; Mabe and West, 1982; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004; Yammarino and Atwater, 1997) indicated the relative importance of information on biographic background (age, sex, educational level and job-related experience), individual characteristics (intelligence, achievement status, self-esteem and locus of control), cognitive processes (beliefs and expectations), contextual factors (political influence, rater experience and pressure), and similarity in biographic background (age, sex, educational level and job-related experience) in self-other rating agreement. The study focuses on core self-evaluation traits (internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy), because, according to Judge, Locke and Durhm's core self-evaluation theory (Cited in Judge and Bono, 2001; Judge *et al.*, 1998), core self-evaluation traits indicate individuals' final evaluation of themselves and are the best predictors of job performance (Judge and Bono, 2001; James, 2021; Farčić *et al.*, 2020).

In the following section a discussion is made as to how core self-evaluation traits (self-esteem, internal locus of control and leadership self-efficacy) that reflect leaders' ultimate self-evaluation influence their self-rating (Judge and Bono, 2001; Judge *et al.*, 1998).

The meta analytic put forth by Mabe and West (1982) validated self-evaluation of ability and it included three personality variables (i.e. intelligence, achievement status and internal locus of control) and indicates perceived internal locus of control as one of the personality attributes associated with accurate self-ratings. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that their actions or personal characteristics are prominent determinants of their experiences, whereas those with an external tendency feel outcomes are primarily determined by outside factors such as other circumstances (Paglis and Green, 2002; Rotter, 1966). Leaders who believe that they are in control of things will perceive that they have performed better than those who believe the causes of events lie outside of their control (Levy, 1993). Leaders with an internal locus seek and retain information about themselves (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992) and are likely to provide accurate self-ratings (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Yammarino and Atwater, 1997). We thus, hypothesize the following:

H1a. The more internal locus a leader reports, the higher the self–other rating agreement will be.

The second factor expected to influence self–other rating agreement is self-esteem. Gist and Mitchell (1992) indicate that low self-esteem leaders may feel more anxious and self-critical about chances for success when confronting leadership opportunities, compared to high self-esteem leaders. Moreover, Levy (1993) found that self-esteem to be related to self-ratings on a

hypothetical test of managerial potential. According to the consistency theory presented by Korman (1970), individuals perceive their behavior to be consistent with their self-esteem in order to maintain a consistent self-image. Accordingly, leaders with high self-esteem self-raters evaluate themselves more favorably than those with low self-esteem self-raters (Farh and Dobbins, 1989). Furthermore, Farh and Dobbins (1989) discovered that leniency bias in self-rating is related with self-esteem. Therefore, leaders who believe that they are more valuable tend to overestimate their effectiveness because of their perceived worthiness (Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004). We consequently hypothesize the following:

H1b. The more self-esteem a leader reports, the higher the self-other rating discrepancy will be.

Leaders' self-efficacy to undertake the leadership tasks is an important factor in self–other rating agreement. Leaders with high self-efficacy can influence events and consequences (Sosik and Megerian, 1999), and subordinates are likely to be attracted to and motivated by a leader who believe that he/she can make things happen. A study by Sosik and Megerian (1999) indicates personal efficacy is significant and also positively related factor to self-ratings of leaders, and Ostroff *et al.* (2004) suggest that self-efficacy is an important indicator of background agreement. Therefore, the underlying assumption here is that leaders with high leadership self-efficacy exercise better judgment concerning their effectiveness and they tend to indicate self-ratings in agreement with others. We, therefore, hypothesize the following:

H1c. The more self-efficacy a leader reports, the higher the self-other rating agreement will be.

Overview of the model

The model guiding this research is shown in Figure 1. On the right side, self–other rating agreement represents leaders and their subordinates' evaluation of leaders' effectiveness. On the left side, the core self-evaluation traits – internal locus of control, self-esteem, and leadership self-efficacy – are postulated as predictors of SOA. The central hypotheses focus on the proposed relationship between the personal traits and the SOA.

