

Reviews

RESEARCH REVIEWS

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Future research and exploration of the SF approach is an ongoing interest for me, having done a Doctorate on the “Usefulness of the SF Approach to Team Development.” I am therefore exploring it in this Research Review.

The context

It seems already known that one bad (whatever ‘bad’ is) member in a team, can affect the other members. The expression “a rotten apple” is a shortening of the proverb “a rotten apple spoils the barrel” – a 14th century Latin proverb translated as “the rotten apple injures its neighbours”.

By the same token, can one expect the contrary: that “the pure apple heals its neighbors”? Can one especially good individual positively affect – improve, build and construct – the other team members and so the whole team?

Crossover – as a leading concept

The process of transferring emotions from one to others is called ‘Crossover’. Crossover – in the behavioural sciences – refers to the viral effect of contamination of one person to others. In a team setting, it implies that one team member can influence his or her teammates through cohesiveness.

The idea suggested here is that knowledge about how to best provide the infrastructure and modelling to create a positive crossover – a crossover of positive wanted affects – could be an innovative and generative solution.

Crossover is an interpersonal process that occurs when

psychological strains experienced by one person affect the level of strain of another person in the same social environment. It's a dyadic, inter-individual transmission of strains. It is like an emotional contagion that is defined as a tendency to automatically mimic and synchronise feelings, expression and attitudes with those of other people. Earlier findings suggest that one partner's strain affects the well-being of the other partner so that one's strain is a stressor to the other. Most research has focused on crossover between partners and couples.

Westman, M., Etzion, D., & Chen, S. (2008). *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24(3), 269–284.

Crossover of positive experiences from business travellers to their spouses.

Already in 2001, Westman suggested broadening the definition of crossover for contagious positive as well as negative events. According to Westman, positive feelings following positive job events may also cross over to the partner or colleague and have a positive effect on their well-being, just like stressful job demands have a negative impact on the well-being of the partner.

One possible reason for avoiding the possibility of positive effects crossing over was that research in the domain of occupational health psychology relied mostly on medical models, emphasising negative effects, just as negative affectivity was investigated for many years before researchers broadened their interest to positive affectivity.

The purpose of this research was to focus on the positive aspects of business trips, aiming to examine the antecedents of vigour and the crossover of vigour from business travellers to their spouses.

The methodology used a sample of 275 business travellers and their working spouses. The business travellers were required by their work to travel abroad several times a year. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling.

The findings showed that demands on the travellers – through the number of trips – and their resources – through the trip control and the satisfaction of their business trips – were positively related to the travellers' vigour. As hypothesised, travellers' vigour crossed over to spouses' vigour.

The obvious implications were that positive feelings may cross over between partners, suggesting that further research could provide additional positive outcomes. As this study included participants in a work setting, further studies could also explore group and team settings.

Carlson, D. S., Ferguson, M., Kacmar, M., Grzywacz, J.G., & Whitten, D. (2011) *Journal of Management*, 37(3), 770–789.

Pay It Forward: The Positive Crossover Effects of Supervisor Work-Family Enrichment

This research studied the crossover effect of work-family enrichment of supervisors on the work-family enrichment of the subordinates. A crossover effect was found and led to the creation of a family-friendly work environment.

The methodology included 161 participants (57% female) as subordinates with their 48 immediate supervisors. No crossover effects were detected for family-to-work enrichment. Measures were completed by both the supervisors and the subordinates. Statistical analysis checked correlations, means and standard deviation between the variables.

The findings showed that the greatest impact of positive crossover was of the supervisor work-family enrichment on their subordinates' perception of work-family enrichment and subsequent performance. Simply stated, it demonstrated that positive experiences of supervisors crossed over to the subordinate level.

This research used supervisor ratings of performance. Thus, allowing the presence of the crossover to be expressed not only in a positive psychological frame, but also to be noted

in the performance of the subordinates. It also supported the notion that positive experiences by one individual in the workplace can cross over and influence another. This can lead to further research from the supervisor-subordinate case to a same-level dyads case, moving from the leadership influence of the team leader, to the effect – crossover – of team members on each other.

Westman, M., Bakker, A. B., Roziner, I., and Sonnentag, S. (2011) *Anxiety, Stress & Coping*, 24(5), 561–577.

Crossover of job demand and emotional exhaustion within teams: a longitudinal multilevel study

This research, in an organisational setting, studied the crossover effect in a team setting: investigating the crossover of job demands and emotional exhaustion among team members, as well as the moderating effect of cohesiveness and social support on this process.

The methodology used 310 employees as participants, who were members of one of 100 teams. Crossover effects were found only in teams that were characterised by high levels of cohesiveness and social support. Scores of all variables were collected during a six-week period, which was believed to be long enough to produce variance. The research was conducted in the Netherlands.

It was found and established that crossover exists in a team setting, where individuals who showed exhaustion managed to pass it on to their other team members. The participating teams were chosen based on Katsenbach & Smith's (1993) typology of teams that run things – groups that oversee some significant functional activity. The findings have shown that under certain conditions, such as team-level job demands and exhaustion, high levels of cohesiveness and social support can be harmful in exacerbating the crossover of demands and exhaustion.

This research contributed to showing existing crossover effects among team members. Further research could look into different aspects of interactions between team members that

can generate different kinds of crossover, and consider what can build and nurture positive crossovers.

The next step

Three main ideas directed this Research Review choice:

1. Looking for research that can be understood in SF language and yet is not reported in known SF literature.
2. Looking for research that can contribute to the domain of Team Management & Team Behaviour.
3. Introducing relatively new term – the Crossover – that needs to be explored and studied.

Beyond the challenge of conducting SF work in different modes and with different kinds of teams, I find the Crossover concept – especially the positive crossover – contributes beyond the notion of resources.

Looking for resources (strengths, past experiences, abilities, knowledge, skills) in a team, invites each member of the team to be aware of their own resources and those of their teammates. That by itself is a challenge, as most of the teams I've met were better in identifying what is missing in the team and what its weaknesses are.

Crossover, once known and worked with, could offer a means to generate further resources and intelligently empower other team members, helping the team to perform better.

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