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Status differentiation

Grow, André

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Chapter 4

Status and Interdependence in Organizational Teams: A Case Study of a Dutch Childcare Organization*

Abstract

Status differentiation can strongly affect the processes and performance of organizational teams. Functionalistic accounts of status differentiation hold that it operates as an informal incentive system, in which team members reward the performance of others with respect and deference to facilitate team success. Earlier research has implicitly assumed that the postulated link between status and performance in team settings is universal. In this chapter, we argue that the status-performance link is not as universal as assumed and crucially depends on the level of task interdependence and informal interdependence that team members experience. We predict that individuals are more likely to reward the performance of their colleagues with respect when they experience higher levels of task interdependence, but are less likely to do so when they experience higher levels of informal interdependence. We test these predictions with data collected in 15 teams of a medium-sized Dutch childcare organization. Our results suggest that in this sample task interdependence moderates the relation between respect and performance. Informal interdependence, by contrast, generally increases the respect that team members have for others, but does not moderate the relation between performance and respect.

*This chapter is co-authored with Rafael Wittek and Andreas Flache and at time of writing was in preparation for submission to a scientific journal.

4.1 Introduction

Status differentiation can strongly affect the processes and performance of organizational teams. Status is the respect and prominence that individuals have in the eyes of others (Anderson et al., 2015; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Mannix & Sauer, 2006). Team members who command more respect than their colleagues are typically more involved in the group task and are more influential in group decision processes (Berger et al., 1980). High status team members tend to have a disproportional impact on team processes and outcomes, even if all team members have equal standing in the formal organizational blueprint (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012). Given this impact on group work, an increasing number of management scholars are asking why and under which conditions status differentiation emerges in organizational teams (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012; Chen, Peterson, Phillips, Podolny, & Ridgeway, 2012; Cheng et al., 2013; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Mannix & Sauer, 2006; Meeussen & van Dijk, 2015; Pearce, 2010; Waldron, 1998).

Most current theorizing in management research takes a *functionalistic perspective* on status differentiation in teams (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012; Chen et al., 2012; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). In this perspective, status differentiation operates as an informal incentive system that motivates team members to contribute to the team's goals and refrain from the temptation to free-ride on the efforts of others. Specifically, functionalistic accounts assume that in small group settings, individuals both desire the respect of others and respect those who make outstanding contributions to collective goals. The prospect of gaining appreciation from colleagues, in turn, motivates them to work hard for the team, even when they could benefit from withholding effort and focusing on their own interests instead.

The assumption that individuals are willing to grant status to those who make outstanding contributions to the tasks important to team members is in line with insights from a large body of experimental research on status differentiation in small groups with a collective task focus (for early studies on this issue see Bales, 1950, 1970). Existing management research has taken for warranted that also outside the laboratory individuals are willing to grant status to those who show outstanding performance in task focused group settings. However, in this chapter we suggest that outside the laboratory, this willingness is not as universal as earlier research has implicitly assumed. We argue that both the level of *task interdependence* and *informal interdependence* that team members experience affect their willingness to grant status to high performing colleagues.

Our argument starts from the insight that status is a zero-sum commodity that can lead to competition and tensions among team members (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Blau, 1964; Groysberg, Polzer, & Elfenbein, 2010; Porath, Overbeck, & Pearson, 2008). Individuals who grant status to other team members run the risk of lowering their own status and jeopardizing the social integration of the team. Based on this, we assume that individuals only confer respect for performance when they expect that the benefits of such conferrals outweigh their costs. Drawing on related research on organizational teams (e.g., Doerr et al., 2004; Koster et al., 2007) and small groups (e.g., Bianchi & Lancianese, 2007; Blau, 1964), we expect that the level of task interdependence and informal interdependence that team members experience will

crucially affect these subjective costs and benefits, and thereby will act as moderators in the relation between performance and respect.

Task interdependence, on the one hand, refers to the extent to which the tasks of team members are connected, so that the performance of one individual can benefit the performance of others. Informal interdependence, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which individuals maintain strong supportive social bonds with the other members of their team. We argue that when team members experience higher levels of task interdependence, they will perceive their own outcomes more dependent on the performance of their colleagues and will therefore expect to benefit more from motivating them to perform well. Consequently, they will be more willing to reward high performance with respect. When team members experience higher levels of informal interdependence, by contrast, they will be more concerned that performance-based status differentiation might undermine the strong social bonds that exist in the team. Therefore, they will be less willing to make their respect contingent on performance.

