



Participative leadership congruence and employee task performance: The intermediate roles of person-unit fit and unit-member exchange

Journal:	<i>Leadership & Organization Development Journal</i>
Manuscript ID	LODJ-12-2022-0538.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	quantitative research, Quantitative Analysis, workers performance, Business Leadership, General Management, Leader-follower congruence

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Abstract

Purpose – Participative leadership's influence on employee task performance has garnered significant attention in a rapidly evolving organizational landscape. This study explores the multilevel dynamics of participative leadership congruence between unit managers and direct supervisors and its effects on employee task performance.

Design/methodology/approach – Drawing on two longitudinal studies based on the firms randomly selected from the Taiwan Economic Journal (TEJ) database, the research observes the mediating role of Person-Unit fit and the moderating influence of Unit-Member Exchange in the participative leadership-performance relationship.

Findings – Results indicate that participative leadership congruence positively affects employee task performance, with Person-Unit fit serving as a mediator and Unit-Member Exchange as a moderator.

Originality/value – The study extends leadership literature by highlighting the significance of leadership alignment across levels and the interplay between psychological and social factors in improving employee performance.

Keywords Participative leadership, Employee task performance, Multilevel leadership, Person-Unit fit, Unit-Member Exchange

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizational leadership is widely recognized as a crucial factor in creating competitive advantages and sustaining firm performance (Menguc *et al.*, 2007). In recent years, contemporary leadership theories have shifted the focus from traditional leader-centric models to collaborative leadership approaches (Chan, 2019; Eva *et al.*, 2019). Participative leadership, a collaborative approach outlined by Arnold *et al.* (2000), actively involves employees in problem-solving and decision-making processes (De Poel *et al.*, 2014; Eva *et al.*, 2019; Miao *et al.*, 2013; Somech, 2005). Recognized for its fairness (Sagie *et al.*, 2002), this style is essential in today's dynamic organizational environments (Aramovich and Blankenship, 2020; De Poel *et al.*, 2012). It fosters employee commitment and citizenship (Eva *et al.*, 2019), enhances job satisfaction (Chan, 2019), and boosts motivation and engagement (Busse and Regenberg, 2019).

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3 However, Eva *et al.* (2019, p. 70) argue that “consistent evidence of a
4 relationship between participative leadership and employee performance has not yet
5 been established.”. While some studies in the leadership literature suggest that
6 participative leadership behaviors enhance employee task performance (De Poel *et al.*,
7 2012; Huang, 2012; Newman *et al.*, 2016), others report conflicting results. This
8 disparity leads to confusion about how participative leadership might improve
9 employee performance and the specific processes involved (Eva *et al.*, 2019). As a
10 result, the mechanisms linking participative leadership to employee performance are
11 poorly understood, posing a challenge for leaders who practice this approach. This
12 uncertainty shapes the central research question of our study: Can a participative
13 leadership approach enhance employee task performance?
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28 The study addresses this research question by examining the role of
29 participative leadership congruence between leadership levels—unit managers and
30 direct supervisors—and the intermediate mechanisms between participative leadership
31 congruence and employee task performance. Congruence between different levels of
32 leadership is an important extension of the participative leadership—employee
33 performance relationship, given the structural complexity of many organizations
34 across the globe where multiple leaders across levels are responsible for employee-
35 level outcomes. Consistent with recent studies of congruence that examine the
36 alignment of leadership between organizational levels (e.g., Wach *et al.*, 2021),
37 participative leadership congruence is defined as both unit leaders and direct
38 supervisors displaying participative leadership behavior, which will not always be the
39 case (Chan, 2019). Hence, the study explores whether participative leadership
40 congruence is positively associated with unit employee task performance.
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3 Ali *et al.* (2020) assert that the performance of teams and individuals is not
4 solely determined by participative leadership. Based on social exchange theory (Blau,
5 1964; Huang *et al.*, 2010), this performance can be influenced by two critical socio-
6 psychological mechanisms. First is Person–Unit (P–U) fit, defined as an individual
7 perception of their compatibility with the unit (Cable and DeRue, 2002). Participative
8 leadership can cultivate a culture of respect, fairness, and dignity, nurturing trust
9 among employees (Blau, 1964; Moorman, 1991; Organ, 1988). This trust, pivotal in
10 social exchange, enhances the quality of interactions between superiors and
11 subordinates and potentially boosts employee task performance (Lavelle *et al.*, 2007;
12 Moorman and Byrne, 2005). A nurturing environment, therefore, strengthens P-U fit,
13 aligning employees closely with unit objectives and enhancing their motivation and
14 performance (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005;
15 Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987). The second mechanism, Unit-Member Exchange
16 (UMX), refers to the quality of social exchanges among unit members (Banks *et al.*,
17 2014). UMX is seen as a complementary context (Ali *et al.*, 2020) and can act as a
18 moderator in the relationship between participative leadership congruence and task
19 performance. It involves the collective perception of contributions and benefits within
20 the unit, affecting how group dynamics shape individual and collective outcomes
21 (Banks *et al.*, 2014; Seers *et al.*, 1995).
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46 Drawing from social exchange theory, we hypothesize (1) P-U fit as a strong
47 mediator in the relationship between participative leadership congruence and
48 employee task performance; (2) UMX positively moderates the relationship between
49 participative leadership congruence and P-U fit. Relying on two longitudinal studies
50 conducted in Taiwan, we gathered 1,317 responses from 278 units across 24 firms in
51 the first study, and 1,116 responses from 236 units of the same 24 firms in the second
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3 study. Our results show that P-U fit is a strong mediator in the relationship between
4 participative leadership congruence and UMX positively moderates the relationship
5 between participative leadership and P-U fit.
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10 Our study makes three key contributions to the leadership literature. The first
11 contribution lies in our examination of participative leadership dynamics across both
12 unit and individual levels. Unlike the dominant trend in existing leadership research
13 which primarily focuses on senior leaders like top management teams and CEOs
14 (DeChurch *et al.*, 2010; Eva *et al.*, 2019), our research delves into the multilevel
15 dynamics of leadership. We explore how these dynamics impact individual employees
16 within organizations, thus shifting the lens to a more granular level of leadership
17 analysis. By integrating contrasting perspectives—leader-focused, through
18 participative leadership congruence, and individual-focused, via socio-psychological
19 mechanisms—our study enriches the leadership field. This integrative approach not
20 only extends the leadership literature but also builds upon the foundational work
21 from, for example, Eva *et al.* (2019), Srivastava *et al.* (2006), Wang *et al.* (2005), and
22 Wach *et al.* (2021), offering a more nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics in
23 organizational settings.
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42 The second contribution of the study builds on the first contribution by
43 examining the role of participative leadership in enhancing performance, which has
44 often been considered on leader—follower congruence (e.g., Wang *et al.*, 2022).
45 However, this approach often neglects the influence of direct supervisors' leadership
46 behaviors (Caughron and Mumford, 2012), which can be crucial in understanding the
47 impact on individual performance. Our study addresses this gap by exploring the
48 extent of participative leadership congruence between unit-level leaders and direct
49 supervisors. This examination is vital for a deeper comprehension of employee task
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3 performance. It recognizes that direct supervisors not only affect employee health and
4 well-being through their behavior but also indirectly shape tasks and working
5 conditions (Klebe *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, our research emphasizes the need for a
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14 multilevel analysis to understand how leadership congruence at different
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The third contribution of our study lies in its examination of intermediate socio-psychological mechanisms and their impact on the relationship between participative leadership congruence and employee task performance. Recognizing the significant role of employees' local environment in the effectiveness of inclusive leadership approaches (Nishii and Leroy, 2022), our study addresses a gap in understanding the socio-psychological factors influencing employees' responses to participative leadership. This aspect, particularly under-researched in Eastern contexts (e.g., Astakhova *et al.*, 2014), is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics. By examining both the mediating role of P-U fit and the moderating role of UMX, our research contributes to expanding participative leadership literature. We move beyond existing research (e.g., De Poel *et al.*, 2014; Glew *et al.*, 1995; Vroom and Jago, 1995) by offering a multilevel perspective on the socio-psychological mechanisms at play, specifically in Taiwan. This approach not only enhances our understanding of participative leadership but also provides insights into the complex interplay of individual and organizational factors within diverse cultural settings.

Theoretical framework

Social exchange theory, participative leadership, task performance, and intermediate mechanisms

Social exchange theory, underpinning our framework, posits that reciprocal behaviors in two-sided relationships influence organizational dynamics (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In social exchange theory, the reciprocal rules explain that beneficial actions delivered by one side can lead to a response by another side in the relationship (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, the quality of social exchanges, such as trust and respect, fosters closer interpersonal relationships, crucial for collaborative and participatory behaviors (Blau, 1964; Moorman, 1991; Wang *et al.*, 2019). Echoing social exchange theory, favorable treatment from supervisors leads to enhanced task performance, where employees reciprocate with heightened commitment and effort (Huang *et al.*, 2010).

In the context of participative leadership, individual employees are pivotal. The participative leader relies on their knowledge and input for collective decision-making (Arnold *et al.*, 2000). This participative leader delegates responsibility, empowers employees to self-manage, and favors consultation over directive approaches (Eva *et al.*, 2019). Viewed through the lens of social exchange theory, this leadership style encourages employees to actively contribute ideas and engage in work processes, which is believed to enhance task performance. However, research findings on this matter are not consistent. De Poel *et al.* (2012) and Newman *et al.* (2016) report a positive link between participative leadership and individual task performance. Conversely, Huang *et al.* (2010) found this effect only among managerial subordinates, not non-managerial ones. Additionally, Somech (2005) challenges the idea that participative leadership universally boosts member task

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3 performance. This discrepancy in findings can be attributed to the delicate balance
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5 between desired participatory behaviors of delegation and inclusiveness and undesired
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7 inefficiencies in decision-making speed and productivity (Aramovich and
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9 Blankenship, 2020; Busse and Regenberg, 2019).

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12 Studies focusing on unit-level leadership have revealed a notable positive
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14 correlation between unit-level participative leadership and unit-level task performance
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16 (Caughron and Mumford, 2012; De Poel *et al.*, 2014; Somech, 2006). This positive
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18 relationship can partly be explained by the ability of participative leadership to drive
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20 strategic consensus, which, in some instances, has been positively associated with key
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22 performance outcomes like productivity at the unit level (Wach *et al.*, 2021). In a
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24 similar vein, research has identified a significant positive link between individual-
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26 level participative leadership and individual task performance (De Poel *et al.*, 2012;
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28 Newman *et al.*, 2016). However, though De Poel *et al.* (2014) suggest that unit-level
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30 participative leadership may be connected to individual-level work outcomes, the
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32 relationship between participative leadership congruence and individual-level task
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34 performance remains under-explored. This is a critical gap in the literature since
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36 “different employees have different interpretations of the behaviors of their
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38 participative leaders” (Chan, 2019, p. 320). Thus, the degree of congruence between
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40 senior leaders and employees’ direct supervisors may vary. In turn, this potential
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42 variance might influence the impact of participative leadership on employees’
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44 performance.
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51 The mixed findings between participative leadership and task performance can
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53 be explained by the different interpretations of managers and employees across
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55 organizational levels to adopt a participative leadership approach, highlighting the
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57 importance of reciprocal perceptions (Huang *et al.*, 2010; Hong *et al.*, 1999). For
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3 instance, Kao *et al.* (2015) and O'Reilly *et al.* (2010) observe how leadership
4 alignment is positively associated with positive individual-level outcomes, which
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6 points to critical multilevel dynamics between leadership and employee task
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8 performance. Leadership congruence will likely play a critical role.
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12 In examining the role of participative leadership congruence specifically, two
13 perspectives are relevant: unit leader and unit employees' direct supervisors (e.g.,
14 Wach *et al.*, 2021). The degree of (mis)alignment becomes central to understanding
15 the relationship to employee task performance inasmuch that employees would feel
16 more incongruence with the unit and would see a reduction of employee task
17 performance if participative leadership behaviors were misaligned across the unit
18 leader and the employee's direct supervisor (e.g., O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010). Hence,
19 through the social exchange mechanism, participative leadership *congruence* is
20 necessary to frame the complexity of the leader–employee response exchanges across
21 organizational levels.
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34 35 ***Intermediate mechanisms*** 36

37 Notwithstanding the role of participative leadership congruence, the existing
38 body of knowledge on the participative leadership–employee task performance
39 relationship points to neglected intermediate mechanisms, which may impact the
40 strength and direction of the relationship (Eva *et al.*, 2019). In line with social
41 exchange theory, contextual conditions, group dynamics, and psychological factors
42 are anticipated to mediate and moderate the participative leadership–performance
43 relationship (e.g., De Poel *et al.*, 2014).
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53 The extant leadership literature has considered several intermediate mechanisms,
54 including occupational contexts, individual experiences, information sharing,
55 organizational tenure, and cultural values, as reported by Chan (2019). With its focus
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3 on individual participation (Eva *et al.*, 2019), examining the relationship between
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5 participative leadership and employee task performance must account for other
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7 employee-centric contingencies, however. The level of congruence among actors has
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9 been identified as central to performance in the broadest sense (i.e., organizational)
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11 (Lin, 2014, p. 928). When we 'zoom in' to the individual level, P–U fit, defined as a
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13 match between person and unit (Cable and DeRue, 2002), is central to employee
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15 decision-making and performance. For instance, Muchinsky and Monahan (1987)
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17 suggest that the higher the fit, the more motivated employees are to enhance their task
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19 performance, a relationship supported by Cable and DeRue (2002), Kristof-Brown *et*
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21 *al.* (2014) and Kristof-Brown *et al.* (2005), among others.

