



Group effectiveness

Abstract

This term paper describes the team concept and the different roles that people play in a team according to different researches. Belbin's team role theory is extensively described. Then the different types of teams and how their effectiveness can be measured is described. Then what are the factors that affect the group/team effectiveness are framed. Then focus is laid upon the influence of Psychological traits on group performance.

•Prabhat Kumar -
2011me10707

•Krishna Teja -
2011ce10362

Introduction

Yesterday's structure of management was inclined to create a culture where the workers brought the problems to management whereas the management solved them and gave directives on what the workers should do. However, today we witness the imperative paradigm shift from mastership to empowered individuals or team leadership. Team (based) management approaches are gradually becoming widespread. This brings more flexibility in organizing model which is required in today's world as a strategic requirement. Some of the benefits of team based management systems are:

- ◆ Problem solving and realization of making decisions through the participation of all the team members simultaneously.
- ◆ The team members would feel the strong commitment.
- ◆ The team (based) management enables the organization to improve morale, cut down on the expenses, improve quality, increase productivity and develop organizational performance to the highest level possible.

The Team Concept: According to the most commonly accepted definition in the field of organizational behavior, the team is a small group of people who make contributions to the common goal, who perform in accordance with the goals, who depend on each other with the mutual feeling of responsibility and who have complementary skills.

Katzenbach and Smith (1999) describes three fundamental characteristics of a team which are devotion, accountability (responsibility) and the skills.

However, the concepts of team and group are often confused and mostly used instead of one another. One opinion in the literature suggests that the team is not different from the group and that the studies on them goes well long common past. But, they do not have the same qualities. Like skills as for example may or may not be a characteristics of a group but it will be in a team.

The Role Concept: Role is a sociology-origin concept. It was first used to define the behaviors of individuals in a social environment. Belbin (1981)'s role definitions that are composing the fundamentals of his studies and play important role from the aspects of this study. He defines two role styles which are namely functional and team roles. Functional role, is required functions for the survival and living of a social system. Team role, is set of roles that are defined within a definite context. In other words, it is sum of the roles that are required to play for the pursuit to be done.

Team effectiveness is influenced by how the **Team Roles** are decided and assigned. Some of the research on this are:

- According to Parker, there are four team player styles: contributor, collaborator, communicator and challenger.
- **Barry (1991)'s delegated leadership behavior approach** – four types of leadership required for self-managing teams which are envisioning leadership (innovative and vision fostering), organizing leadership (giving orders on missions), spanning leadership (facilitating the activities

that connects team to the organization) and social leadership (developing and maintaining the psychology and sociability of the team).

- **Belbin's Team Roles Theory:** She believes that team members have two types of roles. The first one, as described in role theory, typical functional role (points out job related operational and technical knowledge). The second type is the team role(s). Team role describes how suitable the member is for the team, not the functions.

Belbin's Team Roles Theory

Table 1: Belbin's team-role descriptions

Type	Symbol	Typical features	Positive qualities	Allowable weaknesses
Company Worker	CW	Conservative, dutiful, predictable.	Organizing ability, practical common sense, hard-working, self-discipline.	Lack of flexibility, unresponsiveness to unproven ideas.
Chairman	CH	Calm, self-confident controlled.	A capacity for treating and welcoming all potential contributors on their merits and without prejudice. A strong sense of objectives.	No more than ordinary in terms of intellect or creative ability.
Shaper	SH	Highly strung, outgoing, dynamic.	Drive and a readiness to challenge inertia, ineffectiveness, complacency or self-deception.	Proneness to provocation, irritation and impatience.
Plant	PL	Individualistic, serious-minded, unorthodox.	Genius, imagination, intellect, knowledge.	Up in the clouds, inclined to disregard practical details or protocol.
Resource Investigator	RI	Extroverted, enthusiastic, curious, communicative.	A capacity for contacting people and exploring anything new. An ability to respond to challenge.	Liable to lose interest once the initial fascination has passed.
Monitor-Evaluator	ME	Sober, unemotional, prudent.	Judgement, discretion, hard-headedness.	Lacks inspiration or the ability to motivate others.
Team Worker	TW	Socially orientated, rather mild, sensitive.	An ability to respond to people and to situations and to promote team spirit.	Indecisiveness at moments of crisis.
Completer-Finisher	CF	Painstaking, orderly, conscientious, anxious.	A capacity for follow-through. Perfectionism.	A tendency to worry about small things. A reluctance to 'let go'.