In the controlled and short-lived environment of laboratory groups, concerns for own status and social relations are not very likely to affect individuals' status allocation behavior. In enduring groups outside the lab, by contrast, we expect that such motives play an important role. To assess the moderating roles of the two forms of interdependence, we make use of two waves of sociometric data that contain information about the patterns of respect and performance among 66 members of 15 teams of social workers in a medium-sized Dutch childcare organization. To preview results, our analyses suggest that the task interdependence that team members experience increases their willingness to confer status for performance as predicted. By contrast, we find no evidence that the level of informal interdependence affects the relation between status and performance. In the remainder of this chapter, we first discuss the theoretical background of our research and present our hypotheses. Subsequently, we present the research design, data, and results. We conclude with a discussion of our findings for current theorizing on status differentiation in organizational teams.

4.2 Theory and Hypotheses

4.2.1 The benefits and costs of granting status in organizational teams

Existing research commonly assumes that individuals value the respect and admiration of their peers for both instrumental and intrinsic reasons (Anderson et al., 2015; Frank, 1985; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). From an instrumental point of view, respect and admiration are often associated with influence, power, and privileged access to valued resources (Berger et al., 1980; Thye, Willer, & Markovsky, 2006; Willer, 2009). Individuals therefore strive for status to gain accesses to these commodities. From an intrinsic point of view, it has been assumed that humans developed a 'taste for status' in their evolutionary past, due to the reproductive advantages that come with influence, power, and resources (Anderson et al., 2015; Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010; Frank, 1985; Huberman, Loch, & Onculer, 2004).

Given that status tends to have subjective value, it has similarities with other valuable commodities that individuals strive for (Frank, 1985). However, it is also different from many commodities in two crucial aspects. First, status is a zero-sum commodity. The instrumental

and intrinsic benefits that accrue to high status positions can only be acquired when a given individual is relatively more respected than others. To illustrate this, consider a group in which all group members are equally respected, no matter how much or little. In this context, nobody can exert more influence on the decision process or will acquire privileged access to resources. Thus, striving for status has the tendency to generate positional treadmills on which individuals compete for the respect of their peers. Second, status is not a commodity that can be owned independently of others. Instead, status “exists entirely in the eyes of others[, and is] conferred by them” (Magee & Galinsky, 2008, p. 364). In team settings, those who demand status are those who control its supply (Blau, 1964; Brennan & Pettit, 2004).

Existing research in the functionalistic perspective has highlighted the potential benefits that performance-based status competition can have for a team and its members. The benefits derive from the fact that in team settings, individuals’ work and personal outcomes tend to be interlocked, so that the good performance of one team member can benefit the work of others and can make team success more likely. What has largely been neglected, however, is the fact that status is a zero-sum commodity that makes conferring status to others a potentially costly act. That is, whenever one team member shows respect and admiration toward another team member, such gestures have the potential to lower the status of the originator relatively to that of the receiver and the rest of the team (Blau, 1964; Gould, 2002; Grow, Flache, & Wittek, 2015; Skvoretz & Fararo, 1996). Consequently, individuals tend to be reluctant to show their respect for others too freely and sometimes engage in strategic behavior that aims at extracting gestures of respect from others even if they are not merited (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012).

Furthermore, individuals tend to value the friendship and social support of their peers, next to social status (Blau, 1954; Goode, 1979). Status differentiation can “inhibit [such] sociable interaction[s] and create[s] some social distance between the leading group members and the rest” (Blau, 1964, p. 49). Even more, status differentiation and competition for high status ranks can lead to negative emotions among group members. That is, the “more successful [individual] A is in impressing B and earning B’s high regard, the more displeasure he causes to C whose relative standing in the eyes of B has suffered” (Blau, 1964, p. 44). This displeasure tends to reduce the satisfaction among low status group members and decreases their attachment to the group. It can even lead to conflict about the legitimacy of the status hierarchy (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Consequently, the more emotionally attached individuals are to the other members of their team and the more they value social integration, the more costly they might perceive it to make their regard for others contingent on their performance (cf. Bianchi & Lancianese, 2007).

Taken together, we argue that in organizational teams rewarding respect with performance is connected to both benefits and costs. On the one hand, team members might benefit from rewarding the performance of others with respect, because an increase in the performance of others might ultimately benefit themselves and the team. On the other hand, showing respect for the performance of others can come at the costs of lowering one’s own status in the team and reduced social integration. We expect that individuals will only reward the performance of their colleagues with respect when they perceive that the potential benefits outweigh the potential costs. We discuss next how task interdependence and informal interdependence might

affect these costs and benefits.

4.2.2 Interdependence and status conferral in teams

Interdependence is a defining element of organizational teams, but the exact amount and form of interdependence that team members experience can vary widely, even between teams that have to fulfill similar tasks under similar organizational conditions (Taggar & Haines, 2006; Van der Vegt, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 2001; Wageman & Gordon, 2005). Accordingly, a large body of research has examined how variations in different forms of interdependence affect team member behavior and team level outcomes (for an overview see Van der Vegt & Van de Vliert, 2002). Interestingly, this literature has not addressed how the degree and form of interdependence affects the status-performance link in teams. Our focus is on task interdependence and informal interdependence as two central forms of interdependence that might moderate this link.