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26 As an intermediate mechanism of its own, P–U fit and UMX, as conceptualized
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28 within social exchange theory, are influenced by group dynamics, extending beyond
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30 mere participative leadership congruence. UMX refers to the quality of the exchange
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32 relationship between members and the unit and includes what employees contribute
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34 to, and receive from, the unit (Seers *et al.*, 1995). Banks *et al.* (2014) further state that
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36 UMX refers to the exchange quality of unit members concerning other unit members
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38 rather than individuals and, thus, theorizes that UMX belongs to a shared construct of
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40 unit members (Chan, 1998). In other words, UMX can be understood from a
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42 relational perspective, “not as individual behavior, but behavior-in-a-relational
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44 context” (Boer *et al.*, 2011, pp. 87). Thus, UMX is suggested to form a horizontal
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46 workplace relationship-based construct (Banks *et al.*, 2014) and, consequently, will
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48 likely impact the degree of P–U fit perceived by employees through their
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50 interpersonal relationships.
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Hypotheses development

Participative leadership congruence, P–U fit, and task performance

Relying on the social exchange theory, upper-level leaders structure an organizational climate by disseminating organizational strategies and exchanging information and ideas at meetings with lower-level leaders and employees to elicit congruence (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2010). In other words, when a unit's participative leaders and supervisors at these decision-making meetings simultaneously spread encouragement to their unit's employees to become involved in the exchange of thoughts and opinions, their own unit's cohesion and potency will rise, as per the principles of reciprocal exchange (Blau, 1964). Accordingly, employees may enhance their own task performance by feeling greater alignment with the unit (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2014). These leadership behaviors positively reinforce the employee's perceived need to validate their ideas and choices, and thus promote the desire for continuous interaction and showing confidence in the abilities of a unit (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2014). In line with social exchange theory, participative leadership congruence is expected to thus increase P–U fit and task performance due to the mutual reciprocation of trust and respect (Moorman, 1991).

Extending these insights from the extant literature, numerous studies have examined whether leaders' characteristics are associated with P–U fit. For example, Glew *et al.* (1995) observe from previous research that individual-level participative leadership is significantly positively related to individual-level task performance, while Vroom and Jago (1995) show how leaders may solve problems by allowing subordinates to participate in decision-making, sharing their experiences, initiatives, and ideas to produce high-quality decisions, fostering a reciprocal beneficial relationship. Reflecting on social exchange theory, Huang *et al.* (2010) suggest that

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3 managers and employees may respond differently through personal cognition, work
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5 experience, economic needs, and the body and mind when facing the same
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7 organizational phenomena (Hong *et al.*, 1999). Glew *et al.* (1995) also indicate that
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9 P–U fit should consider the changing factors of individuals and an organization to
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11 explain the relationship between individual-level participative leadership and
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13 individual-level task performance by introducing a multilevel perspective specifically.
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17 Furthermore, the impact of direct supervisors on P–U fit is accentuated due to
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19 their frequent and close interactions with employees. This allows supervisors to more
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21 effectively engage in participative leadership practices, fostering a stronger reciprocal
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23 relationship and enhancing P–U fit. In accordance with social exchange theory, this
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25 enhanced engagement by direct supervisors is hypothesized to be more influential in
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27 shaping P–U fit compared to the participative leadership of unit leaders. This is
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29 because the direct, day-to-day interactions facilitated by supervisors are more likely to
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31 cultivate trust, respect, and mutual understanding, critical components of P–U fit
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33 (Huang *et al.*, 2010). Therefore,
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40 *Hypothesis 1: P–U fit is higher at a high level of participative leadership congruence.*

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42 *Hypothesis 2: P–U fit is higher when supervisors' participative leadership is*
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44 *perceived to be higher than unit-level participative leadership.*
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48 ***The role of UMX***

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50 Under the lens of social exchange theory, unit-level UMX is an important
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52 relational concept, which will likely benefit the positive relationship between
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54 participative leadership congruence and P–U fit. The logic underpinning this
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56 expectation is based on social exchange norms. Specifically, an individual is
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58 stimulated to become a valuable contributor and maintain an owned qualification in
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3 the unit (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2014). Participative leadership congruence is
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5 associated with greater cohesiveness, which facilitates the exchange of knowledge as
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7 well as trust between units in the organization, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of
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9 these exchanges (Wach *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the expectation is that UMX will enhance
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11 the role of participative leadership congruence because it will further enhance unit
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13 members' cooperation and coordination and their desires to advance toward the same
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15 unit goals, subsequently increasing P–U fit.
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19 Regarding the role UMX may play, Banks *et al.* (2014) explain that UMX
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21 reflects how individuals observe their interactions with other members and promotes a
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23 social attachment, which should benefit task performance by enabling employees to
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25 better anticipate each other's actions, promoting effectiveness and teamwork. The
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27 descriptions of such a relational context are closely aligned to the notion of
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29 collaborative climate (e.g., Boer *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, as Liu *et al.* (2011) claim,
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31 UMX may influence employees' identification for the unit, which should benefit work
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33 outcomes. This relationship was supported by meta-analyses by Banks *et al.* (2014).
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35 In explaining this, Farmer *et al.* (2015) point to two pertinent and related relationships
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37 to the study at hand: first, unit-level UMX assimilation may enable unit members to
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39 express their ideas and exchange professional resources with each other, augmenting
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41 the relationship between participative leadership and P–U fit; and second, UMX
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43 assimilation advancement toward the same unit goals, leading to greater P–U fit, a
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45 reflection of reciprocal exchanges strengthening unit cohesion. Thus, UMX should
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47 augment the specific features of participative leadership that create opportunities for
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49 employees to engage in social exchanges to discuss and solve problems at hand (Ali
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51 *et al.*, 2020), which, in turn, will strengthen the individual's perceived compatibility
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53 with the unit (e.g., P–U fit), consistent with the principles of social exchange (Blau,
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3 1964). As support to this proposed effect, Ali *et al.* (2020) demonstrate how team
4 voice behavior, a not-too-dissimilar construct to UMX, positively moderates the
5 relationship between participative leadership and the degree to which team members
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relationship between participative leadership and the degree to which team members
rely on one another, which resonates with P–U fit. Hence,

Hypothesis 3: UMX positively moderates the relationship between participative leadership congruence and P–U fit.

Methods

Data collection

The study draws on two longitudinal studies of firms randomly selected from the Taiwan Economic Journal (TEJ) database, representing high technology, manufacturing, financial services, and service sectors. The two longitudinal studies were conducted via a survey questionnaire from November 2018 to July 2019. Also, main constructs in the study are measured at two different time points is due to the fact that “the respondent provides the measures of the predictor and criterion variable is the same person. This type of self-report bias may result from any artifactual covariance between the predictor and criterion variable produced by the fact that the respondent providing the measure of these variable is the same (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003:881). This allows us to reduce consistency motif (i.e., the propensity for respondents to try to maintain consistency in their responses to questions) (Podsakiff *et al.*, 2003). The use of information especially the main measures from multisource at multiple levels in a longitudinal design permits us to lessen common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

The interval of each study was three months, and each followed a set procedure: first, from week 1 to week 3, unit employees rated their supervisors' participative

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3 leadership; second, from week 4 to week 6, unit employees were invited to rate their
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5 unit managers' participative leadership; third, each study from week 7 to week 9
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7 invited unit employees to rate their P-U fit; fourth, from week 10 to week 12, unit
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9 employees rated UMX, followed by a set of control questions. Collecting interval
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11 periods is used to avoid raters' biases (i.e., memory to rate the same scores)
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13 (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). We argue that the congruence effects of leadership do not
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15 appear in terms of time plan. In addition, in line with previous studies (Arnold *et al.*,
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17 2000; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Huang, 2012), participative leadership adopted employee-
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19 rated rather than self-rated. The collection method could reduce common method bias.
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21 Comon method variance (CMV) refers to collecting self-perception simultaneously
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23 and using the same method (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).
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29 Before commencing each study, an invitation letter was delivered to each
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31 targeted firm's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) requesting their participation.
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33 Participants received \$10 U.S. dollars for each completed questionnaire as a further
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35 incentive. The recommendations of Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) were followed to alleviate
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37 the potential of common method bias. The wording of the surveys was adapted to fit
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39 the conceptual level of constructs and translated into Chinese through the back-
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41 translation method. All items were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale. The
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43 research conducted item parceling using the random assignment technique for every
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45 latent construct.
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50 In study 1, the survey questionnaire was administered to 2000-unit employees
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52 from 400 units across 30 firms with at least 2 to a maximum of 70 units. After three
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54 reminders, 1317 valid questionnaires (65.85%) from 278 units of 24 firms were
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56 received. On average, these firms had 11.58 units (s.d. = 9.54), each unit had 4.73
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58 employees (s.d. = 0.15), and firms represented high technology (25.0%),
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3 manufacturing (25.0%), financial services (16.7%) and service (33.3%) sectors. Of
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5 the individual respondents, 917 were male (69.6%), 400 were female (30.4%), 20 held
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7 a master's degree or above (1.5%), 1265 held a bachelor's degree or similar (96.1%),
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9 and 32 were reported as 'other' (2.4%). Of these respondents, 12 worked in R&D
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11 (0.9%), 1207 worked in marketing and sales (M&S) (91.7%), 28 worked in operations
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13 (2.1%), and 70 were classified as 'other functions' (5.3%). Of the supervisors, study 1
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15 comprises male (67.20%) and female (32.80%) supervisors with a mean tenure of
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17 5.14 years (s.d. = 2.36) and an average age of 33.81 years (s.d. = 3.47). Further
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19 descriptive statistics can be found in Table 1, including the average number of years
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21 unit managers have worked with the same supervisor (2.43 years) and the gender
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23 (male: 73.02%; female: 26.98%), average tenure (7.02 years) and the average age of
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25 unit managers (38.97 years).

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31 In study 2, the survey questionnaire was replicated and administered to 1317-
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33 unit employees from 278 units of 24 firms in Taiwan. Firms sampled ranged between
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35 2 to 60 units. After three reminders, the study gained 1116 valid responses (84.73%)
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37 from 236 units across 18 firms. On average, firms had 13.11 units (s.d. = 9.91), each
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39 unit had 4.73 employees (s.d. = 0.16), and the firms represented high technology
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41 (22.2%), manufacturing (22.2%), financial services (16.7%) and service (38.9%)
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43 sectors. Of the respondents, 782 were male (70.1%) and 334 were female (29.9%), 12
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45 of whom held a master's degree or above (1.1%), 1084 held bachelor's degree or
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47 similar (97.1%), and 20 were classified as 'other' (1.8%). Of the respondents, 12
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49 worked in R&D (1.1%), 1050 worked in M&S (94.1%), 20 in operations (1.8%), and
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51 34 were classified as 'other functions' (3.0%). Of the supervisors surveyed, 68.91%
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53 were male, and 31.09% identified as female; their mean tenure in years was 5.27 (s.d.
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55 = 2.71), and they had a mean age of 34.36 years (s.d. = 3.25). As done for study 1,
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Table 4 presents further descriptive detail, including the average number of years participating unit managers worked with the direct supervisor (2.37 years), their gender composition (male: 75.42%; female: 24.58%), tenure (6.92 years) and their average age (38.59 years).

Measurement items

Supervisors' participative leadership. The construct was captured using six items from Arnold *et al.*'s (2000) Empowering Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ). The construct shows good reliability scores (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$). The CFA results revealed that the one-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 5.54$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 4.86$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99).

Unit-level participative leadership. The construct was captured using six items from Arnold *et al.*'s (2000) ELQ. The construct shows a good reliability score (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). The CFA results revealed that the one-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 11.39$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 9.48$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98). The construct was then aggregated into the unit-level (study 1: $rwg(j) = 0.88$, $ICC(1) = 0.42$, $ICC(2) = 0.77$, $F(277, 1039) = 8.63$, $p < .001$; study 2: $rwg(j) = 0.86$, $ICC(1) = 0.41$, $ICC(2) = 0.77$, $F(235, 880) = 8.42$, $p < .001$).

Participative leadership congruence. This construct is the multiplied product of supervisors' and unit-level participative leadership.