Source: Belbin R.M. (2007), Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail, Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann

Belbin, attracts the attention to the connection between the needs for different team roles prevailing at different stages of the development process of the team. The mentioned six stages are as follows; 1. Determining the needs 2. Coming up with ideas, 3. Formulating the plans, 4. Realization of the ideas, 5. Forming the team and 6. Finalization of the job. At the first stages the Shaper and coordinator will be needed mostly whereas the Completer-Finishers and Implementers will make the greatest contribution in the later stages.

Team roles were divided into three groups; action roles (Shaper, Implemented and Completer Finisher), social roles (Coordinator, Team worker and Resource Investigator) and thinking roles (Plant, Monitor Evaluator and Specialist).

There was a study performed by *Hasan Basri Gündüz* on **An Evaluation on Belbin's Team Roles Theory** which states that there is no parallelism between functional and team roles of a member i.e. they are independent of each other. Most members prefer to play the roles that are most convenient.

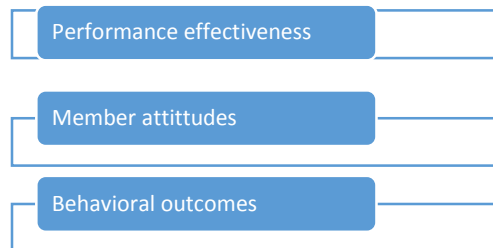
Types of Teams

Four types of teams can be identified in the today's organizations:

1. Work Teams: (production and service teams) Continuing work units for producing goods and providing services. Their membership is typically stable, usually full-time and well defined.
2. Parallel Teams: Pulls together people from different work units or jobs to perform functions that the regular organizations are not equipped to perform well. Cross unit jobs.
3. Project Teams: Time limited, one time outputs, non-repetitive and involve considerable application knowledge, judgment and expertise. After completion of project the members move on to their functional units or to the next project. Companies are expanding the use of project teams as a response to time based competition.
4. Management Teams: Coordinate and provide directions to the sub-units under their jurisdiction, laterally integrating interdependent sub-units across key business processes.

Effectiveness of teams

Three major dimensions



Team Effectiveness Framework

Effectiveness is a function of environmental factors, design factors, group processes and **group psychological traits**. This framework moves away from the “input-process-output” approach (Mcgrath, 1984) by depicting design factors, which have direct impact on outcomes via group processes and psychological traits. **It suggests that the group psychological traits are real group level phenomenon.** These traits directly influence outcomes; they also indirectly influence them through shaping internal and external processes. This framework illustrates that group processes can become embedded in psychological traits such as norms, shared mental models, or affective states.