4.2.2.1 Task interdependence

Task interdependence is “the connectedness between jobs such that performance of one depends on the successful performance of the other” (Kiggundu, 1983, p. 146). The level of task interdependence that team members experience is to some extent defined by managerial requirements and demands of the task (Brass, 1985), but teams often have considerable leeway in coordinating their work. In the extreme case, management defines nothing more than who belongs to the team and what goals need to be achieved, and leaves it to the team how to organize its work (cf. Barker, 1993). In such self-managing teams, the interdependence that develops is fully emergent and is likely to reflect skills, experiences, and personality dispositions of team members (Wageman & Gordon, 2005).

The interdependence that a given team member experiences can be distinguished into initiated task interdependence and received task interdependence (Kiggundu, 1981, 1983; Taggar & Haines, 2006; Van der Vegt, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 1998). Initiated task interdependence is the degree to which a team member’s work and performance affects the work and performance of others. Team members high in initiated task interdependence have many other team members relying on them for material, information, and advice (Taggar & Haines, 2006). Those other team members tend to develop a sense of responsibility for the work of the initiator, which often leads to high motivation and a generally positive job perception (Van der Vegt et al., 1998). Received task interdependence, by contrast, is the degree to which a team member depends on the work and performance of others. Team members high in received task interdependence are likely to experience little autonomy in their jobs and are likely to perceive that their success at work largely depends on the efforts of others (Doerr et al., 2004).

In this chapter, we focus on received task interdependence, due to its potential effect on the benefits that individuals might derive from motivating other team members to perform well. Given this effect, we expect that the level of received task interdependence (for brevity from here on simply called ‘task interdependence’) that team members experience is a moderator in the relation between status and performance. The more a given team member depends on the

task performance of others, the less likely they will perceive that their own efforts alone are sufficient to be successful in her work and the more they assume to gain from motivating others to perform at high levels. However, the less they depend on the task performance of others, the less they stand to gain from conferring status to them. Consequently, high (low) received task interdependence should increase (decrease) team members' willingness to reward performance with respect. We therefore formulate our first hypothesis as:

Hypothesis 1: Task interdependence will moderate the relation between respect and performance. The more a team member experiences task interdependence, the more this team member will respect other team members for their performance.

4.2.2.2 Informal interdependence

Task interdependence refers to the formal, task focused relations that exist among team members. Informal interdependence, by contrast, refers to the "personal relationships between team members [...] that are independent from the formal positions they have" (Koster et al., 2007, p. 120). Informal interdependence is high when team members frequently socialize outside work, maintain friendly relations, discuss personal matters, and provide each other with social support. Dense informal ties among co-workers have been assumed to have beneficial effects for both individual employees and the larger organization, and have been conceptualized as a form of social capital that individuals can draw upon (Jones & George, 1998; Leana & van Buren, 1999; Spagnolo, 1999). In line with this notion, Koster et al. (2007) highlighted that strong personal relations have been shown to facilitate access to information, idea exchange, emotional support, and subjective well-being among organizational members.

Given the social capital that can reside in strong personal relations, individuals tend to engage in acts that facilitate such relations and tend to avoid acts that might undermine them. Such behaviors can even occur at the cost of performance. For example, Flache and Macy (Flache & Macy, 1996; Flache, 1996) argued that when individuals value good social relations with their colleagues, they can be inclined to divert time and resources to behaviors that aim at promoting and maintaining strong dyadic bonds with others, rather than focusing on team performance. In line with this, Langfred (2004) has shown that in teams in which there exists a high level of mutual trust among team members, individuals are less likely to monitor the work of others to avoid undermining the existing trust. This reluctance even occurs at the cost of decreased team performance.

As indicated earlier, status differentiation tends to create barriers to social interactions and can cause tensions that might lead to the deterioration of social ties among group members. Given that individuals tend to value strong social bonds with their peers, we might expect that team members who experience higher levels of informal interdependence will be less likely to make their regard for others contingent on their performance. We thus formulate our second hypothesis as:

Hypothesis 2: Informal interdependence will moderate the relation between respect and performance. The more a team member experiences informal

interdependence, the weaker will be the effect that the performance of others has on the respect that this team member has for them.