P-U fit. Nine items from Cable and DeRue's (2002) scale were used to capture individual fit perceptions. The construct had good reliability (study 1:

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$), and it was divided into three dimensions: value congruence fit (VC fit) (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$); need-supply fit (NS fit) (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$); demand-abilities fit (DA fit) (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$). The CFA results revealed that the second-order three-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 5.65$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 3.84$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99).

UMX. Ten items were adapted from Seers *et al.*'s (1995) scale to measure UMX. The original items referred to the "team" and these were adapted to refer to the "unit". The construct had good reliability (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$), and it was divided into two dimensions: the members' contribution to the unit (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$); what the member received from the unit (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$). The CFA results revealed that the second-order two-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 4.49$, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 2.09$, $p > .05$, RMSEA = 0.03, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99). The construct was then aggregated into the unit-level (study 1: $rwg(j) = 0.91$, $ICC(1) = 0.42$, $ICC(2) = 0.77$, $F(277, 1039) = 8.43$, $p < .001$; study 2: $rwg(j) = 0.91$, $ICC(1) = 0.33$, $ICC(2) = 0.70$, $F(235, 880) = 8.67$, $p < .001$).

Employee task performance. Following Huang (2012), employee task performance was captured by requesting every firm to provide objective performance ratings for each employee.

Control variables. In line with previous scholars' arguments (e.g., Chang *et al.*, 2019; Huang, 2012; Lam *et al.*, 2015), we controlled that these covariate variables may

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3 related to outcomes. First, demographic variables included gender (male; female),
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5 age, firm tenure (years), unit tenure (years), job tenure (years), education level
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7 (master's and above; bachelor's degree or similar; others) and work together with the
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9 supervisor (years). Second, relevant control variables at unit level included unit size
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11 (years), unit age, unit managers' tenure (years), unit managers' age, and unit-level
12
13 environmental dynamism. Third, relevant control variables at firm level included firm
14
15 size, firm age, CEO's tenure, top management teams (TMTs) size, and CEO's age.
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17 Finally, social desirability is reflected the raters' social acceptability rather than their
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19 true feelings due to common variance bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). In line with
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21 previous studies (e.g., Hays *et al.*, 1989), raters may lead to social desirability issue
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23 due to providing better scores for their leaders. Social desirability was assessed by
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25 five items from Hays *et al.* (1989) on a seven-point Likert scale.
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31 Unit-level environmental dynamism held good reliability score (study 1:
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33 Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$). The CFA results revealed that the
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35 one-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 3.63$, $p < .05$, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI
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37 = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 1.86$, $p > .05$, RMSEA = 0.03, CFI =
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39 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99). The construct was then aggregated into the unit-level
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41 (study 1: $rwg(j) = 0.86$, $ICC(1) = 0.39$, $ICC(2) = 0.75$, $F(277, 1039) = 7.91$, $p < .001$;
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43 study 2: $rwg(j) = 0.86$, $ICC(1) = 0.41$, $ICC(2) = 0.77$, $F(235, 880) = 8.29$, $p < .001$).
44
45 Finally, related variables of firms included firm size, firm age, CEO's tenure, top
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47 management teams (TMTs) size, and CEO's age. The social desirability construct was
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49 highly reliable (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$). The CFA
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51 results revealed that the one-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 10.13$, p
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53 $< .001$, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 7.09$, p
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55 $< .001$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99). All measurement items
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are presented in Appendix A.

Data analyses and results

For both studies, we analyzed a three-way first-stage moderated mediation in multilevel polynomial structural equation modeling (SEM) using Mplus 7.4. Following previous research (Preacher *et al.*, 2010, 2016), the results were more precisely presented by using the multilevel SEM method at the same time rather than the multilevel regression (i.e., separate hierarchical linear modeling). In addition, Monte Carlo simulation was adopted to estimate the confidence intervals (CIs) of conditional indirect effects in the model. Also, in line with previous studies (Hall *et al.*, 1999; Landis *et al.*, 2000), we used random parceling techniques to run the CFA to improve model fits, reduce measurement errors, maintain the reasonable ratios of parameters, samples, and the degree of freedom.

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics and correlations among these variables for study 1 and Table 4 for study 2. For study 1, table 2 shows the results. The hypothesized structural model had a good fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 4.39, p < .001$; CFI = .90; TLI = .90; SRMR = .07; RMSEA = .08). Table 5 shows results for study 2 and the same good fit for study 2 ($\chi^2/df = 1.49, p > .05$; CFI = .94; TLI = .92; SRMR = .06; RMSEA = .06). First, participative leadership congruence had a significant positive impact on P–U fit (study 1: $b = 0.30, p < .001$; 95% CI = [0.10, 0.50]; study 2: $b = 0.47, p < .001$; 95% CI = [0.31, 0.63]). The alignment effect of the relationship between supervisors' and unit-level participative leadership on P–U fit was significant (study 1: $slope = 3.24, p < .001$; $curvature = 1.28, p < .001$; study 2: $slope = 3.48, p < .001$; $curvature = 2.99, p < .001$). Nevertheless, Figures 2 and 5 imply that P–U fit was higher when unit-level leaders and direct supervisors were aligned at a high level of participative leadership as opposed to when they were misaligned. Therefore,

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3 hypothesis 1 was supported in both studies.
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5 [Insert Tables 1, Table2, Table 4, Table 5, Figure 2, Figure 5]
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8 Second, the misalignment effect of the relationship between direct
9 supervisors' and unit-level participative leadership on P-U fit was significant (study
10 1: $slope = 0.28, p < .001$; $curvature = 0.68, p < .001$; study 2: $slope = 1.46, p < .05$;
11 $curvature = -0.67, p < .05$). Meanwhile, figure 2 and figure 5 also imply that P-U fit
12 is higher when individual-level participative leadership was higher than unit-level
13 participative leadership rather than when unit-level participative leadership was
14 higher than individual-level participative leadership. Hence, hypothesis 2 was
15 supported in both studies.
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26 Third, unit-level UMX significantly positively moderated the relationship
27 between participative leadership congruence and P-U fit such that in the presence of
28 higher unit-level UMX, participative leadership congruence at a high level was more
29 positively related to P-U fit (study 1: $b = 0.10, p < .001$; 95% CI = [0.09, 0.11]; study
30 2: $b = 0.11, p < .001$; 95% CI = [0.09, 0.13]). The simple slope tests of three-way
31 interactive effect are presented in Tables 3 and Figure 3, (study 1); Table 6 and Figure
32 6 (study 2), respectively. The findings from both studies support hypothesis 3.
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42 [Insert Tables 3, Table 6, Figure 3, Figure 6]
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46 ***Additional analysis***

47 For additional insights, we examined whether UMX positively moderated the
48 participative leadership congruence-employees' task performance relationship
49 through P-U fit. Following Zyphur *et al.* (2016), there were six steps to test a
50 multilevel polynomial three-way moderated mediation model. First step, individual-
51 level participative leadership among direct supervisors' is positively related to
52 employee task performance (study 1: $b = 11.58, p < .001$; 95% CI = [6.84, 16.32];
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study 2: $b = 18.32, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [8.63, 28.01]$). Second, individual-level participative leadership is positively related to P-U fit (study 1: $b = 1.76, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.67, 1.85]$; study 2: $b = 2.47, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.21, 3.73]$). Third, P-U fit is positively related to employee task performance (study 1: $b = 2.51, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.73, 4.29]$; study 2: $b = 3.54, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.24, 6.84]$). Fourth, unit-level participative leadership is positively related to P-U fit (study 1: $b = 1.48, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.21, 1.75]$; study 2: $b = 1.01, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.97, 1.05]$). Fifth, unit-level participative leadership is positively related to employee task performance (study 1: $b = 5.48, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.42, 10.54]$; study 2: $b = 5.63, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.14, 10.12]$). For the sixth and final step, UMX is found to moderate the mediation paths of participative leadership congruence—P-U fit—employee task performance (study 1: $b = 6.53, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.82, 11.24]$; study 2: $b = 11.78, p < .001; 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.42, 22.14]$). **Three-way moderated mediation effect of individual-level participative leadership, unit-level participative leadership and unit-level unit-member exchange on individual-level person-unit fit through individual-level task performance are presented in Figure 4 (study 1) and Figure 7 (study 2).**

[Insert Figure 4, Figure 7]

Discussion

Contributions to theory

The study makes three contributions to leadership and management theory. First, while leadership has long been recognized as a critical feature of organizational success (Menguc *et al.*, 2007), a multilevel perspective is needed for inclusive leadership approaches to prosper (Nishii and Leroy, 2022). While extant research has suggested that the role and impact of leadership cuts across organizational levels and

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3 requires multilevel treatments (Klebe *et al.*, 2022; Glew *et al.*, 1995), extant research
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5 has generally examined individual (De Poel *et al.*, 2012; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Newman
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7 *et al.*, 2016) or group (Caughron and Mumford, 2012; De Poel *et al.*, 2014; Somech,
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9 2006) level dynamics. Subsequently, few studies have examined an integrated
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11 multilevel framework of participative leadership and employee-level outcomes. In
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13 response, this study employs a multiple-level approach to reveal the role of
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15 participative leadership congruence between business unit leaders and direct
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17 supervisors and intermediate socio-psychological mechanisms on employee task
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19 performance. In doing so, the study places a much-needed emphasis on both senior
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21 leaders and lower-level leaders and employees' local and interpersonal experiences
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23 that are suggested to make all the difference for inclusive leadership environments
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25 (Nishii and Leroy, 2022). Specifically, the results demonstrate that higher
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27 participative leadership congruence will enhance employee task performance through
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29 P–U fit. Consequently, the revealed importance of participative leadership congruence
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31 between senior and lower-level leaders reinforces the need for leadership research to
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33 account for (mis)alignment in leadership behaviors across all leadership levels when
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35 examining outcomes of participative leadership in large firms.
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42 Second, O'Reilly *et al.* (2010) indicate how participative leadership incongruence
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44 would result in reduced employee task performance but do not show how this might
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46 occur. The findings show a more complex picture than the suggested positive impact
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48 on employee task performance when leadership congruence is high and, conversely,
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50 the suggested negative impact on employee task performance when leadership
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52 incongruence is present. Specifically, the findings reveal that leadership incongruence
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54 (i.e., misalignment in the participative leadership behaviors between unit-level leaders
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56 and employees' direct supervisors) can raise P–U fit and, thus, employee task
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3 performance only when direct supervisors display high participative leadership
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5 behaviors. The critical implication here is twofold: (i) direct supervisors' participative
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7 leadership is more critical than the participative leadership of senior leaders for
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9 employee task performance, via the mediating role of P–U fit; and (ii) the established
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11 importance of leader and follower similarity of attributes (e.g., Emirza and Katrinli,
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13 2022) does not hold for the relationship between participative leadership and P–U fit.
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15 This finding reinforces the assertion of Nishii and Leroy (2022, p. 683) that “people’s
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17 more local and interpersonal experiences make all the difference” for inclusive
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19 leadership in organizations. In other words, direct supervisors are essential to
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21 enhancing P–U fit by working closely and collaboratively with subordinates through
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23 frequent discussion of, and collective involvement in, decision-making (e.g., Klebe *et*
24
25 *al.*, 2022). It is through these behaviors and the corresponding employee responses
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27 that employees’ task performance increases. This finding highlights the nuances of
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29 participative leadership congruence, suggesting that the relationship to employees’
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31 task performance is more complex than simply an aligned situation being ‘good’ and
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33 a misaligned situation being ‘bad’ for the task performance of employees.
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40 Third, in addition to the theoretical insights presented above, the findings put a
41
42 spotlight on the situational conditions experienced by unit-level employees and how
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44 such conditions moderate the pathway to employee task performance. Specifically,
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46 the results reveal how the boundary role of UMX enhances the relationship between
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48 participative leadership congruence and employee P–U fit. UMX augments the
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50 specific qualities of participative leadership that promote P–U fit. Participative
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52 leadership is a highly inclusive leadership approach, which the presence of UMX
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54 further amplifies through its characteristics of open exchange of ideas, information,
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56 and resources among unit employees and in group discussions and meetings (Farmer
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3 *et al.*, 2015). UMX generates social attachment between the individual employee and
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5 the unit, resulting in stronger identification with the unit as well as greater cohesion
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7 and teamwork among unit members (Liu *et al.*, 2011; Banks *et al.*, 2014). UMX is,
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9 thus, found to directly strengthen and augment the relationship between participative
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11 leadership and P–U fit, empirically validating the importance of situational conditions
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13 for successful inclusive leadership practices (e.g., Nishii and Leroy, 2022; Somech,
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15 2005).
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21 ***Implications for practice***