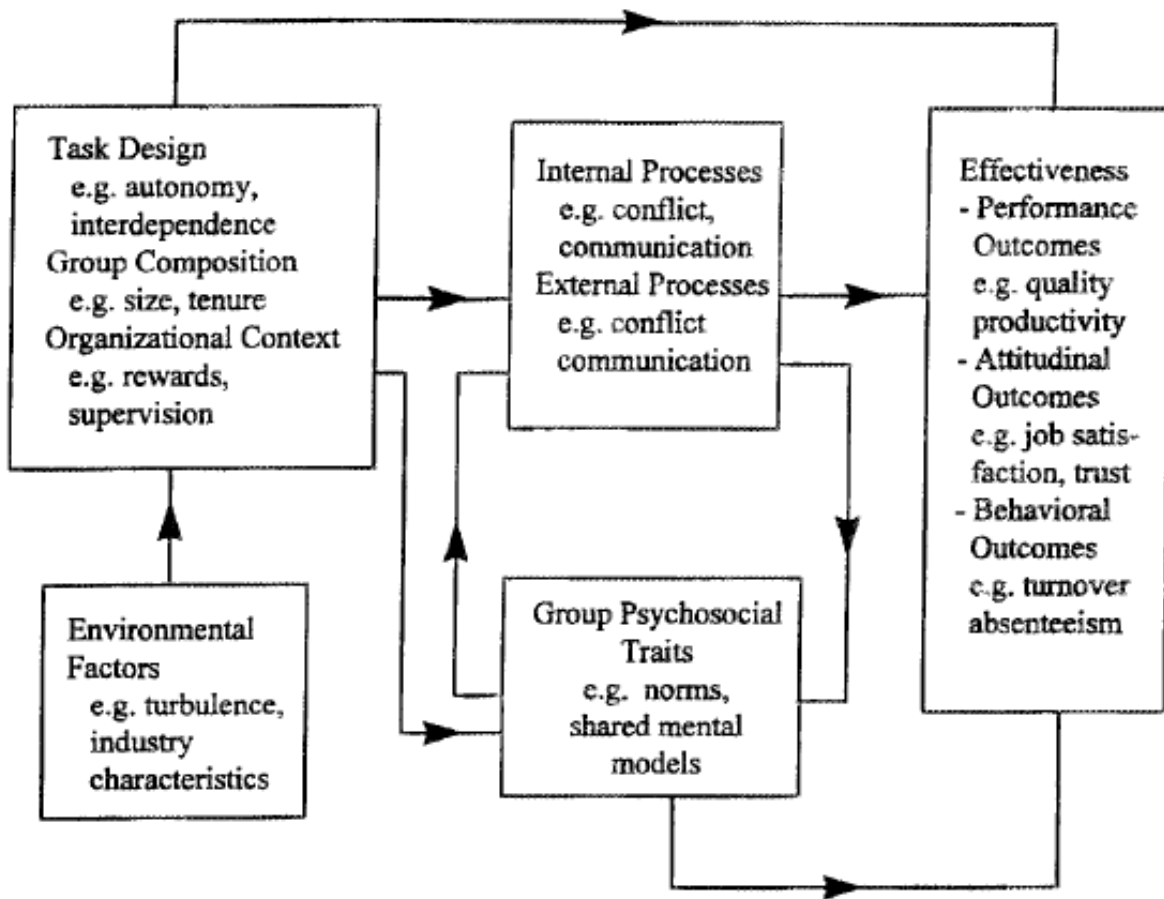


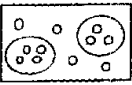
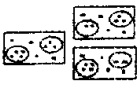






Figure 1. A Heuristic Model of Group Effectiveness. Variables listed under each category are meant as examples; they do not constitute an exhaustive listing.

Different types of teams have different factors under task design, group composition, organizational context, environmental factors, internal processes, external processes and group psychological traits. Moreover they have different criteria for assessing the Team effectiveness too. This is shown in the next table.

Table 5. Comparison Among Types of Teams of the Key Variables Studied in the Past Six Years of Empirical Field Research

Category	Work Teams	Parallel Teams	Project Teams	Top Management Teams
 Task Design	Autonomy Interdependence Task Traits	Participation	Autonomy Task Allocation Product Traits	
 Group Composition	Diversity Size	Diversity Size		Demographics Size Diversity
 Organizational Context	Rewards Supervision			Leader Behaviors
 Environmental Factors	Client Climate			Industry Traits Market Effects
 Internal Processes	Collaboration Conflict		Collaboration	Communication Collaboration Conflict
 External Processes			Communication	
 Group Psychosocial Traits	Cohesiveness Norms Affective Tone		Problem-Solving Style	Certainty Attributions
 Effectiveness	Productivity Response Times Job Satisfaction Commitment Absenteeism Turnover Perceptions of Performance	Job Satisfaction Commitment Absenteeism Turnover Perceptions of Performance	Perceptions of: Adherence to Budgets and Schedules Innovation Project Quality Performance	Return on Equity Return on Assets Sales Growth Total Return to Shareholders Decision Quality Turnover Promotions

From here onwards the influence of psychological traits on different team's effectiveness will be illustrated.