4.3 The Current Study

4.3.1 Sample and procedure

We tested our hypotheses with longitudinal data collected at two time points at four locations (from here on departments) of a medium-sized Dutch childcare organization. The departments operated independently of each other but shared a focus on treating non-institutionalized children with special social and psychological needs (from here on clients). The departments consisted of 16 to 42 staff members who either were directly involved in treating clients or had supportive functions (e.g., administrative personnel).¹² Staff members concerned with treating clients could be further categorized into social workers and a smaller number of employees with specialized functions (e.g., medical doctors, speech therapists, and play therapists). Social workers worked in teams of two to five members that were jointly responsible for 8 to 16 children. Our analysis focuses on the respect among the members of these teams.

Within teams, mentoring roles were assigned so that certain tasks with particular children were the responsibility of only one team member. Apart from this, the work in the teams was self-managed and team members had to organize who would take care of which children over the course of a week and what group activities would be organized. This aspect of self-organization makes these teams particularly attractive for our study, because it creates a situation in which the organizational context is constant, whereas the exact way in which the work is structured might vary between teams.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the size of the different teams, participation rates, and turnover between the two time points. In total, there were $N = 66$ social workers of which $n = 55$ participated in the study at least once (83% participation rate). Between Time 1 and Time 2, 16 employees left their teams, either because they left the organization, started working in different functions, or because they switch to other teams. One team ceased to exist between Time 1 and Time 2 and total of 18 employees joined the teams.

Data collection took place by means of paper-and-pencil questionnaires distributed in spring and autumn 2011. The questionnaires consisted of two parts. The first part had a round robin design which asked respondents to evaluate the other members of their department on several characteristics. The second part consisted of respondents' self-ratings on various social-psychological measures and questions about demographic characteristics. As we discuss in detail below, our central dependent variable was the amount of respect that a given respondent (i.e. *actor*) indicated to have for a given member of their team (i.e. *target*). We aimed to predict this variable with the performance in client directed tasks that actors attributed to the targets, contingent on the task interdependence and informal interdependence that actors reported experiencing.

¹² Department sizes in detail (Time 1/Time 2): 16/19, 40/42, 19/16, 34/39.

Department/Team	Time 1			Time 2			Turnover	
	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>left</i>	<i>joined</i>
Total	52	46	(88)	54	38	(70)	16	18
Department 1	7	7	(100)	6	5	(83)	2	1
Team 1	4	4	(100)	3	3	(100)	1	0
Team 2	3	3	(100)	3	2	(66)	1	1
Department 2	17	15	(88)	21	12	(57)	3	7
Team 3	4	3	(75)	4	3	(75)	1	1
Team 4	3	2	(66)	4	3	(75)	1	2
Team 5	4	4	(100)	4	1	(25)	0	0
Team 6	3	3	(100)	4	3	(75)	1	2
Team 7	3	3	(100)	5	2	(40)	0	2
Department 3	11	9	(81)	8	6	(75)	6	3
Team 8	5	4	(80)	3	1	(33)	3	1
Team 9	2	1	(50)	—	—		2	0
Team 10	4	4	(100)	5	5	(100)	1	2
Department 4	17	15	(88)	19	15	(78)	5	7
Team 11	2	2	(100)	4	3	(75)	1	3
Team 12	5	4	(80)	5	5	(100)	3	3
Team 13	4	3	(75)	3	1	(33)	1	0
Team 14	3	3	(100)	3	2	(66)	0	0
Team 15	3	3	(100)	4	4	(100)	0	1

Table 4.1 Department and team sizes, participation rates, and turnover. *N* = number of employees, *n* = number of employees who participated, and % = participation rate. Team 9 had been dissolved between Time 1 and Time 2. Four respondents switched teams between Time 1 and Time 2, therefore the number of employees is larger than the sum of the numbers of team members.

4.3.2 Measures

4.3.2.1 Respect

We asked respondents to indicate how much they respected the members of the department relatively to each other. They could indicate this respect on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘much lower than average’ (1) to ‘much higher than average’ (5). We developed this question based on earlier research on status allocations in organizational contexts (cf. Flynn, 2003). The comparative nature of the measure takes into account that status is a zero-sum commodity, so that high status derives from being relatively more respected than others.

4.3.2.2 Performance

We asked respondents to evaluate the performance of the other members of their department in terms of client directed tasks. Similar to our measure of respect, employees could evaluate the performance of their colleagues on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘much lower than average’ (1) to ‘much higher than average’ (5) (cf. Barrick & Mount, 1993; Kohli, Shervani, & Challagalla, 1998). We relied on a subjective measure of performance, instead of an objective measure, for two reasons. First, the tasks that respondents had to fulfill were

complex and highly non-standard, which makes it difficult to devise objective performance measures. Second, status scholars have highlighted that what matters most for status processes is perceived performance and contributions to collective goals, which might or might not be aligned with objective performance measures (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012; Berger, Cohen, & Morris, 1972; Ridgeway, 1991). We relied on relative performance evaluations because this was likely to make performance differences between department members more salient.