Method

Setting and sample

The study is a cross-sectional study within a commercial bank setting in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, there are 18 commercial banks with 2,377 branches. Because of cost, time and convenience considerations, the study focuses on the 18 banks with 838 branches in Addis Ababa (the capital and main city of Ethiopia), which amounts almost 40% of the branches in the country. A good rapport has been made with 15 banks that are willing to cooperate. The leaders in these 15 banks are responsible for leading and coordinating the marketing activities of all staff members within

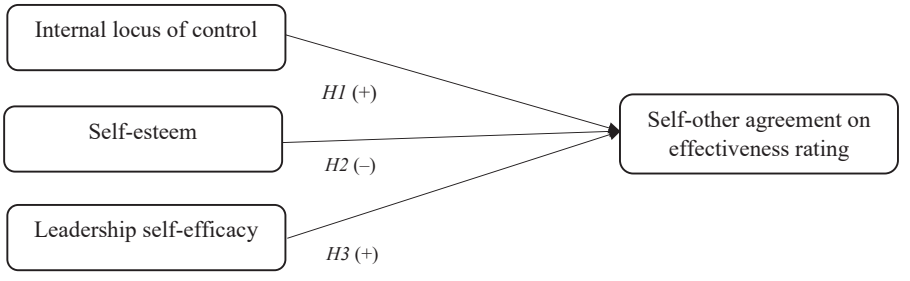

Figure 1. Personality determinates of agreement

the branch. Further, they ensure full utilization of the customer relationship management system to meet and exceed established sales goals and deliver financial service products to current and potential customers. The study uses stratified random sampling technique. Each bank is considered as a stratum, and random samples are taken from each bank proportional to the bank's share of the total branches. Accordingly, 168 leaders and 454 subordinates have participated from the 15 commercial banks, and out of whom, 143 (85.11%) leaders and 384 (84.58%) subordinates have completed the questionnaire. It is decided to delete 15 (10.49%) leaders and 40 (10.42%) subordinate respondents in the process of aligning leaders with subordinates' data (e.g., leaders with incomplete subordinates' data have been removed, cases that consistently and inappropriately give positive or negative answers in the response to the items are removed). Hence, the analyses are carried out on 128 leaders' and 344 subordinates' valid cases.

Procedures

Before administering the questionnaires, a formal official letter has been submitted to the head office presidents of the selected commercial banks. Presidents and other concerned bodies have been requested to give their permission to do the research and also have been requested to give some background information (e.g., number of branches). To test the hypothesized model of the current study, pairs of survey packages have been distributed to 15 commercial banks in Ethiopia. Two types of questionnaires have been used, one for the leaders and the other for their immediate followers. Each leader and subordinate have been formally asked to fill out and return a questionnaire in English.

Measures

The leaders have filled in a questionnaire on their leadership self-efficacy, internal locus of control, self-esteem and effectiveness, and subordinates evaluated their leaders' leadership behavior. As the measures have collected at one point in time a series of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) have been carried out in AMOS (version 22) to assess the discriminant validity of the measures. A full measurement model is initially tested in which each indicator is specified to load on the latent variable it is supposed to measure. Primarily confirmatory factor analyses have been carried out. The model fit is assessed according to the following criteria: χ^2 likelihood ratio statistics, Goodness of Fit Index (*GFI*), Adjusted Goodness of fit Index (*AGFI*), Tucker–Lewis Index (*TLI*), Comparative Fit Index (*CFI*), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA*). For *CFI*, *GFI* and *TLI,* values ≥ 0.90 indicates acceptable fit and values ≥ 0.95 indicates good fit. Further, *RMSEA* values ≤ 0.08 suggest acceptable fit. When a poor fit is found for the model, exploratory factor analysis is carried out. The method is principal component analysis (PCA) with oblimin rotation. To determine the number of factors to be retained, parallel analysis is used (e.g. Glorfeld, 1995; Horn, 1965), which is the factor retention method that generally has shown the best performance and gets the most recommendations from specialists (e.g. Garrido *et al.*, 2013), and the total variance explained (Hair *et al.*, 2009). The most recommended variant of parallel analysis is used as is suggested by Glorfeld (1995), which retains the first factors that all exceed the 95th percentile of their corresponding distribution of reference eigenvalues. The web application https://cemo.shinyapps.io/EKCapp/ is employed to carry out the parallel analysis.