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23 Concerning the practical implications of the research findings, we urge firms to
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25 emphasize the vertical alignment of participative leadership behaviors across all
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27 'leaders', regardless of their position in the firm. Immediate employee supervisors play
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29 a critical leadership role and should not be dismissed as simply operational managers,
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31 only concerned with day-to-day operations, and not impacting organizational
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33 performance. Ensuring that direct supervisors receive appropriate managerial
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35 education training for the required participative leadership behaviors will improve
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37 employees' task performance (e.g., Banks *et al.*, 2014; De Poel *et al.*, 2014).
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42 We also urge senior executives to promote an organizational workplace climate
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44 that fosters an open-minded unit culture by constructing a variety of information
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46 exchange platforms. This practice will increase the effectiveness of participative
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48 leadership in intensifying individual P–U fit and, subsequently, the relationship
49
50 between P–U fit and employee task performance. Based on our findings, it is essential
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52 that misalignment in the participative leadership behaviors across levels is identified
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54 and addressed as this has the potential to undermine P–U fit and reduce the task
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56 performance of employees. This is especially the case if employees' direct supervisors
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58 show an absence of participative leadership behaviors, as these individuals play a
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3 critical role in generating P–U fit and ultimately superior organizational performance,
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5 through increasing employees' task performance.
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9 ***Limitations and Future research***

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11 There are several study limitations: First, the study examines participative leadership
12
13 behaviors among unit managers and immediate supervisors. An appropriate extension
14
15 of this research would be to include a third hierarchical level of positions such as
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17 senior executives and top management teams. Second, the study focused on firms in
18
19 Taiwan while we expect the findings to hold across other similar Asian countries, the
20
21 future should investigate possible cross-national/cross-cultural differences in the
22
23 relationships uncovered. Third, the study applied a cross-lagged panel approach.
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25 While this provided insights over time, daily analysis to observe changes in P–U fit
26
27 and task performance would be an interesting avenue to explore in future research.
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Study 1

Table 1 – Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1. Employee's gender	.70	.46	-																						
2. Employee's age	31.42	4.22	.16***	-																					
3. Employee's firm tenure (years)	3.61	2.36	.13***	.43***	-																				
4. Employee's unit tenure (years)	2.89	2.04	.10***	.32***	.60***	-																			
5. Employee's job tenure (years)	1.94	1.71	.08**	.18***	.49***	.52***	-																		
6. Employee's education level ^a	.98	.15	-.02	-.05*	-.08***	-.10***	-.16***	-																	
7. Work together with the supervisor (years)	2.43	1.64	.08***	.27***	.51***	.58***	.48***	-.11***	-																
8. Individual-level socially desirable response	4.45	0.92	.06*	-.09***	-.02	-.05*	.04*	.01	-.08***	-															
9. Unit size	7.68	6.22	-.11***	-.08***	.02	.11***	.14***	-.05*	.16***	-.05*	-														
10. Unit age	23.83	5.69	.01	.03	.03	.05*	-.11***	.20***	.09***	-.10**	-.08***	-													
11. Unit managers' tenure (years)	7.02	3.06	-.05	.10***	.15***	.11***	.06**	-.05	.14***	.48***	.01	.01	-												
12. Unit managers' age	38.97	4.41	-.06**	.06**	.09***	.07**	.12***	.10**	.06**	.01	.08***	.03	.33***	-											
13. Unit-level environmental dynamism	4.69	.76	-.02	-.05*	-.01	-.03	.13***	-.09***	-.07***	-.01	.04	-.26***	-.03	.07***	-										
14. Firm size	2805.10	1044.41	-.13***	-.23***	.002	.07**	.01	.32***	.09***	.05*	.15***	.33***	.06**	.02	-.21***	-									
15. Firm age	26.50	5.70	-.04	-.04	.12***	.14***	.06**	.27***	.16***	.0002	.22***	.33***	.10***	.07**	.02	.31***	-								
16. CEO's tenure	12.88	3.73	-.12***	.04	.07**	.14***	.15***	-.31***	.17***	-.03	.39***	.18***	.03	.17***	.19***	-.10***	.50***	-							
17. TMTs size	328.54	131.70	-.12***	-.21***	.01	.08***	.004	.34***	.09***	.05*	.16***	.36***	.07**	.02	-.20***	.64***	.35***	-.06*	-						
18. CEO's age	47.75	3.12	.07**	.06**	.03	-.05*	.04	-.31***	-.07**	-.04	-.20***	-.53***	-.03	-.13***	.06**	-.47***	-.40***	-.41***	-.52***	-					
19. Individual-participative leadership	4.51	.95	-.05*	-.06**	-.02	-.03	.12***	-.15***	-.04*	.49***	.10***	-.28**	-.05*	.07***	.53***	-.10***	-.04	.14***	-.12***	.13***	-				
20. Individual-level person-unit fit	4.49	.94	.01	-.07***	-.03	-.04	.10***	-.08***	-.07**	.55***	.08***	-.22***	.01	.05**	.50***	-.10***	.002	.12***	-.10**	.04	.57***	-			
21. Unit-level participative leadership	4.55	.76	-.08***	-.07***	-.03	-.04*	.13***	-.13***	-.07***	.46***	.10***	-.29***	-.05**	.06**	.59***	-.10***	-.05*	.13***	-.12***	.13***	.56***	.50***	-		
22. Unit-level unit-member exchange	4.55	.82	-.04	-.07***	-.02	-.03	.14***	-.15***	-.07***	.48***	.08***	-.28**	-.03	.07***	.61***	-.12***	-.001	.18***	-.14***	.10***	.55***	.54***	.62***	-	
23. Individual-level task performance (2018)	79.19	7.13	.07**	.08***	.09***	.06**	.06**	-.005	.02	-.003	-.10***	-.06**	.04*	.05*	.03	-.07**	-.06**	-.09***	-.08***	.16***	.23***	.24***	.25***	.26***	-

^a1 = bachelor's degree or similar above; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Study 1

Table 2 - Results: Paths, estimate, and their significance.^a

Part A: Direct effect (unstandardized estimates)				
	Estimate (SE) ^c	LLCI ^d	ULCI ^d	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2018)	11.58*** (2.88)	6.84	16.32	
Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2018)	2.51*** (0.68)	0.73	4.29	
Part B: Moderated effect (unstandardized estimates)				
	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.76*** (0.05)	1.67	1.85	
Individual-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.12* (0.06)	0.01	0.23	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.48*** (0.06)	1.21	1.75	
Unit-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.86*** (0.06)	0.76	0.96	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2018)	5.48*** (1.59)	0.42	10.54	
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.30*** (0.08)	0.10	0.50	Hypothesis 1 supported
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level task performance (2018)	1.67*** (0.48)	0.72	2.62	
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.50*** (0.14)	0.23	0.77	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.17*** (0.09)	1.03	1.31	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.10*** (0.08)	0.96	1.24	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.10*** (0.004)	0.09	0.11	Hypothesis 3 supported
Part C: Indirect effect (unstandardized estimates)				
	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2018)	6.53*** (1.87)	1.82	11.24	
Part D: Congruence and incongruence effect				
	Estimate	SE	T-value	Hypothesis testing
<i>Congruence (Individual-level participative leadership = Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	3.24***	0.10	32.24	Hypothesis 1 supported
Curvature	1.28***	0.04	32.00	Hypothesis 1 supported
<i>Incongruence (Individual-level participative leadership = -Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	0.28***	0.05	6.11	Hypothesis 2 supported
Curvature	0.68***	0.13	5.13	Hypothesis 2 supported
Part E: Moderator (Unit-level participative leadership, Unit-level unit-member exchange)				
	Estimate	Monte Carlo Simulation ^d		Hypothesis testing
		LLCI	ULCI	
-2	-9.53	-19.94	0.61	
-1	-2.55	-4.92	1.13	
0	4.42*	0.55	7.67	
1	11.39**	1.84	21.73	
2	18.36**	2.11	35.80	

^an = 1317 at the individual level (level 1); n = 278 at the unit level (level 2). ^b*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. ^cSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Study 1

Table 3 - Simple slope difference tests.

Pair of slopes	t-value
(1) High unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (2) High unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	14.23***
(1) High unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (3) Low unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange	3.05**
(1) High unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (4) Low unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	9.43***
(2) High unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange and (3) Low unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange	7.01***
(2) High unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange and (4) Low unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	1.96*
(3) Low unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (4) Low unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	13.62***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Study 2

Table 4 - Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1. Employee's gender	.70	.46	-																						
2. Employee's age	31.31	3.99	.18***	-																					
3. Employee's firm tenure (years)	3.55	2.18	.13***	.43***	-																				
4. Employee's unit tenure (years)	2.82	1.89	.11***	.30***	.61***	-																			
5. Employee's job tenure (years)	1.86	1.59	.08**	.16***	.53***	.54***	-																		
6. Employee's education level ^a	.98	.14	.02	-.04	-.08**	-.09***	-.15***	-																	
7. Work together with the supervisor (years)	2.37	1.50	.08**	.26***	.53***	.60***	.52***	-.10***	-																
8. Individual-level socially desirable response	4.45	.93	.06*	-.10***	-.02	-.06*	.05*	-.0002	-.09***	-															
9. Unit size	7.27	5.23	-.11***	-.13***	.03	.10***	.15***	-.03	.16***	-.03	-														
10. Unit age	24.17	5.37	.02	.04*	.05*	.07**	-.09***	.18***	.12***	.11***	-.07**	-													
11. Unit managers' tenure (years)	6.92	2.89	-.08***	.09***	.13***	.09***	.05*	-.01	.12***	-.02	.03	.01	-												
12. Unit managers' age	38.59	4.07	-.06**	.05**	.10***	.07**	.11***	.08**	.06***	-.03	.05**	.04	.38***	-											
13. Unit-level environmental dynamism	4.67	.75	-.01	-.08***	-.01	-.03	.14***	-.09***	-.08***	.51***	.04	-.25***	-.04	.03	-										
14. Firm size	2808.44	861.07	-.14***	-.19***	.001	.09***	.01	.28***	.10***	.05*	.21***	.37***	.07**	.06*	-.16***	-									
15. Firm age	26.50	5.09	-.11***	-.06*	.08**	.12***	.07**	.20***	.15***	-.01	.29***	.28***	.07**	.11***	.07**	.31***	-								
16. CEO's tenure	12.79	3.62	-.14***	-.02	.07**	.14***	.15***	-.29***	.18***	-.02	.37***	.17***	.05*	.14***	.16***	.04	.60***	-							
17. TMTs size	332.15	119.83	-.13***	-.18***	.01	.09***	.01	.28***	.10***	.06*	.22***	.39***	.08**	.07*	-.16***	.64***	.34***	.07*	-						
18. CEO's age	47.73	3.16	.08**	.08***	-.004	-.08***	.02	-.26***	-.10***	-.06*	-.21***	-.51***	-.08**	-.10***	.09***	-.57***	-.44***	-.38***	-.58***	-					
19. Individual-level participative leadership	4.46	.93	-.03	-.08***	-.02	-.03	.12***	-.13***	-.06**	.55***	.09***	-.26***	-.06**	.02	.56***	-.08**	.03	.13***	-.09***	.12***	-				
20. Individual-level person-unit fit	4.46	.94	.02	-.09***	-.03	-.04	.10***	-.09***	-.08***	.58***	.07**	-.22***	-.01	.01	.55***	-.07**	.04	.11***	-.06**	.04	.59***	-			
21. Unit-level participative leadership	4.52	.74	-.05	-.09***	-.02	-.05*	.13***	-.12***	-.08***	.50***	.09**	-.26***	-.06**	.02	.61***	-.08**	.02	.12***	-.08***	.13***	.58***	.55***	-		
22. Unit-level unit-member exchange	4.52	.82	-.02	-.10***	-.02	-.04	.14***	-.13***	-.07***	.51***	.08***	-.26***	-.04	.03	.62***	-.09***	.06**	.17***	-.09***	.10***	.57***	.56***	.62***	-	
23. Individual-level task performance (2019)	79.23	7.09	.09***	.08***	.09***	.08***	.07**	.004	.03	.002	-.11***	-.06*	.04	.05*	.04	-.08***	-.06**	-.07**	-.09***	.14***	.23***	.24***	.25***	.26***	-

^a1 = bachelor's degree or similar above; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Study 2

Table 5 - Results: Paths, estimate, and their significance.^a

Part A: Direct effect (unstandardized estimates)					Estimate (SE) ^c	LLCI ^d	ULCI ^d	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2019)					18.32*** (5.49)	8.63	28.01	
Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2019)					3.54*** (1.00)	0.24	6.84	
Part B: Moderated effect (unstandardized estimates)					Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit					2.47*** (0.74)	1.21	3.73	
Individual-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit					0.08 (0.07)	-0.03	0.19	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit					1.01*** (0.02)	0.97	1.05	
Unit-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit					1.08*** (0.15)	0.82	1.34	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2019)					5.63*** (1.63)	1.14	10.12	
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level person-unit fit					0.47*** (0.10)	0.31	0.63	Hypothesis 1 supported
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level task performance (2019)					2.33*** (0.65)	1.26	3.40	
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit					0.21*** (0.06)	0.09	0.33	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit					1.83*** (0.24)	1.44	2.22	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit					1.39*** (0.18)	1.09	1.69	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit					0.11*** (0.01)	0.09	0.13	Hypothesis 3 supported
Part C: Indirect effect (unstandardized estimates)					Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2019)					11.78*** (3.30)	1.42	22.14	
Part D: Congruence and incongruence effect					Estimate	SE	T-value	Hypothesis testing
<i>Congruence (Individual-level participative leadership = Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>								
Slope					3.48***	0.75	4.65	Hypothesis 1 supported
Curvature					2.99***	0.24	12.31	Hypothesis 1 supported
<i>Incongruence (Individual-level participative leadership = -Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>								
Slope					1.46*	0.73	1.99	Hypothesis 2 supported
Curvature					-0.67*	0.27	-2.51	Hypothesis 2 supported
Part E: Moderator (Unit-level participative leadership, Unit-level unit-member exchange)					Estimate	Monte Carlo Simulation ^d		Hypothesis testing
						LLCI	ULCI	
-2					-10.17	-22.75	0.39	
-1					-0.71	-4.30	2.31	
0					8.76*	1.99	15.53	
1					18.39**	5.38	35.39	
2					28.01**	7.62	54.41	

^an = 1116 at the individual level (level 1); n = 236 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. ^cSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Study 2

Table 6 - Simple slope difference tests.