4.3.2.3 *Task interdependence*

We assessed respondents' perceptions of their dependence on other colleagues for fulfilling their tasks with one item from Van der Veegt et al.'s (2001) task interdependence scale. Employees could indicate on a 7-point Likert-type scale how much they depended on their colleagues for doing their own work, ranging from 'not at all' (1) to 'very much' (7).

4.3.2.4 *Informal interdependence*

Based on earlier research on informal interdependence (Koster et al., 2007), we operationalized the level of informal interdependence that respondents experienced with each of their colleagues by asking them to describe their relations with them on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'very difficult relation' (1) to 'good friend' (5).

4.3.2.5 *Control variables*

We included information about respondents' gender (dummy coded with 'female' (1), 'male' (0)), age and tenure (both measured in years), weekly working hours, and employment status ('intern' (1), 'employee' (0)) in the analysis. We expected that each of these attributes might affect status allocations for reasons other than performance. For example, age, tenure, and working hours might be correlates of experience that might command respect in the eyes of others, even if it is not strongly related to current individual performance. Men might act more dominantly than women in teamwork, which might elicit respect among others, even if this is unrelated to performance. Additionally, the temporally limited role and learning role of interns might generally diminish the respect they receive within a team. Note that interns were present in some teams only at Time 1 and only in some of the teams.

4.3.3 Analytical approach

Our data had a complex multilevel structure in which status conferrals were nested in time points, actors, targets, dyads, and teams, which violates assumptions of independence of most standard statistical methods. We therefore used the social relations model (Kenny & La Voie, 1984) for analyzing our data. The social relations model decomposes the variation in the observed status conferrals into time, actor, target, dyad, and team variance (Back & Kenny, 2010). Time variance captures variation in status conferral behavior between the two time points of data collection; actor variance captures variation due to differences in the status conferral behavior between individuals (i.e. actor variance is high when some individuals generally grant more/less respect to their colleagues than other team members); target variance

Variable	Time 1		Time 2	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Actor Female	.94	.24	.96	.18
2. Actor Age	34.51	10.17	35.45	9.39
3. Actor Tenure	8.57	7.53	9.83	8.12
4. Actor Hours	26.68	6.09	24.60	5.82
5. Actor Intern	.14	.35	—	—
6. Target Female	.93	.25	.96	.18
7. Target Age	35.21	9.89	35.21	9.33
8. Target Tenure	8.91	7.40	9.65	8.22
9. Target Hours	26.96	6.43	25.17	6.95
10. Target Intern	.10	.30	—	—
11. Task-Int	5.58	.85	5.39	.93
12. Informal-Int	3.82	.70	3.86	.67
13. Perf	3.56	.68	3.53	.71
14. Respect	3.53	.65	3.49	.69

Table 4.2 Means and standard deviations of study variables.

captures differences in the status that individuals generally receive (i.e. target variance is high when some individuals generally are more/less respected than other individuals); dyad variance captures variation in allocations between particular pairs of individuals (i.e. dyad variance is high when two individuals grant more/less respect to each other than other individuals grant to them); team variance, finally, captures general differences in the status allocations between teams (i.e. team variance is high when members of one team have a tendency to grant more respect to each other than the members of other teams grant to each other).

The estimation of social relations models starts with a null-model that does not contain any predictor variables; this model serves both variance partitioning and as a baseline model against which the fit of subsequent models that contain predictor variables can be compared. In our case, the first subsequent model (Model 1) contained all control variables and main predictor variables; in the second subsequent model (Model 2) we added two multiplicative interaction terms, one for the interaction between perceived performance and task interdependence and one for the interaction between perceived performance and informal interdependence. The inclusion of these two-way interactive terms enabled us to test our hypotheses.

A social relations model has one observation for each dyad of individuals with information from the side of the actor at a given time point (i.e. two observations when individuals 1 and 2 evaluate each other; only one when, e.g., individual 1 evaluates individual 2, but individual 2 refuses to participate). To deal with the possibility of missing evaluations, we conducted all analyses with the `lme4` package (Bates, Maechler, Bolker, & Walker, 2015) in the statistical software environment R (R Core Team, 2014). This package let us estimate multilevel models with appropriate cross-classification of observations across the five levels (time points, actors, targets, dyads, and teams), while allowing for missing observations.