Group Psychological traits that influence team effectiveness

Group Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness is a measure of the attraction of the group to its members (and the resistance to leaving it), the sense of team spirit, and the willingness of its members to coordinate their efforts.

- The strength of bonds between group members.
- The unity of a group.
- The feeling of attraction between group members and the group itself.
- The degree to which members coordinate their efforts to achieve goals.

Some social scientists argue that cohesion cannot be understood as a single dimension. The concept is too complex to be defined as one dimensional. There is very little commonality between the cohesion that exists in one group and that of another. One group is cohesive because the members like one another, but another group is cohesive because the members work well together.

Consequences of cohesion:

- Member Satisfaction
 - In general, people are more satisfied in groups that are cohesive.
 - Cohesion provides a healthier social psychological setting than non-cohesive groups.
 - However, when people become dependent on the group any disruption can cause emotional stress.
- Group Dynamics
 - Members more readily accept group goals.
 - Pressure to conform to the group is greater which leads to **groupthink** and hence irrational decision making.
- Group Performance
 - The cohesion-performance link is significant.
 - Three associated variables are: attraction, group pride, and commitment to task.
 - Strongest when cohesion is based on commitment to task, rather than attraction or pride.

There is a positive link between the group cohesion and performance. Mullen, Anthony, Salas, and Driskell (1993) conducted the fourth meta-analysis and found that the more the operationalization of cohesion tapped into interpersonal attraction, the more is the cohesiveness impaired decision making. Also cohesiveness tend to impair quality of decision making as group size increased. Seers et al. (1995) found cohesiveness to increase over time in autonomous groups, while decreasing for traditionally managed ones.

Norms

Every group has a set of norms: a code of conduct about what is acceptable behavior. They may apply to everyone in the group or to certain members only. Some norms will be strictly adhered to while others permit a wide range of behavior.

A norm, when established, becomes a social fact. It permits the group to regulate its member behavior.

Consequences of Norms:

- Cohen et al. (1996) found norms to be positively related to the attitudinal measures of organizational commitment, trust in management, and satisfaction, but not to the behavioral measure of absenteeism.
- Norms reflecting the acceptance of conflict within a group were examined by Jehn (1995). She found that norms promoting an open and constructive atmosphere for group discussion enhanced the positive effect of task based conflict on individual and team performance.
- For relationship-based conflict groups with conflict avoidance norms had higher satisfaction and member liking than those with openness norms. In these cases openness did not promote acceptance and forgiveness.

Hence, here the impact of norm on effectiveness is shown to depend both on its content and context.

Group Affects

Affect refers to the experience of feeling or emotion (4). People with similar personalities will tend to be attracted to, selected by, and retained in a given environment, then work groups might logically possess a shared affective tone, which could either be positive or negative.

Group affect is a collectively shared pattern of affective states among group members). Because higher identification (i.e. the extent to which group members define themselves in terms of their group membership) is related to higher attentiveness to fellow group members, we expected that group identification would foster affective convergence, and that the effects of group affective tone on team effectiveness would be stronger for higher identifying groups.

This shared tone might affect the group's performance.

Group Cognition

"Groups of people can manifest cognitive capacities that go beyond the simple aggregation of the cognitive capacities of their individual members." In asserting that groups cognize, we attribute mental properties to groups that are normally attributed to individuals. What are those properties? From a folk-psychological perspective, candidate properties for group cognition might include intent, thought, intelligence, and consciousness. Going along with these might be other properties more typically studied directly by cognitive scientists such as memory, concepts, attention and learning. From a more abstract perspective one might try to characterize cognition using notions such as computation, information processing, generation and use of internal and external representations, and problem solving flexibility.

Collective mind of a group is defined not as a sum of individual knowledge but rather as the interrelation of actions carried out within a representational understanding of the system. This idea of collective minds is also present in Wegner's (1986) concept of transactive memory.

Consequences:

Shared experiences may lead groups to code, store, and retrieve information together. The memory is not only the sum of individual memories but also the awareness of who knows what. Group members specialize in remembering distinct aspects of the assembly procedure, coordinated their efforts smoothly and trusted one another's knowledge.