Pair of slopes	t-value
(1) High unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (2) High unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	6.89***
(1) High unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (3) Low unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange	3.39***
(1) High unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (4) Low unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	10.11***
(2) High unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange and (3) Low unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange	5.02***
(2) High unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange and (4) Low unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	1.97*
(3) Low unit-level participative leadership, High unit-level unit-member exchange and (4) Low unit-level participative leadership, Low unit-level unit-member exchange	6.56***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

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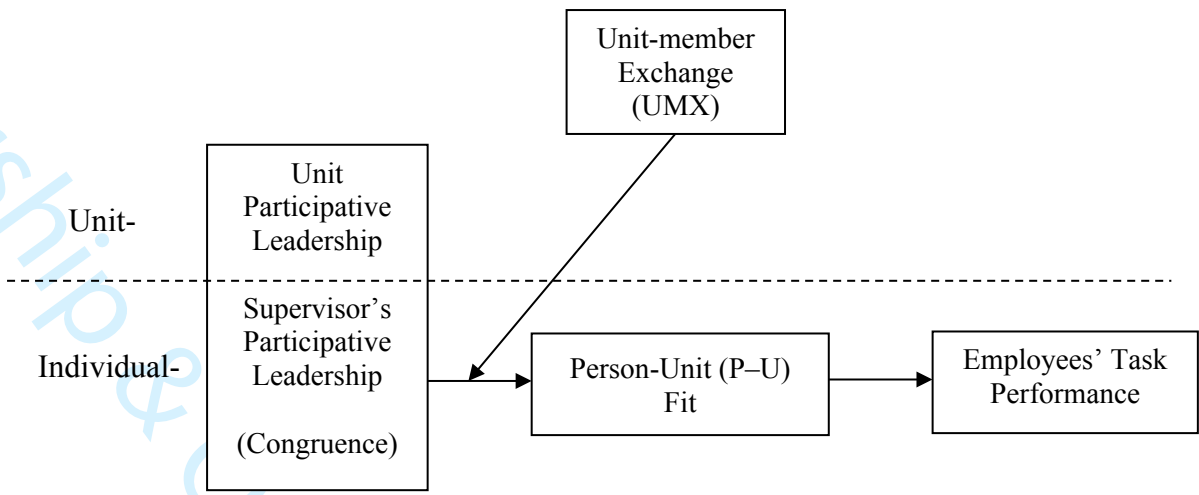
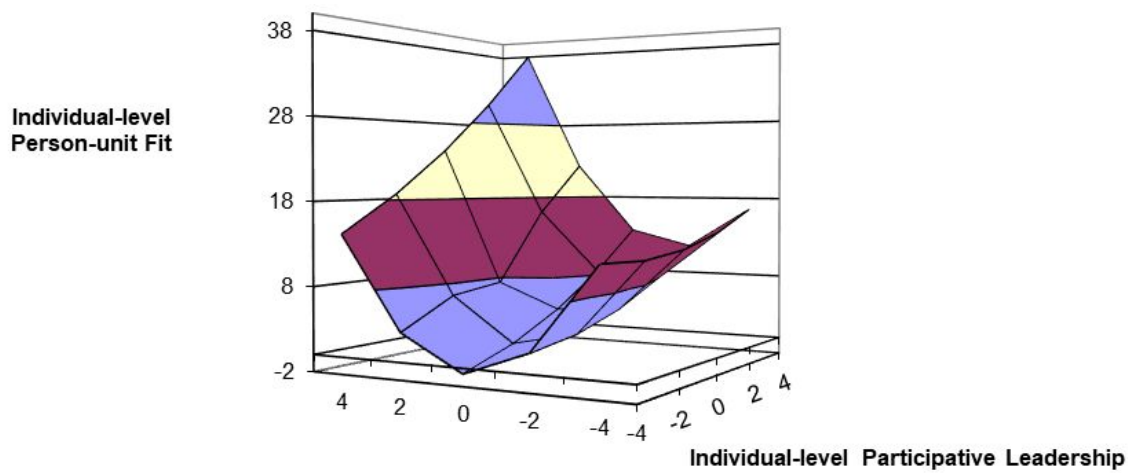


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.



Unit-level Participative Leadership

Figure 2. Study 1 - Congruence effect and asymmetrical incongruence effect of individual-level participative leadership and unit-level participative leadership on individual-level person-unit fit.

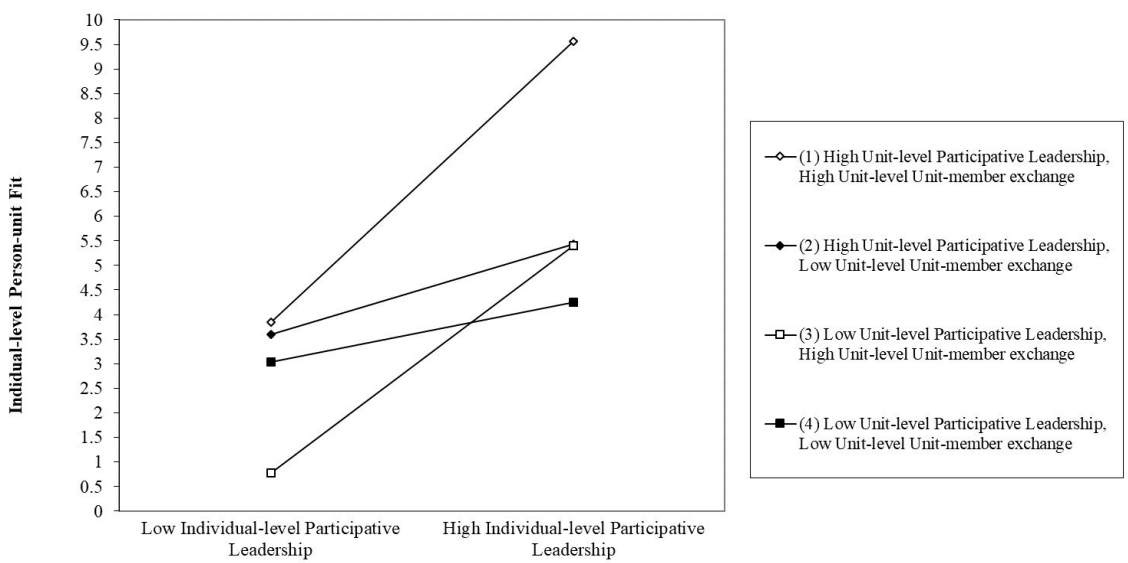


Figure 3. Study 1 - Three-way interactive effect of individual-level participative leadership, unit-level participative leadership and unit-level unit-member exchange on individual-level person-unit fit.

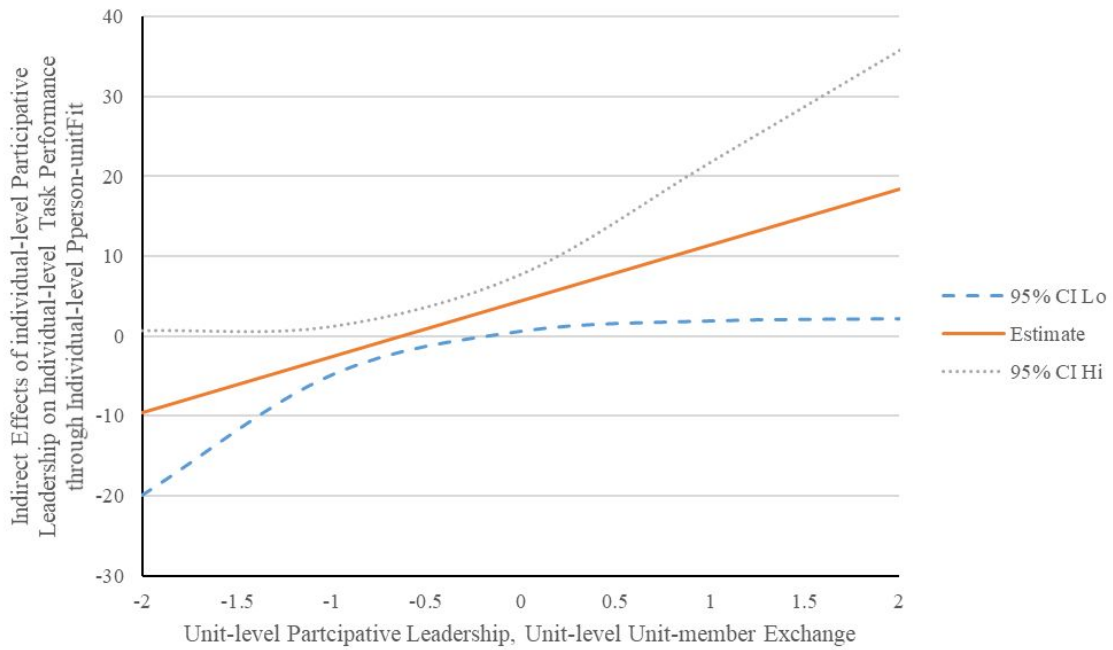
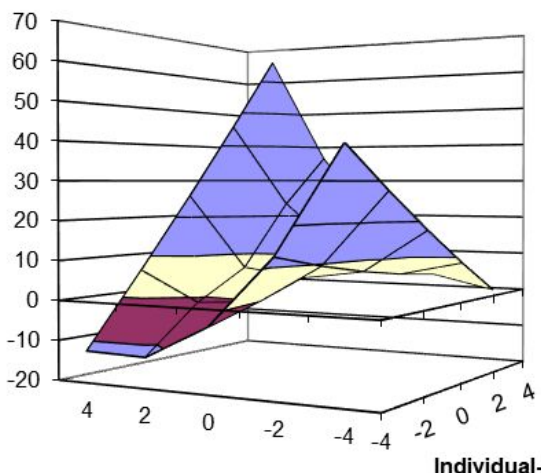


Figure 4. Study 1 - Three-way moderated mediation effect of individual-level participative leadership, unit-level participative leadership and unit-level unit-member exchange on individual-level person-unit fit through individual-level task performance.

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Individual-level
Person-unit Fit



Unit-level Participative Leadership

Figure 5. Study 2 - Congruence effect and asymmetrical incongruence effect of individual-level participative leadership and unit-level participative leadership on individual-level person-unit fit.

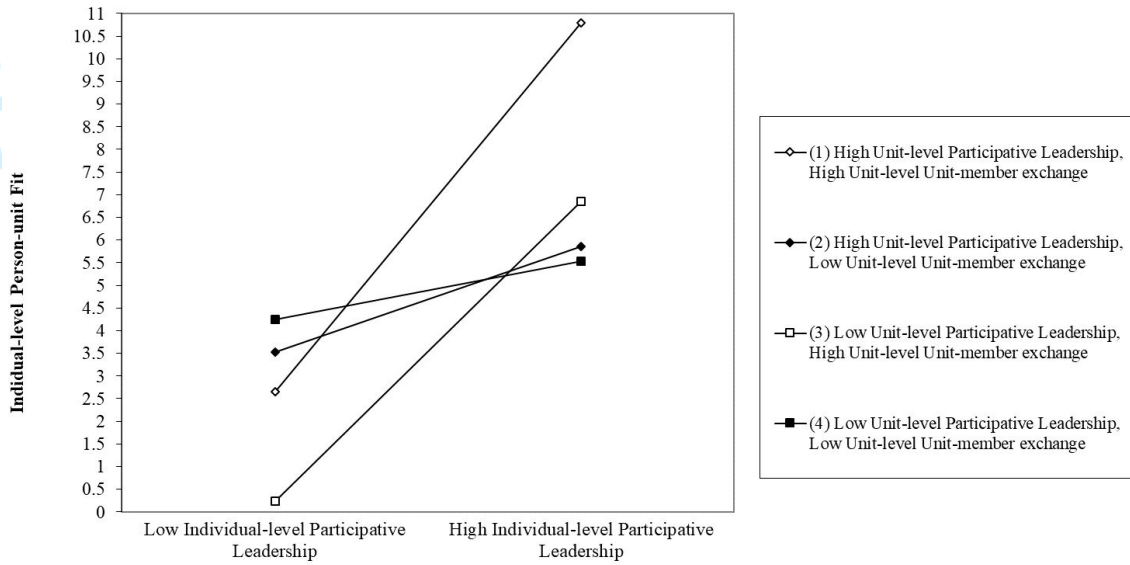


Figure 6. Study 2 - Three-way interactive effect of individual-level participative leadership, unit-level participative leadership and unit-level unit-member exchange on individual-level person-unit fit.