Self-esteem. The self-esteem is measured by averaging responses of leaders on their attitude toward themselves on a ten-item measurement scale (Rosenberg, 1965). However, the CFA result ($\chi^2 = 88.16$, $p < 0.001$, $GFI = 0.86$, $AGFI = 0.79$, $CFI = 0.83$, $TLI = 0.78$, and $RMSEA = 0.11$) indicates that the data do not fit the 10-item construct. Following the CFA result, PCA is used and the result yields a four-item self-esteem factor. The four items loaded 0.75, 0.79, 0.80 and 0.85 and explain 63.57% of total variance. A sample item such as *"I feel that I have a number of good qualities"* is measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha is 0.80.

Internal locus of control. The second individual factor, internal locus of control is measured based on leaders' responses on eight items adopted from Rotter (1966). The CFA for the eight-item scale is (χ^2 = 52.47, p < 0.001, *GFI* = 0.90, *AGFI* = *0.83*. *TLI* = 0.81, *CFI* = 0.87 and *RMSEA* = 0.11), and item loading for the items is very low. Further, the PCA result for internal locus of control suggests a three-item factor. These three items are loaded 0.82, 0.86 and 0.88 and are explained 73.05% of total variance in internal locus of control. The construct is measured based on three items: "*Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little or nothing to do with it"; "Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it"; "In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck*". A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree has been used. The Cronbach's alpha score is 0.81.

Leadership self-efficacy. To measure leadership self-efficacy, 66 items are adopted from Anderson *et al.* (2008). Leaders are asked to rate their self-efficacy on a 17-factor leadership self-efficacy construct based on the 100-point self-efficacy measurement scale proposed by Bandura (2006), ranging between 0 ("cannot do at all"), 50 ("moderately can do"), and 100 ("highly certain can do"). Some of the items are "*Have the aspiration and stamina/strength"*, *"Define the work roles and tasks of others", and "Make and retain solid organizational connection*". The fit of the 17-factor model of leadership self-efficacy is generally inadequate (χ^2 = 3772.19, p < 0.001, *GFI* = 0.55, *AGFI* = 0.52, *TLI* = 0.72, *CFI* = 0.73, and *RMSEA* = 0.08). Therefore, The PCA has been used in all 66 items, which results in the first three eigenvalues equal to 29.29 (44.37%), 3.06 (4.64%) and 2.56 (3.88%). The corresponding reference eigenvalues of parallel analysis are 2.95, 2.74 and 2.61, suggesting two underlying components. Because the first is already explained about half of the total variance and the second component explain a substantial amount of variance. It is decided to retain one component. The scale has created by simply averaging all items with a reliability of 0.98, and all corrected item total correlations are in the range of 0.50–0.77.

Leadership effectiveness. To measure leadership effectiveness, 44 items are adopted from Anderson *et al.* (2008). Leaders and subordinates are asked to rate leaders' effectiveness on a nine-factor leadership effectiveness construct. Some of the items are *"Takes time to hear others' points of view", "'Big picture' thinker who sees the organization as a whole and understands it as an open system within a larger context", and "Forecasts and prepares for future institutional developments"*. All items use a five-point agree/disagree response scale. The fit of the nine-factor model of leadership effectiveness is not adequate either, both for self-rated leadership effectiveness (χ^2 = 1594.55, p < 0.001, *GFI* = 0.66, *AGFI* = 0.62, *TLI* = 0.80, *CFI* = 0.80, and *RMSEA* = 0.08) and subordinate-rated leadership effectiveness (χ^2 = 2030.99, p < 0.001, *GFI* = 0.78, *AGFI* = 0.76, *TLI* = 0.88, *CFI* = 0.89, and *RMSEA* = 0.06), although the fit for the subordinates is close to adequate. Running the PCA on the 44 items of the *subordinates* results in the first three eigenvalues being 18.12 (41.18%), 2.67 (6.06%) and 1.90 (4.31%). Corresponding reference eigenvalues of parallel analysis are 2.53, 2.32 and 2.18, respectively, suggesting two components. However, it is preferred to retain just one component because it explains the lion's share of the variance. This component results in a scale with reliability of 0.97. One item is excluded ("Does favors for persons under my supervision") because it shows a weak correlation (r = 0.154). Corrected item total correlations varied from 0.38 to 0.78. Running the same analyses on the *leadership* data results in eigenvalues of 21.74 (49.41%), 1.93 (4.38%) and 1.36 (3.09%) and reference values of 1.86, 1.73 and 1.66, respectively. Again, one component is retained because it explains almost half of the total variance. The resulting scale has a reliability of 0.98 after excluding the same item as for the *subordinates* sample (r = 0.26), with corrected item total correlations ranging from 0.52 to 0.77. Note that the leadership effectiveness scale is identical for both samples.

