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Introduction

A Community-Academic Health Partnership (CAHP) is a form of networked organisation that aims to bridge specific knowledge-practice gaps in health care through collaboration between researchers and diverse community stakeholders (Drahota et al., 2016). Although CAHPs have been widely applied to address numerous “wicked” health problems (e.g., drug addiction, cardiovascular diseases, and physical inactivity), they have long been criticised for being too resource-intensive, complex to operate and manage, and lacking performance or sustainability, resulting in a high risk of project failure. Yet, little is known about how individual project workers can meet CAHPs’ inherent challenges and constraints to perform well in these increasingly diversified CAHP settings.

Objectives

To improve CAHPs’ ability to enable lasting, effective health impacts and to identify practical insights to inform future CAHP practice, this PhD sets out to answer the central question:

How do workers perceive and respond to the inherent challenges and constraints of their CAHP environment to achieve high project performance?

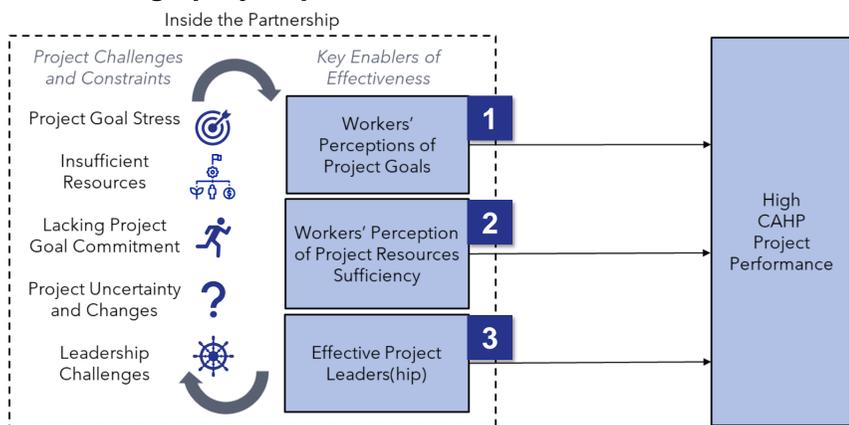


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of High CAHP Project Performance

Methods

The dissertation adopted a pragmatist approach to inform future CAHP practice (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, & Bristow, 2015). Following CAHP scholars’ recommendations (Ortiz et al., 2020; Luger et al., 2020), it adopted a mixed-method design) for data collection and analyses.

Target Population

CAHP project workers (i.e., leaders and partner members) from the DACH regions

Quantitative

A large-scale, online, anonymous, self-administered questionnaire (N=322)

Qualitative

Semi-structured interviews with project leaders of different CAHPs (N=32)

Sampling Methods

Random & snowball sampling

Sampling Method

Heterogenous purposive sampling

Key Findings

1 CAHP workers who perceive their project goals as important can manage the stress associated with demanding goals better given high goal clarity.

Managerial Implications

1. Set clear project goals
2. Help project workers deal with the stress resulting from overly demanding goals
3. Highlight the importance of the project goals, especially when goal stress is high

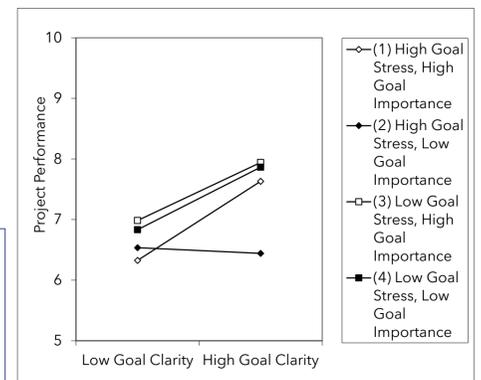


Figure 2. Unstandardised Three-Way Interaction on the Effect of Goal Clarity, Stress and Importance on Project Performance (N = 268)

2 CAHP workers’ hope plays a crucial role in facilitating their ability to cope with challenges, and hope can be reinforced by highly collaborative leadership and adequate financial resources. Hopeful CAHP workers also tend to be more committed to the project, experience lower stress due to demanding goals and report higher project performance.

Managerial Implications

To promote project workers’ goal commitment, reduce their goal stress, and boost CAHP project performance, leaders should:

1. Secure financial project resources
2. Reinforce workers’ hope by training or fostering collaborative project leadership

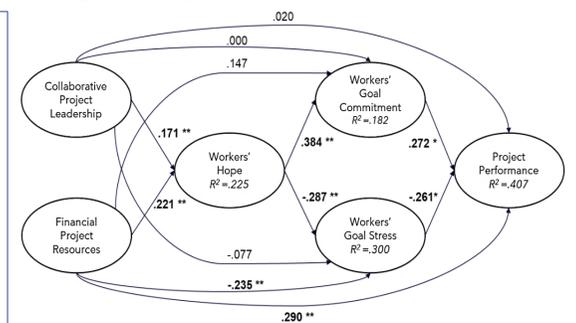


Figure 3. A Three-path Mediation Model of Collaborative Project Leadership and Financial Project Resources on Project Performance with Standardised Path Coefficients

3 While CAHP project leaders may address the challenges differently, the process of being an effective leader and practising effective leadership can be similar. Here is a framework of effective leaders(hip) practices:

Managerial Implications

1. To become an effective CAHP project leader: (1) be more proactive; (2) adopt an open, adaptive mindset; (3) seek advice and support from others; and (4) have a growth mindset
2. A flexible adoption of the operational, enabling and entrepreneurial leadership logics can improve the CAHP projects’ functioning and prevent subsequent major leadership challenges

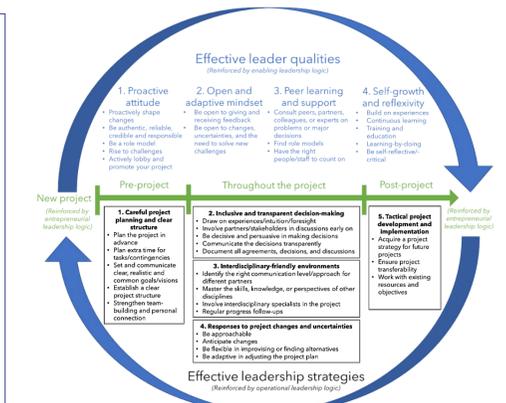


Figure 4. Effective CAHP Project Leaders(hip) Cycle

Conclusion

Managing and coordinating complex collaborative networks like CAHPs can be challenging. By highlighting the underlying conditions, mechanisms, and processes that help individual workers enhance their CAHP projects’ performance, this dissertation illustrates how one can optimise the internal CAHP process to rise above various inherent challenges and pursue more meaningful and productive knowledge co-creation. Having said that, more work is needed to testify to a CAHP’s value and societal utility.

References

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