

Misattribution of Good Leadership - Evidence from a Field experiment



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Introduction

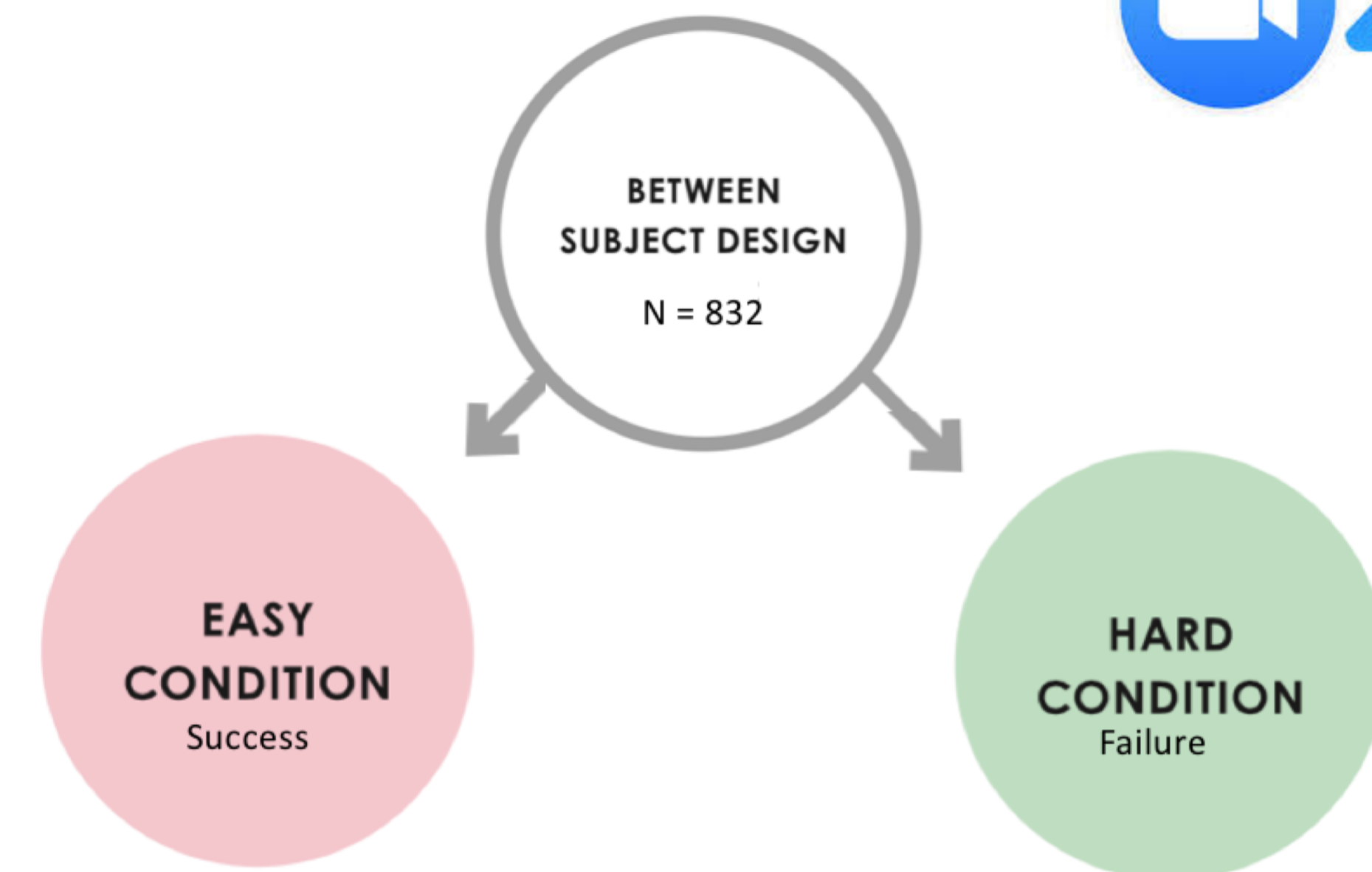
There is a stream of literature providing evidence for biased attribution for organizational or group success (Bligh et al., 2011) - poor performance is blamed on external events, while good performance is credited to the quality of leadership (Staw et al., 1983) Experimental evidence for this phenomenon was observed in laboratory studies using coordination games (Weber et al., 2001) as well as puzzle tasks (Frollová, Tkáčik & Houdek).

By a field experiment, we want to examine the external validity of those laboratory findings as well as the contextual sensibility of phenomena, which is hard to simulate in the laboratory. The field environment can be crucial for the understanding of the limitation of attribution leadership examined in laboratory settings.

Methods

We will study the performance of teams consisting of four people in a real-life escape game in which teams have to solve a series of non-routine cognitively demanding tasks in order to succeed. Randomly selected leader will be the only one member from the team who can decide if they are gonna ask for additional information on how to solve the game. Teams are randomly assigned to a game condition with varying difficulty - easy or hard one.

We will measure the assessment of the leader by team members as well as assessment of the all team members by the leader. We assume that a high rating of leaders in the easy-task condition and lower rating in the difficult-task condition will be caused by underestimation of an external factor. We assume that low assessment of team members in a difficult condition and a positive self-assessment of a leader due to self-serving bias.



Hypotheses

- 1) Participants in the easy condition will judge leaders more positively than participants in a difficult condition. This relationship will be moderated by leadership behavior and romance of leadership scale score.
- 2) Self-evaluation of the leaders will be the same among both conditions.
- 3) Followers who tend to romanticize leaders are more likely to attribute failure to external factors rather than to internal factors.
- 4) Perceived power will be associated with the condition.
- 5) Randomly filled/unfulfilled preferences of leaders will affect the leader's assessment and assessment of leadership behavior. This relationship will be moderated by Romance of leadership scale score.

References:

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