The leaders are asked to indicate their feeling of agreement/disagreement on whether or not they display effective leadership behaviors, such as "*Takes time to hear others'*

points of view", "'Big picture' thinker who see the organization as a whole and understands it as an open system within a larger context", and "Forecasts and prepares for future institutional developments", with a five-point agree/disagree response scale. Cronbach's alpha is 0.97. The format and the instruction is the same for subordinates except that they are asked to indicate their agreement/disagreement on whether or not their leaders are engaged in effective leadership behavior with a five-point agree/disagree response scale. Cronbach's alpha is 0.98. How self-other rating agreement is assessed and discussed in the following section.

Analysis strategies

The study design provides data at two levels: the leader level and the subordinates' level. The leaders provide data on their self-efficacy, self-esteem, internal locus of control and effectiveness, whereas subordinates indicate their leaders' effectiveness in performing leadership tasks. Subordinate level data are nested within leaders (the average is 2.65 subordinates per leader).

Day *et al.* (2014), in their review of 25 years research and theory on leaders and leadership, indicate that the importance of using of straightforward techniques such as comparisons of self-ratings to mean ratings of others rather than complicated techniques (e.g. polynomial regression) in SOA studies. Nevertheless, other researchers (Edwards, 1995; Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004) indicate the disadvantage of using difference score and recommend a multivariate regression procedure as a more appropriate technique in studies where congruence is a dependent variable.

Multivariate regression does not combine self-ratings and others' ratings into a single index; rather, self and others' ratings are retained separately and are tested jointly (Edwards, 1995). Multivariate regression is performed by jointly regressing both self-ratings and other ratings as a dependent variable on predictor variables (Edwards, 1995; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004). The self and others' ratings are not combined as a single index variable; rather, each is retained as a separate component. Keeping both self and others' ratings and undertaking the multivariate procedure on the joint equations has two advantages. First, it allows for estimating the effects of each predicator on each component measure as a set. Second, the sources of rating discrepancies (e.g. self-ratings are higher than other ratings or other ratings are higher than self-ratings) can be determined (Edwards, 1995; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004).

The first test to interpret is the omnibus multivariate test of association between predictors and the self and others' ratings of the joint test of the equations based on an overall Wilks' Lambda (Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004). Multivariate tests based on Wilks' Lambda are conducted to assess the effects of each predictor on the set of self and others' ratings. A significant Wilks' Lambda indicates that the predictor is related to the self and others' ratings. However, a nonsignificant Wilks' Lambda indicates that equal but opposite effects of a predictor on SOA is possible, provided that a predictor regression coefficient is different from zero (Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004). Further, to determine the source of any rating discrepancy that may exist, regression analysis is conducted to examine the relationship between the predictor and the corresponding self and others' ratings independently for each significant predictor (Fleenor *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, multivariate regression is performed by jointly regressing both leaders' self-ratings and subordinates' ratings as a dependent variable on internal locus of control, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy as predictor variables.

SPSS (version 23) is used to calculate the descriptive statistics and to test the hypothesis and AMOS (version 22) for the CFA. Descriptive statistics reports the mean values, standard deviations, Cronbach alpha and bivariate correlations of the included variables in Table 2.

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of participants (leaders and subordinates). The majority of leaders (85.9%) and subordinates (64.8%) are male. The mean age and work experience for leader participants is 37.42 and 5.47 years, respectively. The majority of the leaders and subordinates have a bachelor's degree and above (99.2 and 91.5%, respectively).

