

Final Project 1
Code: MGM 496-PMG496
Project Template

Faculty of Management
Midocean University

The Impact of Micromanagement on Team Dynamics in Organizational Settings

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June 2025 – 3rd Semester – 3rd Year

Table of Contents

1. Chapter 1: Introduction	3
1.1. Research Background	4
1.2. Research Problem.....	5
1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps	5
1.2.2. Practical Gaps	6
1.3. Research Significance.....	6
1.3.1. At the theoretical level	6
1.3.2. At the practical level	7
References	8

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In organizational settings, effective management practices are crucial for fostering a positive work environment and maximizing team performance. One increasingly scrutinized practice is micromanagement a management style characterized by excessive control and attention to minor details by supervisors. While some may perceive micromanagement as a way to ensure quality and accountability, numerous studies suggest it may negatively impact employee morale, productivity, and team dynamics.

The first stage of understanding this phenomenon lies in establishing the research territory, which focuses on leadership and management approaches in business administration. Research into team dynamics defined by collaboration, communication, and mutual support among members has shown these dynamics are essential for innovation and high performance. With the evolving nature of work environments, especially post-COVID-19 and during widespread remote work, leadership styles are under greater scrutiny, and the implications of micromanagement have become even more pronounced.

The second stage involves identifying the research niche. There is limited empirical research in Middle Eastern or Saudi business contexts that examines the specific ways micromanagement affects team dynamics in organizational settings. Most available studies originate from Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics unfold in non-Western, hierarchical business cultures.

The third stage is to highlight the relevance of this issue. Leaders and HR professionals often fail to recognize the subtle, yet destructive, influence of micromanagement. It may suppress creativity, reduce autonomy, create stress, and erode trust among team members. These outcomes are particularly problematic in team-based environments, where synergy and interdependence are key to achieving organizational goals.

The fourth stage is to review what has already been done. Research suggests that micromanagement is associated with high turnover, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased productivity (White & Gardner, 2020; Singh & Sharma, 2021). Team

dynamics, on the other hand, flourish in climates of psychological safety, autonomy, and mutual respect (Edmondson, 2019; Hackman, 2002). Despite this, studies specifically linking micromanagement to deteriorating team collaboration, trust, and morale are relatively rare and often anecdotal in nature.

Finally, the fifth stage is to indicate the value and contribution of the present study. This research aims to provide a structured, evidence-based assessment of how micromanagement affects team dynamics in real-world organizations. By doing so, it hopes to inform leadership practices, HR policies, and managerial training programs, especially in Saudi Arabia and other similar cultural contexts.

1.2. Research Problem

In modern workplaces, effective team dynamics are crucial for achieving organizational success. However, micromanagement has been identified as a leadership approach that may undermine these dynamics. Despite growing attention in management literature, the theoretical and practical understanding of how micromanagement shapes team behavior, trust, morale, and performance remains underexplored, particularly in regional and cultural contexts like Saudi Arabia.

1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps

While extensive literature exists on leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership, micromanagement remains an understudied area. Theoretical frameworks often overlook micromanagement as a unique construct, instead subsuming it under authoritarian leadership or control-oriented behavior. There is a need for a deeper theoretical understanding of how micromanagement specifically disrupts trust, autonomy, and team cohesion all of which are critical components of team dynamics.

1.2.2. Practical Gaps

In practice, many organizations fail to recognize micromanagement as a problem until it manifests in high turnover, low morale, or dysfunctional teams. There is limited empirical data especially in Saudi Arabian or broader Middle Eastern contexts that explores how micromanagement affects employees' behavior and attitudes within teams. Managers and HR departments often lack the tools or metrics to diagnose and correct micromanagement tendencies.

Main Research Question:

What is the impact of micromanagement on team dynamics in organizational settings?

1.3. Research Significance

This research holds both theoretical and practical significance. It addresses an understudied area in leadership literature micromanagement and provides actionable insights that can benefit managers, organizations, and researchers, particularly in regional contexts such as Saudi Arabia.

1.3.1. At the theoretical level

At the theoretical level, this study contributes to expanding the discourse within organizational behavior and leadership studies by positioning micromanagement as a distinct and measurable management construct. Unlike broader authoritarian leadership models, micromanagement has unique implications on psychological safety, autonomy, and interpersonal trust within teams dimensions that are essential to healthy team dynamics. The study builds upon and integrates theories of team effectiveness, psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), and leadership control to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding how micromanagement disrupts team functioning. By highlighting theoretical gaps and proposing new conceptual linkages, this research can support future theory-building and hypothesis testing in leadership studies.

1.3.2. At the practical level

On the practical side, the study is highly relevant for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and team supervisors. By investigating how micromanagement behaviors manifest and impact team dynamics, the study provides a basis for identifying and correcting dysfunctional leadership practices. This is particularly valuable in environments with hierarchical structures such as many organizations in Saudi Arabia where micromanagement is often normalized or goes unrecognized. The findings can help inform leadership development programs, guide HR interventions, and support organizations in cultivating high-trust, collaborative, and autonomous work cultures. Ultimately, the research supports organizational performance by enabling more effective team management and healthier workplace environments.

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