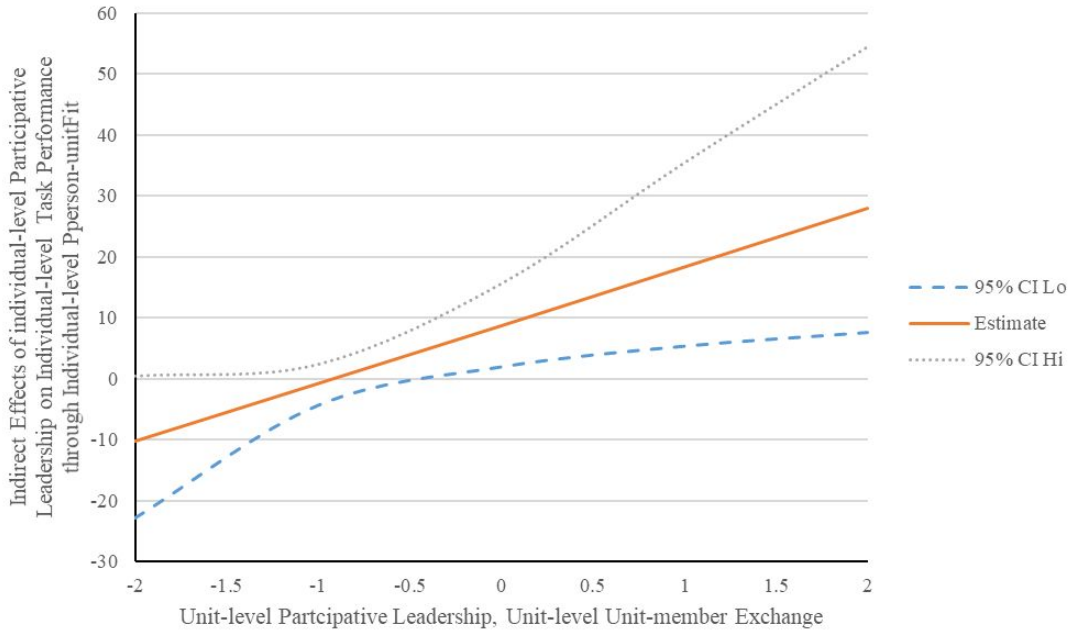


Figure 7. Study 2 - Three-way moderated mediation effect of individual-level participative leadership, unit-level participative leadership and unit-level unit-member exchange on individual-level person-unit fit through individual-level task performance.

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3 **Appendix A. Survey Items.**
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Construct	Measurement item
Individual-level [unit-level] Participative Leadership	1. My immediate supervisor [our unit managers] encourages me [unit members] to express ideas/suggestions. 2. My immediate supervisor [our unit managers] listens to my [our] ideas and suggestions. 3. My immediate supervisor [our unit managers] uses my [our] suggestions to make decisions that affect me. 4. My immediate supervisor [our unit managers] gives me [unit members] a chance to voice their opinions. 5. My immediate supervisor [our unit managers] considers my [our unit's] ideas when he/she disagrees with me. 6. My immediate supervisor [our unit managers] makes decisions that are based only on his/her own idea.
Person-unit Fit	1. The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my unit values. 2. My personal values match my unit's values and culture. 3. My unit's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life. 4. There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job. 5. The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job. 6. The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job. 7. The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills. 8. My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job. 9. My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me.
Unit-level Unit-member Exchange	1. You often make suggestions about better work methods to other unit members. 2. Other members of your unit usually let you know when you do something that makes their jobs easier. 3. You often let other unit members know when they have done something that makes your job easier. 4. Other members of your unit recognize your potential well. 5. Other members of your unit understand your problems and needs well. 6. You are flexible about switching job responsibilities to make things easier for other unit members. 7. In busy situations, other unit members often ask you to help out. 8. In busy situations, you often volunteer your efforts to help others on your unit. 9. You are willing to help finish work that had been assigned to others. 10. Other members of your unit are willing to help finish work that was assigned to you.

Response to Associate Editor and Anonymous Reviewer**Manuscript ID:** LODJ-12-2022-0538.R2**Manuscript Title: Participative leadership congruence and employee task performance: The intermediate roles of person-unit fit and unit-member exchange"****Version:** Second revision**Response to the editor**

Manuscript ID LODJ-12-2022-0538.R1 entitled "Participative leadership congruence and employee task performance: The intermediate roles of person-unit fit and unit-member exchange" which you submitted to the Leadership & Organization Development Journal, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewers are included at the bottom of this email.

Although one of the reviewers has advised me to reject at this stage I am willing to give you one further opportunity to revise and resubmit given that the other reviewer has indicated that your manuscript requires major revisions. As you will see there remains a lot of work needed here to bring this paper up to the required standard for publication in terms of methods, theory contribution and results presentation and this decision does not mean that the paper will ultimately be published.

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/lodj> and enter your Author Centre, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or coloured text.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Centre.

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3 When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the
4 comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this
5 space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In
6 order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as
7 specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).
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12 **IMPORTANT:** Your original files are available to you when you upload
13 your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before
14 completing the submission.
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18 Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts
19 submitted to the Leadership & Organization Development Journal, your
20 revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not
21 possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we
22 may have to consider your paper as a new submission.
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26
27 Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the Leadership &
28 Organization Development Journal and I look forward to receiving your
29 revision.
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33 Sincerely,
34 Dr. Emer Gallagher
35 Associate Editor, Leadership & Organization Development Journal
36 em.gallagher@ulster.ac.uk
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41 **Response:** Thank you for your comprehensive feedback on our manuscript.
42 We deeply appreciate your kind support for providing second revision. We
43 worked hard on this revision and addressed each point raised by you and the
44 anonymous reviewer diligently. Your guidance is invaluable. Thank you
45 once again for your time and insightful advice.
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50 Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

51 Reviewer: 1
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54 Recommendation: Major Revision
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57 Comments:

58 No Comments
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Additional Questions:

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: Yes, potentially the paper contains new and significant information adequate to justify publication. However, I still have some suggestions to make, which I think will further improve the paper.

1. Abstract

I think the authors should follow the Emerald style of writing the abstract for example:

- Purpose
- Design/methodology/approach
- Findings
- Originality/value etc.

Response: Thank you for your insightful comment. We have revised our style of writing the abstract in the revised manuscript. Your valuable feedback will undoubtedly enhance our study's validity and depth. Please refer to page 1.

2. The authors have backed up their research gap with relevant facts from previous literature in the field and this has made their research question more meaningful and relevant.

Response: Thank you for your supportive comment. We further improved in this revised manuscript this round. Please refer to page 1-2.

3. The justification of using (p-U) as a mediator and UMX as a moderator has to be reinforced at the introduction part.

Response: Thank you for your insightful comment. We further improved the justification of using (P-U fit) as a mediator and UMX as a moderator in this revised manuscript this round. Please refer to page 8-13.

4. The purpose of study and contribution is well summarized at the introduction part.

Response: Thank you for your supportive comment.

5. The authors justification of withdrawing fit theory is acceptable, but why have they not replaced the theory. I suggest to the authors to think through and replace with an appropriate theory instead. In the same way, the authors should introduce the theory at the introduction part and how it is going to be

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3 used to link the appropriate variables in their model. Such theory can still be
4 used to reinforce the arguments leading to the formulation of the
5 hypotheses.
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8 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comment. We adopted a social
9 exchange theory as an overarching framework to reinforce the arguments
10 leading to the formulation of the hypotheses. Please refer to page 10-13.
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13
14 2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate
15 understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate
16 range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored? Yes, the current
17 version of the paper demonstrates an adequate understanding of the relevant
18 literature in the field and cites an appropriate range of literature sources. I
19 however, think that the theoretical base of the study is weak. As suggested
20 in comment #5 authors should include theory/theories to improve theoretical
21 base of the study. This is weak at present.
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27 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful and supportive comments. We
28 adopted a social exchange theory as an overarching framework to reinforce
29 the arguments leading to the formulation of the hypotheses. Please refer to
30 page 10-13.
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36 3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of
37 theory, concepts or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual
38 work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods
39 employed appropriate?: 7. The methods employed are okay. The measures
40 are explained. Authors worked on their fit indices as suggested previously.
41 However, the authors' reasons for their choice of the control variables is still
42 not convincing.
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48 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We further improved
49 the choice of control variable in this round. For example, in line with
50 previous scholars' arguments (e.g., Chang et al., 2019; Huang, 2012; Lam et
51 al., 2015), we controlled that these covariate variables may related to
52 outcomes. First, demographic variables included gender (male; female), age,
53 firm tenure (years), unit tenure (years), job tenure (years), education level
54 (master's and above; bachelor's degree or similar; others) and work together
55 with the supervisor (years). Second, relevant control variables at unit level
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included unit size (years), unit age, unit managers' tenure (years), unit managers' age, and unit-level environmental dynamism. Third, relevant control variables at firm level included firm size, firm age, CEO's tenure, top management teams (TMTs) size, and CEO's age. Finally, social desirability is reflected the ratters' social acceptability rather than their true feelings due to common variance bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In line with previous studies (e.g., Hayes et al., 1989), ratters may lead to social desirability issue due to providing better scores for their leaders. Social desirability was assessed by five items from Hays et al. (1989) on a seven-point Likert scale.

Unit-level environmental dynamism held good reliability score (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$). The CFA results revealed that the one-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 3.63$, $p < .05$, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 1.86$, $p > .05$, RMSEA = 0.03, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99). The construct was then aggregated into the unit-level (study 1: $rwg(j) = 0.86$, ICC(1) = 0.39, ICC(2) = 0.75, $F(277, 1039) = 7.91$, $p < .001$; study 2: $rwg(j) = 0.86$, ICC(1) = 0.41, ICC(2) = 0.77, $F(235, 880) = 8.29$, $p < .001$). Finally, related variables of firms included firm size, firm age, CEO's tenure, top management teams (TMTs) size, and CEO's age. The social desirability construct was highly reliable (study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$; study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$). The CFA results revealed that the one-factor model fit the data well (study 1: $\chi^2/df = 10.13$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98; study 2: $\chi^2/df = 7.09$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.99). All measurement items are presented in Appendix A. Please refer to page 17-18.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: 8. Yes, the results are somehow well presented, as I did not see the following:

- Authors did not show in the text where each table or diagram should be placed or inserted
- Hypotheses testing cannot be in tables alone. Report should be provided on the tables in the text
- I do not think each hypothesis is tested separately as indicated by authors. I did not see the sub-topic hypothesis testing in the text.

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. We further improved

the tables by adding sub-topic in the text. Please refer to page 33 (Study 1 Table 2) and 36(Study 2 Table 5).