Table 2 presents means, standard deviations and correlations among the study variables. The relatively strong positive correlation ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$) between self-reported leadership effectiveness and leadership self-efficacy is expected. Further, self-reported leadership effectiveness is correlated with self-esteem ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$) and internal locus of control is ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). Subordinate-rated leadership effectiveness is positively correlated with internal locus of control ($r = 0.090$, $p < 0.05$). Further, subordinate-rated leadership effectiveness is positively correlated with self-reported leadership effectiveness ($r = 0.061$, $p < 0.13$), leadership self-efficacy and self-esteem, but the correlation is not strong (see Table 2).

The results of the self and others' ratings analysis are similar to previous findings in that average self-ratings are higher than subordinates' ratings (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Fleenor *et al.*, 1996).

Before running a multivariate regression analysis, ICC is employed where leadership effectiveness is measured using subordinates' response and found a significant ICC value of 0.26, which is greater than the cutoff 0.05 values (Bass *et al.*, 2003; Bliese, 1998, 2000; LeBreton and Senter, 2008). The ICC value indicates that the nested character of the data needs to be taken into account when testing the hypotheses.

Table 3 summarizes the association between leadership self-efficacy, self-esteem and internal locus of control with self-other rating agreement where the dependent variable leadership effectiveness is considered jointly (both the self-reported and subordinate-rated). The multivariate regression analysis result in Table 3 indicates that leadership self-efficacy and self-esteem predicts differences in self-other ratings. The results reveal that leadership self-efficacy is related significantly to self-other rating considered jointly (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.74$, $F(2,339) = 58.42$, $p \leq 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.26$).

Leaders' perception of high self-worth is significantly associated with self-other rating agreement when self and others' ratings are considered jointly (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.84$, $F(2,339) = 32.20$, $p \leq 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.16$). Furthermore, the omnibus multivariate test for self and subordinates' ratings indicate that internal locus of control is not significantly related to the set of self and subordinates' ratings (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.99$, $F(2,339) = 1.80$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.010$), providing evidence that equal but opposite effect is possible. The results in Table 3 partially support H1a and H1b that self-esteem predicts differences in self–other

		Employment category	
		Leader ($N = 128$)	Subordinate ($N = 344$)
Age	Mean	37.42	29.45
	SD	7.0	5.7
Gender	Male	110 (85.9%)	223 (64.8%)
	Female	18 (14.1%)	121 (35.2%)
Work experience	Mean	5.47	3.26
	SD	5.75	2.88
Educational level	Master's degree	35 (27.3%)	29 (8.4%)
	Bachelor's degree	92 (71.9%)	288 (83.7%)
	Diploma	1 (0.8%)	27 (7.8%)

Note(s): Rater male = 1, and female = 0. Rater diploma (associate's degree) = 1, Rater bachelor's degree = 2, and Rater second degree = 3. Age and work experience were measured in years

Table 1. Participant characteristics

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. LEL	4.18	0.46	0.97											
2. LES	3.84	0.68	0.061	0.98										
3. LSE	83.05	8.39	0.60**	0.056	0.98									
4. Self-esteem	4.28	0.60	0.53**	0.064	0.40**	0.80								
5. Locus of control	3.86	0.88	0.13**	0.090*	0.20**	0.24**	0.81							
6. Age (L)	37.57	7.26	−0.16**	0.065	−0.17**	−0.014	0.10*							
7. Sex (L)			−0.14**	−0.051	−0.18**	−0.038	−0.057	0.012						
8. Educational level (L)			0.083	0.064	0.043	0.080	0.14**	−0.14**	−0.073					
9. Work experience (L)	5.42	5.87	0.039	0.054	−0.10*	0.034	−0.044	0.46**	−0.11*	−0.070				
10. Age (S)	29.42	5.76	−0.13**	0.023	−0.091*	−0.009	0.070	0.15**	0.14**	−0.038	−0.002			
11. Sex (S)			0.004	0.090*	0.058	0.067	0.10*	−0.005	0.024	0.017	−0.046	0.16**		
12. Educational level (S)			0.003	0.071	−0.002	0.055	0.031	−0.017	−0.006	0.024	−0.053	−0.001	0.065	
13. Work experience (S)	3.25	2.88	−0.053	0.016	−0.016	0.015	0.022	0.026	−0.044	−0.061	0.12*	0.42**	0.048	−0.074