In each dyad, we had information about the characteristics of the actor and the target. This enabled us to assess how the control variables affected status allocations as properties of both actors and targets.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics for all study variables at the observation level and Table 4.3 shows bivariate correlations. In total, we obtained 231 observations (Time 1 = 117; Time 2 = 114). At both time points, respondents perceived to depend on their colleagues for doing their work ($M_{T1} = 5.58$, $SD_{T1} = .85$; $M_{T2} = 5.39$, $SD_{T2} = .93$) and experienced some level of informal interdependence ($M_{T1} = 3.82$, $SD_{T1} = .70$; $M_{T2} = 3.86$, $SD_{T2} = .67$). Respondents tended to evaluate the performance of the other team members as average or above average ($M_{T1} = 3.56$, $SD_{T1} = .68$; $M_{T2} = 3.53$, $SD_{T2} = .71$) and tended to respect them similarly or more than all other members of the department ($M_{T1} = 3.53$, $SD_{T1} = .65$; $M_{T2} = 3.49$, $SD_{T2} = .69$).

In terms of bivariate correlations, at both time points respect was positively correlated with performance evaluations ($r_{T1} = .60$, $p \leq .01$; $r_{T2} = .44$, $p \leq .01$) and informal interdependence ($r_{T1} = .38$, $p \leq .01$; $r_{T2} = .47$, $p \leq .01$), but with task interdependence only at Time 1 ($r_{T1} = .20$, $p \leq .05$; $r_{T2} = .04$, *ns*).

4.4.2 Variance partitioning

Table 4.4 presents the partitioning of variance in respect allocations of the time, actor, target, dyadic, and team level of analysis. Of the non-residual variance, about 10% was at the actor level, 15% was at the target level, 25% was at the dyadic level, and 49% was at the team level. The variance across time points was negligible. This indicates that most of the variation in status allocations was specific to teams and dyads of team members, while some respondents differed from others in how much status they generally conferred and/or how much status they generally received.

4.4.3 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1 predicts that task interdependence moderates the relation between performance evaluations and status allocations. The results shown in Table 4.5 (Model 1) suggest that performance evaluations were positively associated with status allocations ($b = .315$, $p \leq .01$). Upon entering the two-way interactive effects (Model 2), the main effect of task interdependence became significant at the 1% level ($b = .116$, $p \leq .01$). In line with our hypothesis, the two-way interactive effect between task interdependence and performance evaluations was positive and significant ($b = .124$, $p \leq .05$). Figure 4.1 illustrates that this implies that respondents who experienced relatively higher levels of task interdependence granted more respect for performance than respondents who experienced relatively lower levels of task interdependence.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Actor Female	—	-.29 **	-.33 **	-.33 **	.10	.07	-.20 *
2. Actor Age	-.44 **	—	.82 **	-.26 **	-.49 **	-.06	.08
3. Actor Tenure	-.33 **	.86 **	—	-.16 †	-.40 **	-.07	.20 *
4. Actor Hours	-.44 **	.14	.10	—	.35 **	-.07	.14
5. Actor Intern	—	—	—	—	—	-.29 **	.19 *
6. Target Female	-.04	-.08	-.14	.26 **	—	—	-.37 **
7. Target Age	-.23 *	.28 **	.30 **	-.12	—	-.43 **	—
8. Target Tenure	-.29 **	.31 **	.32 **	-.10	—	-.33 **	.88 **
9. Target Hours	.08	-.07	-.02	-.21 *	—	-.35 **	.17 †
10. Target Intern	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. Task-Int	.08	-.02	.05	.17 †	—	.24 *	-.25 **
12. Informal-Int	-.04	.04	.00	.15	—	.10	-.07
13. Perf	-.06	.20 *	.20 *	.30 **	—	.01	.11
14. Respect	-.14	.29 **	.30 **	.17 †	—	.00	.13

Table 4.3 Part I Intercorrelations between study variables. Correlations for Time 1 appear above the diagonal; correlations for Time 2 appear below the diagonal. Two-tailed significance levels: ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, † $p \leq .1$.

Variable	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Actor Female	-.22 *	.02	-.15	.05	-.12	-.06	-.24 **
2. Actor Age	.20 *	.00	.12	-.11	-.02	.01	.17 †
3. Actor Tenure	.28 **	-.02	.02	-.12	.00	.06	.13
4. Actor Hours	.14	-.09	-.06	.08	-.01	.03	.04
5. Actor Intern	.08	.09	.03	.08	-.11	.12	-.06
6. Target Female	-.42 **	-.37 **	.09	.03	-.17 †	-.28 **	-.09
7. Target Age	.81 **	-.19 *	-.44 **	-.12	-.04	.27 **	.19 *
8. Target Tenure	—	-.14	-.36 **	-.09	.11	.32 **	.24 **
9. Target Hours	.13	—	.27 **	.04	.01	-.12	-.16 †
10. Target Intern	—	—	—	.00	.09	-.24 **	-.10
11. Task-Int	-.26 **	.03	—	—	.06	.06	.20 *
12. Informal-Int	.01	-.08	—	.09	—	.27 **	.38 **
13. Perf	.14	-.15	—	.03	.47 **	—	.60 **
14. Respect	.17 †	-.26 **	—	.04	.47 **	.44 **	—