Study 1

Table 2 - Results: Paths, estimate, and their significance.^a

Part A: Direct effect (unstandardized estimates)					Hypothesis testing
	Estimate (SE^c)	LLCI^d	ULCI^d		
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2018)	11.58*** (2.88)	6.84	16.32		
Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2018)	2.51*** (0.68)	0.73	4.29		
Part B: Moderated effect (unstandardized estimates)					Hypothesis testing
	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI		
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.76*** (0.05)	1.67	1.85		
Individual-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.12* (0.06)	0.01	0.23		
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.48*** (0.06)	1.21	1.75		
Unit-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.86*** (0.06)	0.76	0.96		
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2018)	5.48*** (1.59)	0.42	10.54		
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.30*** (0.08)	0.10	0.50	Hypothesis 1 supported	
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level task performance (2018)	1.67*** (0.48)	0.72	2.62		
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.50*** (0.14)	0.23	0.77		
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.17*** (0.09)	1.03	1.31		
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.10*** (0.08)	0.96	1.24		
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.10*** (0.004)	0.09	0.11	Hypothesis 3 supported	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit					
Part C: Indirect effect (unstandardized estimates)					Hypothesis testing
	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI		
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	6.53*** (1.87)	1.82	11.24		
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level task performance (2018)					
Part D: Congruence and incongruence effect					Hypothesis testing
	Estimate	SE	T-value		
<i>Congruence (Individual-level participative leadership = Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>					
Slope	3.24***	0.10	32.24	Hypothesis 1 supported	
Curvature	1.28***	0.04	32.00	Hypothesis 1 supported	
<i>Incongruence (Individual-level participative leadership = -Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>					
Slope	0.28***	0.05	6.11	Hypothesis 2 supported	
Curvature	0.68***	0.13	5.13	Hypothesis 2 supported	
Part E: Moderator (Unit-level participative leadership, Unit-level unit-member exchange)					Hypothesis testing
	Estimate	Monte Carlo Simulation^d			
		LLCI	ULCI		
-2	-9.53	-19.94	0.61		
-1	-2.55	-4.92	1.13		
0	4.42*	0.55	7.67		
1	11.39**	1.84	21.73		
2	18.36**	2.11	35.80		

^an = 1317 at the individual level (level 1); n = 278 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* $p < .05$, ^c** $p < .01$, ^d*** $p < .001$. ^eSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Study 2

Table 5- Results: Paths, estimate, and their significance.^a

Part A: Direct effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)^c	LLCI^d	ULCI^d	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2019)	18.32*** (5.49)	8.63	28.01	
Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2019)	3.54*** (1.00)	0.24	6.84	
Part B: Moderated effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	2.47*** (0.74)	1.21	3.73	
Individual-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.08 (0.07)	-0.03	0.19	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.01*** (0.02)	0.97	1.05	
Unit-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.08*** (0.15)	0.82	1.34	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2019)	5.63*** (1.63)	1.14	10.12	
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.47*** (0.10)	0.31	0.63	Hypothesis 1 supported
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level task performance (2019)	2.33*** (0.65)	1.26	3.40	
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.21*** (0.06)	0.09	0.33	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.83*** (0.24)	1.44	2.22	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.39*** (0.18)	1.09	1.69	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.11*** (0.01)	0.09	0.13	Hypothesis 3 supported
Part C: Indirect effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2019)	11.78*** (3.30)	1.42	22.14	
Part D: Congruence and incongruence effect	Estimate	SE	T-value	Hypothesis testing
<i>Congruence (Individual-level participative leadership = Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	3.48***	0.75	4.65	Hypothesis 1 supported
Curvature	2.99***	0.24	12.31	Hypothesis 1 supported
<i>Incongruence (Individual-level participative leadership = -Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	1.46*	0.73	1.99	Hypothesis 2 supported
Curvature	-0.67*	0.27	-2.51	Hypothesis 2 supported
Part E: Moderator (Unit-level participative leadership, unit-member exchange)	Estimate	Monte Carlo Simulation^d		Hypothesis testing
		LLCI	ULCI	
	-2	-10.17	-22.75	0.39
	-1	-0.71	-4.30	2.31
	0	8.76*	1.99	15.53
	1	18.39**	5.38	35.39
	2	28.01**	7.62	54.41

^an = 1116 at the individual level (level 1); n = 236 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. ^cSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: 9. Yes, the theoretical and the practical implications of the study are potentially good. The paper identifies clearly implications for research, practice and/or society. The paper bridges the gap between theory and practice. The research can be used in practice and in teaching, to influence public policy, and in research, contributing to the body of knowledge. It can impact upon society and influence public attitudes. The implications of the study are consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. We further improved theoretical contributions and practical implication by using a social exchange theory as an overarching framework this round.

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the fields and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: 10. The language is good: The paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership. Further attention should however, be paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as grammar, punctuations, spelling and sentence structure before the paper is published.

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. We asked some of the authors as native speaker to proofread the revised manuscript.

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Reject

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5 Comments:

6 Thanks for the opportunity to review the revised version of the
7 "Participative leadership congruence and employee task performance: The
8 intermediate roles of person-unit fit and unit-member exchange". While the
9 study has undertaken a novel method of data collection, there are some
10 critical misalignments between the research design, hypotheses development
11 and methodology that have to be taken into consideration in deciding
12 whether this paper is fit for publication.
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18 Although most of those concerns were identified and raised by the reviewers
19 in the first round of the review process, the responses provided do not
20 adequately address some of those concerns. For instance, misalignment
21 between the argumentation and hypothesis 2 was raised by both reviewers,
22 and the author/s offered a reworded version of the hypothesis, which is
23 again misaligned with the discussion and is ambiguous.
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29 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We further improved
30 theoretical contributions and practical implication by using a social
31 exchange theory as an overarching framework this round.
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36 Another critical concern raised by both reviewers was around the necessity
37 of having a hypothesis outlining the role of task performance in this study,
38 which was ignored by the author/s, and the justification provided is not
39 satisfactory. The response provided to reviewer 2's comment about the
40 absence of a hypothesis referring to the effect of task performance and the
41 mediating role of P-U Fit is vague and incorrect. The response claims that
42 the direct effect is not hypothesized because it has already been established
43 in the literature and then goes on to say the mediated effect is tested and is
44 somehow reflected in the discussion about the moderation effect of UMX,
45 again claiming that the study is measuring the moderating effect of UMX on
46 the mediation effect of P-U Fit. However, hypothesis 3 only refers to the
47 moderation effect of UMX on the relationship between Participative
48 leadership congruence and P-U Fit and not the mediation effect of P-U fit.
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57 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We worked very hard
58 to follow your suggestions to test the direct effect of participative leadership
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3 and employee task performance. The direct effect of participative leadership
4 and employee task performance was significant. Please refer to Study 1
5 Table 2 and Study 2 Table 5. In the introduction section and hypotheses
6 section we explained that the main purpose of this study's contribution to
7 test the intermediate mechanism. Please see below arguments.
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11 We then introduced why testing the intermediate mechanism is important
12 as using a social exchange theory to frame our hypotheses development. For
13 example, "However, Eva et al. (2019, p. 70) argue that "consistent evidence
14 of a relationship between participative leadership and employee
15 performance has not yet been established." While some studies in the
16 leadership literature suggest that participative leadership behaviors enhance
17 employee task performance (De Poel et al., 2012; Huang, 2012; Newman et
18 al., 2016), others report conflicting results. This disparity leads to confusion
19 about how participative leadership might improve employee performance
20 and the specific processes involved (Eva et al., 2019). As a result, the
21 mechanisms linking participative leadership to employee performance are
22 poorly understood, posing a challenge for leaders who practice this
23 approach. This uncertainty shapes the central research question of our study:
24 Can a participative leadership approach enhance employee task
25 performance?" Please refer to page 2-5.
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36 "The second contribution of the study builds on the first contribution by
37 examining the role of participative leadership in enhancing performance,
38 which has often been considered on leader—follower congruence (e.g.,
39 Wang et al., 2022). However, this approach often neglects the influence of
40 direct supervisors' leadership behaviors (Caughron and Mumford, 2012),
41 which can be crucial in understanding the impact on individual
42 performance."
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46 For example:

47 ***Contributions to theory***

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49 The study makes three contributions to leadership and management theory.
50 First, while leadership has long been recognized as a critical feature of
51 organizational success (Menguc et al., 2007), a multilevel perspective is
52 needed for inclusive leadership approaches to prosper (Nishii and Leroy,
53 2022). While extant research has suggested that the role and impact of
54 leadership cuts across organizational levels and requires multilevel
55 treatments (Klebe et al., 2022; Glew et al., 1995), extant research has
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generally examined individual (De Poel et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2016) or group (Caughron and Mumford, 2012; De Poel et al., 2014; Somech, 2006) level dynamics. Subsequently, few studies have examined an integrated multilevel framework of participative leadership and employee-level outcomes. In response, this study employs a multiple-level approach to reveal the role of participative leadership congruence between business unit leaders and direct supervisors and intermediate socio-psychological mechanisms on employee task performance. In doing so, the study places a much-needed emphasis on both senior leaders and lower-level leaders and employees' local and interpersonal experiences that are suggested to make all the difference for inclusive leadership environments (Nishii and Leroy, 2022). Specifically, the results demonstrate that higher participative leadership congruence will enhance employee task performance through P-U fit. Consequently, the revealed importance of participative leadership congruence between senior and lower-level leaders reinforces the need for leadership research to account for (mis)alignment in leadership behaviors across all leadership levels when examining outcomes of participative leadership in large firms.

Second, O'Reilly et al. (2010) indicate how participative leadership incongruence would result in reduced employee task performance but do not show how this might occur. The findings show a more complex picture than the suggested positive impact on employee task performance when leadership congruence is high and, conversely, the suggested negative impact on employee task performance when leadership incongruence is present. Specifically, the findings reveal that leadership incongruence (i.e., misalignment in the participative leadership behaviors between unit-level leaders and employees' direct supervisors) can raise P-U fit and, thus, employee task performance only when direct supervisors display high participative leadership behaviors. The critical implication here is twofold: (i) direct supervisors' participative leadership is more critical than the participative leadership of senior leaders for employee task performance, via the mediating role of P-U fit; and (ii) the established importance of leader and follower similarity of attributes (e.g., Emirza and Katrinli, 2022) does not hold for the relationship between participative leadership and P-U fit. This finding reinforces the assertion of Nishii and Leroy (2022, p. 683) that "people's more local and interpersonal experiences make all the difference" for inclusive leadership in organizations. In other words, direct supervisors are essential to enhancing P-U fit by working closely and collaboratively

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3 with subordinates through frequent discussion of, and collective
4 involvement in, decision-making (e.g., Klebe et al., 2022). It is through
5 these behaviors and the corresponding employee responses that employees'
6 task performance increases. This finding highlights the nuances of
7 participative leadership congruence, suggesting that the relationship to
8 employees' task performance is more complex than simply an aligned
9 situation being 'good' and a misaligned situation being 'bad' for the task
10 performance of employees.
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15 Third, in addition to the theoretical insights presented above, the
16 findings put a spotlight on the situational conditions experienced by unit-
17 level employees and how such conditions moderate the pathway to
18 employee task performance. Specifically, the results reveal how the
19 boundary role of UMX enhances the relationship between participative
20 leadership congruence and employee P-U fit. UMX augments the specific
21 qualities of participative leadership that promote P-U fit. Participative
22 leadership is a highly inclusive leadership approach, which the presence of
23 UMX further amplifies through its characteristics of open exchange of ideas,
24 information, and resources among unit employees (Van Dyne and Kamdar,
25 2015) and in group discussions and meetings (Farmer et al., 2015). UMX
26 generates social attachment between the individual employee and the unit,
27 resulting in stronger identification with the unit as well as greater cohesion
28 and teamwork among unit members (Liu et al., 2011; Banks et al., 2014).
29 UMX is, thus, found to directly strengthen and augment the relationship
30 between participative leadership and P-U fit, empirically validating the
31 importance of situational conditions for successful inclusive leadership
32 practices (e.g., Nishii and Leroy, 2022; Somech, 2005).
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44 *Implications for practice*

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46 Concerning the practical implications of the research findings, we urge firms
47 to emphasize the vertical alignment of participative leadership behaviors
48 across all 'leaders', regardless of their position in the firm. Immediate
49 employee supervisors play a critical leadership role and should not be
50 dismissed as simply operational managers, only concerned with day-to-day
51 operations, and not impacting organizational performance. Ensuring that
52 direct supervisors receive appropriate managerial education training for the
53 required participative leadership behaviors will improve employees' task
54 performance (e.g., Banks et al., 2014; De Poel et al., 2014).
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60 We also urge senior executives to promote an organizational workplace

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climate that fosters an open-minded unit culture by constructing a variety of information exchange platforms. This practice will increase the effectiveness of participative leadership in intensifying individual P–U fit and, subsequently, the relationship between P–U fit and employee task performance. Based on our findings, it is essential that misalignment in the participative leadership behaviors across levels is identified and addressed as this has the potential to undermine P–U fit and reduce the task performance of employees. This is especially the case if employees' direct supervisors show an absence of participative leadership behaviors, as these individuals play a critical role in generating P–U fit and ultimately superior organizational performance, through increasing employees' task performance.

Similarly, the responses to other major concerns raised by reviewers are not satisfactory. For instance, the response to reviewer 2's comment about the data collection intervals regarding the variables that were used to measure the congruence is not satisfactory and does not consider that the question is not about the role of longitudinal data collection in avoiding biases. The reviewer is asking why two variables that are used to measure one of the main constructs in the study are measured at two different time points, and the author/s provided a generic response about longitudinal data collection, ignoring the main question.

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. We worked hard to address why one of main constructs in the study are measured at two different time points is due to the fact that “the respondent provides the measures of the predictor and criterion variable is the same person. This type of self-report bias may be aid to result from any artifactual covariance between the predictor and criterion variable produced by the fact that the respondent providing the measure of these variable is the same (Podsakoff et al., 2003:881). This kind of problems is called consistency motif (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) or the consistency effect (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977) and then is likely to be particularly problematic in those situations in which respondents are asked to provide retrospective accounts of their attitudes, perceptions and behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Please refer to page 13.

Another methodological issue was about the moderation role of UMX, which was questioned by reviewer 2, indicating that there might be a causal

effect between UMX and P-U Fit undermining its moderation effect, and I did not find the response satisfactory.