Note(s): $n = 128$, for leaders' data and 344 for subordinates' data. Letter in brackets after variable name indicates data source: L = leaders, S = subordinates. LSE was measured using a 100-point response scale. Rater male = 1, and female = 0. Rater diploma (associate's degree) = 1, Rater bachelor's degree = 2, and Rater master's degree = 3. Age and work experience were measured in years

Cronbach's alpha coefficients are reported on the diagonal

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

rating agreement while internal-oriented leaders will provide ratings similar to others. However, the hypothesis that high self-efficacy leaders will provide ratings in congruence with others is not supported.

Table 4 displays the results of independent effects of leadership self-efficacy, self-esteem and internal locus of control separately on self-rated and subordinate-rated leadership effectiveness. The results in Table 4 indicate the sources of discrepancy in self-other rating agreement, whether the discrepancy is due to high self-rating or high others' rating. A separate ANOVA on self and others' rating is conducted and the results for leadership self-efficacy indicates a significant leaders' self-rating (F (1,340) = 117.16, $p \leq 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.26$) (see Table 4). The effect of subordinates' ratings is not significant. Therefore, contrary to what is proposed, high self-efficacy leaders overrate their effectiveness. H1c states leaders with high self-efficacy would be in agreement has not been supported.

Moreover, the univariate effect of self-esteem on self-other rating agreement in Table 4 indicates a significant leaders' self-rating (F (1,340) = 64.43, $p \leq 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.16$) (see Table 4). The regression coefficient for subordinates' ratings is not significant. Therefore, the result confirms that leaders with high self-esteem overrate their effectiveness. H1b states that leaders with high self-esteem would overrate their effectiveness has been supported.

The separate regression of internal locus of control on leaders' and subordinates' response separately is not significant (see Table 4). The regression coefficients for both leaders' and subordinates' evaluation is not significant, and the result does not fully support equal but opposite effects of internal locus of control on SOA (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 5 summarizes the effect of each of the predictors – self-esteem, leadership self-efficacy, and internal locus of control – on self-reported and subordinate-rated effectiveness independently. The result provide limited evidence on the effect of internal locus of control on self-reported or subordinate-rated leadership effectiveness ($\beta = -0.028$, p = n.s. and $\beta = 0.059$, p = n.s., respectively). The predictor variables have explained 46.3 and 1.1% of the variation on perceived self-reported and subordinate-rated leadership effectiveness.

Discussion

The purpose of the study is to examine how core self-evaluation traits (self-esteem, leadership self-efficacy and internal locus of control) predict differences in self-other rating agreement.

Table 3. Multivariate association of personality trait factors on self-other agreement

Variables	Wilks' lambda	F statistic	df	Error df	p value	Partial eta squared
Leadership self-efficacy	0.74	58.42	2	339	0.000	0.26
Self-esteem	0.84	32.20	2	339	0.000	0.16
Internal locus of control	0.99	1.80	2	339	0.17	0.010

Table 4. Univariate effects of personality trait factors on self-other agreement

Independent variables	Dependent variable	df	Error df	F statistic	p value	Partial eta squared
Leadership self-efficacy	LE (L)	1	340	117.16	0.000	0.26
	LE (S)	1	340	0.19	0.66	0.001
Self-esteem	LE (L)	1	340	64.43	0.000	0.16
	LE (S)	1	340	0.35	0.56	0.001
Internal locus of control	LE (L)	1	340	1.67	0.20	0.005
	LE (S)	1	340	1.85	0.18	0.005

Note(s): LE = Leadership effectiveness. Letter after variable name indicates data source: L = leaders, S = subordinates

Overall, it is found out that self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy tend to relate to self-other rating agreement. Next, self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy relate with self-other rating agreement is examined. The result reveals that leaders with high self-esteem and self-efficacy tend to overrate their performance. Further, it is also noted whether overrating is the result of higher self-ratings or lower other ratings or both. The results reveal that overrating is due to higher leaders' self-rating for both self-esteem and leadership self-efficacy antecedents. The result indicates a non-significant relationship of internal locus of control with self-other rating agreement jointly, and equal but opposite effect is possible. However, the independent analysis for internal locus of control on self and subordinates' rating is not significant, and internal locus of control does not yield equal but opposite effects.