Table 4.3 Part II Intercorrelations between study variables. Correlations for Time 1 appear above the diagonal; correlations for Time 2 appear below the diagonal. Two-tailed significance levels: ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, † $p \leq .1$.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that informal interdependence moderates the relation between performance evaluations and status allocations. The results shown on Table 4.5 do not support this hypothesis. Informal interdependence positively affects respect in Model 1 ($b = .244, p \leq .01$) but does not act as a moderator in the relation between performance and respect in Model 2 ($b = -.093, ns$), although the coefficient is in the expected direction. That is, as Figure 4.2 illustrates, respondents who experienced relatively higher levels of informal interdependence with their colleagues tended to grant somewhat less respect for performance to them, but this decrease was not significant.

Source of variance	Estimate	
Team	.083	49%
Dyadic	.043	25%
Actor	.017	10%
Target	.026	15%
Time	<.001	<1%
Residual	.301	
Deviance	451.15	

Table 4.4 Variance partitioning for respect allocations.

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Intercept	3.638 **	0.304	3.654 **	0.307
Control variables				
Actor Female	-0.215	0.206	-0.176	0.205
Actor Age	0.005	0.007	0.004	0.007
Actor Tenure	0.013	0.009	0.016 †	0.009
Actor Hours	0.005	0.007	0.010	0.007
Actor Intern	-0.030	0.182	-0.079	0.183
Target Female	0.125	0.201	0.088	0.202
Target Age	0.000	0.008	-0.001	0.008
Target Tenure	0.013	0.010	0.013	0.010
Target Hours	-0.005	0.006	-0.004	0.006
Target Intern	-0.085	0.193	-0.108	0.193
Main effects				
Task-Int	0.101 *	0.041	0.116 **	0.041
Informal-Int	0.244 **	0.060	0.228 **	0.059
Perf	0.315 **	0.058	0.300 **	0.058
Two-way interactions				
Task-Int × Perf			0.124 *	0.063
Informal-Int × Perf			-0.093	0.063
$\Delta\chi^2(df)$	109.38 (13) **		6.232 (2) *	

Table 4.5 Social relations model analyses for respect allocations. Two-tailed significance levels: ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, † $p \leq .1$.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the conditions under which members of organizational teams reward the performance of their colleagues with status in the form of respect. Earlier research suggests that in team settings, individuals use respect as a selective incentive to motivate their colleagues to perform well and to contribute to the collective goals of the team. The results of our analyses suggest that this reward mechanism is not as universal as previously thought. Specifically, in line with our theoretical arguments, our results suggest that individuals are the more likely to reward the performance of other team members with respect, the more they perceive that the successful completion of their own tasks depends on the performance of

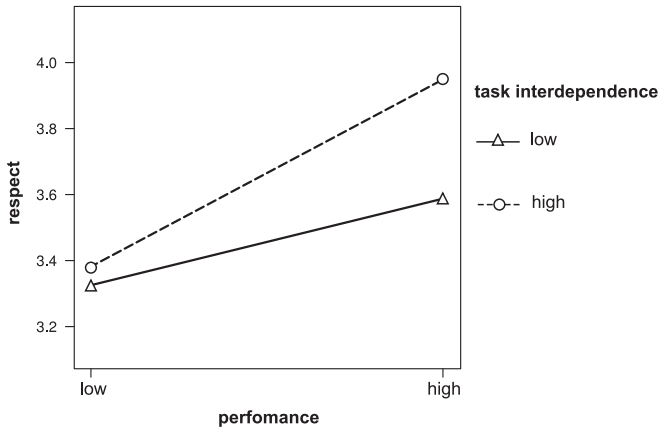


Figure 4.1 Two-way interactive effects of performance perceptions and task interdependence on respect conferral.

others. However, when individuals perceive that the completion of their own tasks depends little on the performance of others, they are less likely to reward their performance with respect. Existing research has so far largely neglected to control for the task interdependence that team members experience and might thereby miss an important boundary condition for the emergence of status differentiation.