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. We run the causal effect test and found that such causal effect is not existence. Please see below.

To magnitude multicollinearity (Cohen et al., 2003) among the interaction of individual-level participative leadership, unit-level participative leadership and UMX, we followed Hofmann et al. (1997) to adopt the grand mean centering conducting the moderation effects. We contend that a causal effect between UMX and P-U Fit will not undermine its moderation role of UMX. In addition, we run the paths of causal effect and reverse causal effect between UMX and P-U Fit. The results revealed that UMX had a significant relationship with P-U Fit. P-U Fit had a nonsignificant relationship with UMX.

Study 1

Effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE ^c)	LLCI ^d	ULCI ^d
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.50*** (0.14)	0.23	0.77
Individual-level person-unit fit → Unit-level unit-member exchange	0.05 (0.03)	-0.01	0.11

^an = 1317 at the individual level (level 1); n = 278 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. ^cSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Study 2

Effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE ^c)	LLCI ^d	ULCI ^d
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.21*** (0.06)	0.09	0.33
Individual-level person-unit fit → Unit-level unit-member exchange	0.04 (0.03)	-0.02	0.10

^an = 1116 at the individual level (level 1); n = 236 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. ^cSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

References

- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Hofmann, D. A. (1997). An overview of the logic and rationale of hierarchical linear models. *Journal of Management*, 23(6), 723-744. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639702300602>

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5 Overall, the study falls short of rigour in terms of methodology and research
6 design.
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8 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We do our best to
9 address both methodology and research design as above-mentioned
10 responses and in the revised manuscript.
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14 Additional Questions:

15 1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information
16 adequate to justify publication?: Please see my overall feedback in the
17 comment section
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19 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We do our best to
20 address both methodology and research design as above-mentioned
21 responses and in the revised manuscript.
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27 2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate
28 understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate
29 range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: Please see my
30 overall feedback in the comment section
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34 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We do our best to
35 address theoretical contributions and practical implication by using a social
36 exchange theory as an overarching framework this round. Please refer to
37 above-mentioned responses and in the revised manuscript.
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44 3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of
45 theory, concepts or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual
46 work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods
47 employed appropriate?: Please see my overall feedback in the comment
48 section
49

50 **Response:** Thank you for your insightful comments. We do our best to
51 address both methodology and research design as above-mentioned
52 responses and in the revised manuscript.
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59 4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do
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the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?:

Please see my overall feedback in the comment section

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. **Please refer to page 32-37. The following two tables are main results from Study 1 and Study 2.**

Study 1

Table 2 - Results: Paths, estimate, and their significance.^a

Part A: Direct effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE^c)	LLCI^d	ULCI^d	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2018)	11.58*** (2.88)	6.84	16.32	Main effect
Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2018)	2.51*** (0.68)	0.73	4.29	Main effect
Part B: Moderated effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.76*** (0.05)	1.67	1.85	
Individual-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.12* (0.06)	0.01	0.23	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.48*** (0.06)	1.21	1.75	
Unit-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.86*** (0.06)	0.76	0.96	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2018)	5.48*** (1.59)	0.42	10.54	
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.30*** (0.08)	0.10	0.50	Hypothesis 1 supported
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level task performance (2018)	1.67*** (0.48)	0.72	2.62	
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.50*** (0.14)	0.23	0.77	
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.17*** (0.09)	1.03	1.31	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.10*** (0.08)	0.96	1.24	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.10*** (0.004)	0.09	0.11	Hypothesis 3 supported
Part C: Indirect effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2018)	6.53*** (1.87)	1.82	11.24	
T- v a l u e				
Part D: Congruence and incongruence effect	Estimate	SE		Hypothesis testing
<i>Congruence (Individual-level participative leadership = Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	3.24***	0.10	32.24	Hypothesis 1 supported
Curvature	1.28***	0.04	32.00	Hypothesis 1 supported
<i>Incongruence (Individual-level participative leadership = -Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	0.28***	0.05	6.11	Hypothesis

		Estimate	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Curvature		0.68***	0.13	5.13	2 supported
Part E: Moderator (Unit-level participative leadership, Unit-level unit-member exchange)					
			Monte Carlo Simulation ^d		Hypothesis testing
			LLCI	ULCI	
	-2	-9.53	-19.94	0.61	
	-1	-2.55	-4.92	1.13	
	0	4.42*	0.55	7.67	
	1	11.39**	1.84	21.73	
	2	18.36**	2.11	35.80	

^an = 1317 at the individual level (level 1); n = 278 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. ^cSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Study 2

Table 5- Results: Paths, estimate, and their significance.^a

Part A: Direct effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE ^c)	LLCI ^d	ULCI ^d	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2019)	18.32*** (5.49)	8.63	28.01	Main effect
Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2019)	3.54*** (1.00)	0.24	6.84	Main effect
Part B: Moderated effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	2.47*** (0.74)	1.21	3.73	
Individual-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.08 (0.07)	-0.03	0.19	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.01*** (0.02)	0.97	1.05	
Unit-level participative leadership ² → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.08*** (0.15)	0.82	1.34	
Unit-level participative leadership → Individual-level task performance (2019)	5.63*** (1.63)	1.14	10.12	
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.47*** (0.10)	0.31	0.63	Hypothesis 1 supported
Participative leadership congruence → Individual-level task performance (2019)	2.33*** (0.65)	1.26	3.40	
Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	0.21*** (0.06)	0.09	0.33	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.83*** (0.24)	1.44	2.22	
Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit	1.39*** (0.18)	1.09	1.69	
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level task performance (2019)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.09	0.13	Hypothesis 3 supported
Part C: Indirect effect (unstandardized estimates)	Estimate (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis testing
Individual-level participative leadership × Unit-level participative leadership × Unit-level unit-member exchange → Individual-level person-unit fit → Individual-level task performance (2019)	11.78*** (3.30)	1.42	22.14	
Part D: Congruence and incongruence effect	Estimate	SE	T-value	Hypothesis testing
<i>Congruence (Individual-level participative leadership = Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	3.48***	0.75	4.65	Hypothesis 1 supported

Curvature	2.99***	0.24	12.31	Hypothesis 1 supported
<i>Incongruence (Individual-level participative leadership = -Unit-level participative leadership) line</i>				
Slope	1.46*	0.73	1.99	Hypothesis 2 supported
Curvature	-0.67*	0.27	-2.51	Hypothesis 2 supported
Part E: Moderator (Unit-level participative leadership, Unit-level unit-member exchange)	Estimate	Monte Carlo Simulation^d		Hypothesis testing
		LLCI	ULCI	
-2	-10.17	-22.75	0.39	
-1	-0.71	-4.30	2.31	
0	8.76*	1.99	15.53	
1	18.39**	5.38	35.39	
2	28.01**	7.62	54.41	

^an = 1116 at the individual level (level 1); n = 236 at the unit level (level 2). ^b* $p < .05$, ^c** $p < .01$, ^d*** $p < .001$. ^eSE = standard error of estimate. ^dCI = confidence interval; LLCI = lower level of the 95% confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of the 95% confidence interval. ^e50000 times. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: Please see my overall feedback in the comment section

Response: Thank you for your insightful comment. We adopted a social exchange theory as an overarching framework to reinforce the arguments leading to the formulation of the hypotheses. Please refer to page 10-13. Also, we further improved theoretical contributions and practical implication by using a social exchange theory as an overarching framework this round. Please refer to page 21-24.

For example:

Contributions to theory

The study makes three contributions to leadership and management theory. First, while leadership has long been recognized as a critical feature of organizational success (Menguc et al., 2007), a multilevel perspective is needed for inclusive leadership approaches to prosper (Nishii and Leroy, 2022). While extant research has suggested that the role and impact of leadership cuts across organizational levels and requires multilevel

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3 treatments (Klebe et al., 2022; Glew et al., 1995), extant research has
4 generally examined individual (De Poel et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2010;
5 Newman et al., 2016) or group (Caughron and Mumford, 2012; De Poel et
6 al., 2014; Somech, 2006) level dynamics. Subsequently, few studies have
7 examined an integrated multilevel framework of participative leadership and
8 employee-level outcomes. In response, this study employs a multiple-level
9 approach to reveal the role of participative leadership congruence between
10 business unit leaders and direct supervisors and intermediate socio-
11 psychological mechanisms on employee task performance. In doing so, the
12 study places a much-needed emphasis on both senior leaders and lower-
13 level leaders and employees' local and interpersonal experiences that are
14 suggested to make all the difference for inclusive leadership environments
15 (Nishii and Leroy, 2022). Specifically, the results demonstrate that higher
16 participative leadership congruence will enhance employee task
17 performance through P-U fit. Consequently, the revealed importance of
18 participative leadership congruence between senior and lower-level leaders
19 reinforces the need for leadership research to account for (mis)alignment in
20 leadership behaviors across all leadership levels when examining outcomes
21 of participative leadership in large firms.

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Second, O'Reilly et al. (2010) indicate how participative leadership incongruence would result in reduced employee task performance but do not show how this might occur. The findings show a more complex picture than the suggested positive impact on employee task performance when leadership congruence is high and, conversely, the suggested negative impact on employee task performance when leadership incongruence is present. Specifically, the findings reveal that leadership incongruence (i.e., misalignment in the participative leadership behaviors between unit-level leaders and employees' direct supervisors) can raise P-U fit and, thus, employee task performance only when direct supervisors display high participative leadership behaviors. The critical implication here is twofold: (i) direct supervisors' participative leadership is more critical than the participative leadership of senior leaders for employee task performance, via the mediating role of P-U fit; and (ii) the established importance of leader and follower similarity of attributes (e.g., Emirza and Katrinli, 2022) does not hold for the relationship between participative leadership and P-U fit. This finding reinforces the assertion of Nishii and Leroy (2022, p. 683) that "people's more local and interpersonal experiences make all the difference" for inclusive leadership in organizations. In other words, direct supervisors

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3 are essential to enhancing P–U fit by working closely and collaboratively
4 with subordinates through frequent discussion of, and collective
5 involvement in, decision-making (e.g., Klebe et al., 2022). It is through
6 these behaviors and the corresponding employee responses that employees'
7 task performance increases. This finding highlights the nuances of
8 participative leadership congruence, suggesting that the relationship to
9 employees' task performance is more complex than simply an aligned
10 situation being 'good' and a misaligned situation being 'bad' for the task
11 performance of employees.
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17 Third, in addition to the theoretical insights presented above, the
18 findings put a spotlight on the situational conditions experienced by unit-
19 level employees and how such conditions moderate the pathway to
20 employee task performance. Specifically, the results reveal how the
21 boundary role of UMX enhances the relationship between participative
22 leadership congruence and employee P–U fit. UMX augments the specific
23 qualities of participative leadership that promote P–U fit. Participative
24 leadership is a highly inclusive leadership approach, which the presence of
25 UMX further amplifies through its characteristics of open exchange of ideas,
26 information, and resources among unit employees (Van Dyne and Kamdar,
27 2015) and in group discussions and meetings (Farmer et al., 2015). UMX
28 generates social attachment between the individual employee and the unit,
29 resulting in stronger identification with the unit as well as greater cohesion
30 and teamwork among unit members (Liu et al., 2011; Banks et al., 2014).
31 UMX is, thus, found to directly strengthen and augment the relationship
32 between participative leadership and P–U fit, empirically validating the
33 importance of situational conditions for successful inclusive leadership
34 practices (e.g., Nishii and Leroy, 2022; Somech, 2005).
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45 *Implications for practice*

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47 Concerning the practical implications of the research findings, we urge firms
48 to emphasize the vertical alignment of participative leadership behaviors
49 across all 'leaders', regardless of their position in the firm. Immediate
50 employee supervisors play a critical leadership role and should not be
51 dismissed as simply operational managers, only concerned with day-to-day
52 operations, and not impacting organizational performance. Ensuring that
53 direct supervisors receive appropriate managerial education training for the
54 required participative leadership behaviors will improve employees' task
55 performance (e.g., Banks et al., 2014; De Poel et al., 2014).
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We also urge senior executives to promote an organizational workplace climate that fosters an open-minded unit culture by constructing a variety of information exchange platforms. This practice will increase the effectiveness of participative leadership in intensifying individual P–U fit and, subsequently, the relationship between P–U fit and employee task performance. Based on our findings, it is essential that misalignment in the participative leadership behaviors across levels is identified and addressed as this has the potential to undermine P–U fit and reduce the task performance of employees. This is especially the case if employees' direct supervisors show an absence of participative leadership behaviors, as these individuals play a critical role in generating P–U fit and ultimately superior organizational performance, through increasing employees' task performance.

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the fields and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: Please see my overall feedback in the comment section

Response: Thank you for your insightful comments. We asked some of the authors as native speaker to proofread the revised manuscript.

In closing, Again, thank you for your valuable feedback. Your insights have been instrumental in improving our manuscript. We are encouraged by your recognition of our effort. The authors.