Leaders with discrepant ratings may misdiagnose their leadership strength and weakness, which can adversely affect their leadership effectiveness (Fleenor *et al.*, 1996). When leaders' self-ratings are higher than ratings provided by subordinates, the difference often results from self-enhancement bias. Even though this bias reflects a positive self-evaluation, overestimation also leads to ignoring feedback and change of important leadership behaviors, which in turn may affect future performance (Atwater *et al.*, 1998).

Self-esteem predicts differences in self-other rating agreement, and leaders with high self-esteem overrate their effectiveness. However, the overrating is due to higher self-rating. It is highly likely for leaders high in self-esteem to overrate their effectiveness, due to their perceived worthiness. Similar to previous studies (Farh and Dobbins, 1989; Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Levy, 1993), self-esteem predicts differences in self-other rating agreement and high self-esteem leaders overrate their effectiveness compared to their subordinates' evaluation. Furthermore, consistent with Korman's (1970) consistency theory, leaders perceive their behavior as consistent with their self-esteem in order to maintain a consistent self-image, and leaders high in self-esteem overrate their effectiveness more favorably than do low self-esteem self-raters.

In terms of self-efficacy, the result reveals a significant main effect for leadership self-efficacy on SOA. Leaders high in self-efficacy are found to overrate their effectiveness because of higher self-rating. Similar to a previous study (Sosik and Megerian, 1999), leader self-efficacy is positively and significantly related to SOA. Further, the results indicate that leaders high in self-efficacy tend to overrate their leadership effectiveness. In contrast to the underlying assumption that leaders high in leadership self-efficacy exercise better judgment concerning their effectiveness and tend to indicate self-ratings in agreement with others, leaders in this study overrate their leadership behavior. Further, it is expected that leaders high in self-efficacy are believed to influence events and consequences, and subordinates are likely attracted to a leader who believes that he/she can make things happen (Sosik and Megerian, 1999) and will be in agreement. However, the study indicates that leaders high in self-efficacy overrate their effectiveness due to higher self-rating.

Table 5.
Regressions of personality trait factors on self and others' rating of leadership effectiveness

	Self-subordinates' comparison					
	Self			Subordinates		
Antecedents	β	SE	t	β	SE	t
Intercept	4.18**	0.02	230.86	3.84**	0.037	104.28
Leadership self-efficacy	0.026**	0.002	10.82	0.002	0.005	0.44
Self-esteem	0.27**	0.033	8.03	0.040	0.068	0.59
Internal locus of control	−0.028	0.021	−1.30	0.059	0.044	1.36
R^2	0.463			0.011		

Note(s): **$p < 0.001$
$N = 344$

The overrating of leadership effectiveness by high self-efficacy leaders could be associated with the power distance between leaders and their immediate followers. Hofstede's (1983) studied the cultural relativity in organizational practices and theories, in which Ethiopia is included, indicated that power distance is larger in third world countries. In countries where power distance is larger, leaders may be unreceptive of feedback from their subordinates, leading to discrepancy in self-other rating agreement (House *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, leaders high in self-efficacy may perceive that they are unequal in authority and intellectual ability with their subordinates. Leaders' perception of being unequal with their followers increases the degree of autocratic leadership and make leaders unreceptive to feedback from subordinates, so they do not learn.

It may be interesting to conduct a comparative study to see cultural differences and how they affect self–other rating agreement. It is indicated in the literature that most of the research conducted on self–other rating agreement is conducted in the USA. Therefore, it is important to conduct studies outside of the USA and compare the results to see how cultural differences such as large or small power distance affect self–other rating agreement.

Limitations and future research

Notwithstanding the insights obtained from this study, it is acknowledged that some limitations may have influenced the results of the study. First, the study is a cross-sectional design, which limits inferences about causal direction. Although the result of our study contributes to understanding how core self-evaluation traits are related to self–other rating agreement, the study is limited to showing how feedback from subordinate's impacts leaders' change in leadership behavior. Further longitudinal studies that examine self-other rating agreement and behavioral changes over time are needed to better understand these relationships. It is therefore recommended that longitudinal studies be conducted on the effects of self-efficacy, self-esteem and internal locus of control in predicting differences in self–other rating of leaders' effectiveness.