Our results also suggest that high levels of informal interdependence in teams leads to increased respect among team members, but it does not moderate the relation between performance and respect. We argued that making the regard for others contingent on performance is potentially a costly act, because it can lead to competition and tensions, which might undermine the personal social relations that might exist in a team. In the outcomes of our analyses, individuals who experienced high levels of informal interdependence with their colleagues were not more or less likely to make their regard for these colleagues contingent on their performance than individuals who experienced lower levels of informal interdependence. Thus, the mechanisms that link respect with performance seem to be largely unaffected by the social relations that exist in a given team. One reason might be that respondents shared a very strong task focus, which might render the delivery of high quality care the central frame for their relations with other team members. If such a task focus is very dominant, other motives (e.g., concerns for friendship and social support) might become secondary for individuals' willingness to reward performance with respect (cf. Berger et al., 1977). Indeed, our experiences during the preparatory interviews with organizational members suggest that most individuals shared a very strong task focus and were strongly committed to their work with their clients. In other organizations in which such commitment is weaker and varies more among employees, informal interdependence might be a more important factor in the status allocation process.

A central strength of our study is that we collected repeated measurements of status allocations. This made it possible to separate measurement error in status allocations from

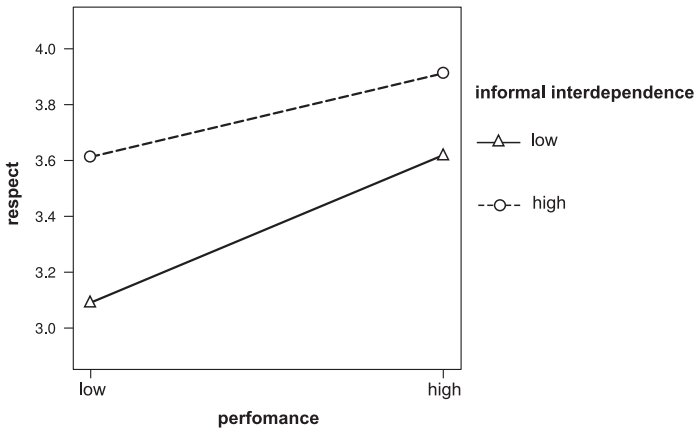


Figure 4.2 Two-way interactive effects of performance perceptions and informal interdependence on respect conferral.

possible dyadic processes that affect the attribution process. The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations were very stable between the two time points of data collection, which underscores the robustness of the processes that we were interested in. Additionally, because we collected status allocations and performance evaluations using sociometric techniques and analyzed these data with the social relations model enabled us to control for possible interdependence and complexity in status allocations.

Our study shows how different forms of interdependence affect status differentiation in organizational teams. Future research can build on and extend our work in several ways. First, we captured each of our central measures with a single item. For our sociometric measures (i.e. respect, performance evaluations, informal interdependence), this approach is in line with much existing research that has used dyadic data. One advantage of this approach is that it is likely to reduce fatigue in respondents, particularly in round robin designs that involve many targets, as was the case in our research (cf. Pustejovsky & Spillane, 2009). Earlier research has suggested that single-item measures can be reliable if they are sufficiently narrow and meaningful for respondents (Sackett & Larson, 1990). In developing our survey, we pretested extensively and discussed the questions (especially those involving a round robin design) with members of other departments not involved in the survey. Based on these discussions, we developed formulations perceived as meaningful by organizational members. Nevertheless, future research might benefit from using multiple measures for some of the variables that we studied, thereby increasing the reliability of the assessment of central theoretical constructs.

Our central measures were based on responses by study participants. At least in the cases of performance and task interdependence, it could have been possible to gather data from other sources, to try to reduce common source bias. For example, in the case of performance, we might have collected the department heads' performance evaluations of study participants. Similarly, in the case of task interdependence, we might have tried to develop measures aimed at objectively quantifying the amount of task interdependence within teams. In the context of

our study, however, there are several important drawbacks to such apparently more objective sources. First, the way employees perceive task interdependence in their teams might differ from what we expect if we look at the formal requirements. In the case of self-managing teams, obtaining external measures of task interdependence might be close to impossible. Thus, using respondents' reports of task interdependence is likely to be more reliable in assessing the level of task interdependence that individual team members experience. Second, measuring performance objectively can be very difficult, especially for complex and non-standard tasks, such as social work. Even supervisors' evaluations might not be reliable, given that they tend to be highly subjective. Thus, using respondents' perceptions of the performance of others is likely to be more reliable for the purposes of our study. Still, future research could try to collect more objective measures of performance and task interdependence and assess how such measures are related to the status processes described here.

Finally, we focused only on teams in one organizational context. Among these teams, the variation in the task interdependence and informal interdependence that individuals experienced was comparatively low. Our analyses suggest that already this comparatively small variation in task interdependence was significantly related to status allocations. However, future research might find even stronger effects than we report here, when a more diverse sample is used.

Together, our results suggest that in team settings, individuals' willingness to grant status to those who perform well is not as universal as previously assumed in research within the functionalistic perspective on status differentiation. Future research might thus benefit from considering the level of task interdependence that study participants experience as a boundary condition when studying status processes in organizational teams.