

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



Consistently Inconsistent: The Effects of Unsteady Performance on Promotability By

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Date : 24 Apr 2024 (WED)
Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon
Venue : GH120c

Abstract

Although it is well recognized that performance is dynamic and varies over time, few studies have examined the role of performance changes in promotion decisions. Despite the notion that unsteady performance is common, and sometimes even expected, employees who display unsteady performance may be negatively evaluated by their managers. Drawing on attribution theory, we examine why and when performance steadiness influences promotion decisions. Across three experiments and one field study, we find that employees who display unsteady (versus steady) performance are less likely to be recommended for promotion, even after controlling for performance levels. Our results also show that perceived competence mediates the relationship between unsteady performance and promotability. Furthermore, job routineness moderates the negative indirect effect of unsteady performance on promotability via perceived competence, such that the indirect effect is weaker when job routineness is lower (Study 3). We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Dr Kenneth Tai is an Associate Professor of Organisational Behavior and Human Resources in the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University. He received his Ph.D. in Management and Organizations from National University of Singapore in 2013.

Dr Tai's research focuses on understanding how individuals can cope with negative interpersonal events at the workplace. His research has been published in leading journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Annals*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* and many others. His work has been covered by various international and local media outlets, such as *Wall Street Journal*, *Psychology Today*, *New York Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, *Boston Globe*, *Channel News Asia*, *The Business Times* etc. He has been appointed as one of the new incoming Associate Editors for *Organisational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* in 2024.

All interested are welcome.



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