Second, although multisource data have been used to test the proposed relationship, leadership self-efficacy, internal locus of control and self-esteem are self-reported, so the data may be affected by social desirability and common method variance. Further, there is evidence suggesting that self-reports provide more accurate estimates of parameters (Podsakoff and Organ, 1998). Although some of the procedural remedies are applied to minimize the effect of common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), Harman's single factor method test does not identify common method variance as a high concern, it still might have been. Therefore, it is important to apply the design remedies suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) and Podsakoff and Organ (1998) in future research to ensure that common method variance is not a serious concern (Podsakoff and Organ, 1998).

Third, the study tests theory-driven leadership self-efficacy and leadership effectiveness constructs empirically. However, the data do not provide evidence for the proposed constructs. Future research maybe a desire to examine the constructs and the factor structure of the scale, particularly the external validity of the proposed factor structure other than Western driven samples. Cultural differences like individualism vs. collectivism or power distance might affect how leaders and subordinates perceive the constructs.

Implications

The findings of the study in general have implications for researchers and organizations in self–other rating agreement. The explorations of the effect of self-esteem, self-efficacy and internal locus of control on self-and other ratings in high power distance cultures are lacking in the literature. A handful of studies is built upon connecting core self-evaluation traits to SOA research, exploring how a leader's self-efficacy, self-esteem and internal locus of control may affect self- and subordinates-ratings of leaders' affect his/her effectiveness.

Self-other rating agreement is a critical issue because it determines leaders' and organizational outcomes (e.g., Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Bass and Yammarino, 1991; Gentry *et al.*, 2007; Gentry and Sosik, 2010; Sosik and Megerian, 1999; Yammarino and Atwater, 1993). Individuals and organizations should be mindful of ways to help those who may be showing biased self-perception tendencies through multisource feedback.

For the individual leader, self-awareness is critical even though others ratings are not necessarily accurate. It is important for them to understand and acknowledge feedbacks and accordingly regulate their behavior Ashford (Cited in Ostroff *et al.*, 2004; Ostroff *et al.*, 2004). Individual leaders should enhance their self-awareness through different mechanisms for example executive coaches, mentoring and personality tests. Leaders should also be open to receiving honest, constructive and developmental feedback and learn from their experiences (Cullen *et al.*, 2015). In an inclusive evaluation, the rationale is that providing leaders with information about the degree to which their self-ratings agree with ratings from other groups will enlighten them about others' perceptions of their performance, thereby promoting better performance through increased self-awareness (McKee *et al.*, 2018).

Intervention is critical to leadership outcomes, and one of the common features of these interventions is feedback. Feedback aims to facilitate the development of leaders' competencies and skills by identifying areas of strength and opportunities for further development (Mosson *et al.*, 2018). Comparison between leaders' and subordinates' perceptions of leadership effectiveness help leaders reflect on their self-awareness (Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Smither *et al.*, 2005; Tekleab, 2008). Scholars (e.g., Fleenor *et al.*, 2010; Yammarino and Atwater, 1997) argued that self-awareness is vital for leaders who seek to improve their effectiveness. Therefore, leaders shall be a recipient of feedback to improve their effectiveness.

Organizations also play critical role. Through investing in multisource data on leaders' effectiveness and communicating the information organizations may increase understanding between leaders and their subordinates and ultimately increase organizational success. Further, organizations need to communicate the purpose and strategy of multisource feedback, and ensure that the multisource feedback process is integrated with other human resource management practices (Atwater *et al.*, 2007).

In conclusion, it is believed that the study advances our knowledge of how SOA is influenced by self-esteem, self-efficacy and internal locus of control. Organizations' understanding of the multisource rating and intervention in the feedback process will be important in providing more specific and helpful information to leaders. The different self-other rating agreement indicate that organizations should consider SOA in their human resource processes because it has important implications for training and development, selection and promotion.

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