Neck and Manz (1994) also considered group cognition and the idea of group mind. They prescribed theoretical conditions for encouraging constructive synergistic team thinking and avoid **groupthink**.

Certainty

By certainty we mean strength of belief. It can take two forms: perspectiveless certainty (C) and perspectival certainty (C_p).

Perspectiveless Certainty (C). Perspectiveless certainty is the idea that a belief is "true" or "the way things are" from no perspective. Consider the belief that "the world is flat." Adopting C means viewing this belief as not de-pendent on perspective. We are using certainty here as a description of people's psychological states—not as a philosophical or scientific claim about truth.

Perspectival Certainty (C_p). Perspectival certainty is the idea that the certainty of a belief reflects the perspective of the person holding it. Even when beliefs are held with high certainty, the importance of perspective is appreciated. People can appreciate that others having a different perspective could hold a different belief with equally high certainty.

Certainty in teams is a cognitive concept that describes the degree of confidence that the teams has about its assessment of the competitive environment and its strategic decisions. A positive relation has been found in the certainty and performance. This shows that "Perceptions can have a stronger effects than objective reality in determining performance".

Attribution Biases

Attribution refers to the way in which people explain their own behavior and that of others. An attribution bias occurs when someone systematically over- or underuses the available information when explaining behavior. There is evidence that when we are making judgments about the behavior of our own group (the in-group) and that of other groups (out-groups), we show attributional biases that favor the in-group. Specifically, where in-group members are concerned, we explain positive behaviors in terms of internal characteristics (e.g., personality) and negative behaviors in terms of external factors (e.g., illness). Conversely, where out-group members are concerned, we explain positive behaviors in terms of external characteristics and negative behaviors in terms of internal characteristics.

So why do we make these intergroup attribution biases? According to social identity theory, we tend to favor our own group/team over other groups/team to maintain a positive perception of the in-group and therefore maintain a high level of self-esteem. We make intergroup attribution biases to ensure that our group is perceived in a positive light compared to other groups. Three findings support this social identity explanation. First, making group membership salient prior to completing an intergroup

attribution task increases the extent to which participants show intergroup attribution biases. Second, intergroup attribution biases are stronger among participants who highly identify with their in-group. Third, it has been demonstrated that making internal attributions about in-group members and making global attributions about the negative behavior of out-group members predicts higher self-esteem.

Negative attribution biases (blaming forces outside ones control for negative events) was associated with poorer performance.

Group potency and collective self-Efficacy

Though group potency is related to self-efficacy, it is separate and distinct from it due to differences in the level of conceptualization. Group Potency is a collective and a generalized construct, assessing the overall team's belief that it can be effective, whereas self-efficacy is the individual's task-specific belief about one's own competence. Collective self-efficacy is the sum of individual self-efficacy towards the specified task. Group potency is widely studied and shown to have a positive effects on the group outcomes of satisfaction, effort, and performance and team effectiveness. Group potency is important in reducing the negative effects of perceived time pressures. Both the collective self-efficacy and group potency are the positive antecedents of effectiveness.

Conclusion

- ✓ The type of team matters for the determination of effectiveness because the factor affecting changes along with the assessment criteria.
- ✓ Cognitive and affective dimensions of key constructs are likely to have different impacts on outcomes. Cognitive (task based) conflict had a beneficial impact while affective conflict (relationship based) did not. Affective can also impair the benefits of cohesiveness.

References

1. *Hasan Basri Gündüz 2008 " An Evaluation on Belbin's Team Roles Theory". World Applied Sciences Journal*
2. Susan G. Cohen & Diane E. Bailey 1997 "**What makes Teams Work: Group Effectiveness Research**". *Journal of Management*
3. <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/small-group/sgt107.html>
4. APA (2006). VandenBos, Gary R., ed. *APA Dictionary of Psychology* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, page 26
5. Jacqueline Tanghe, Barbara Wisse & Henk Van der Flier (2010) "The Formation of Group Affect and Team Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Identification"
6. Georg Theiner, Colin Allen, and Robert L. Goldstone (2010), "Recognizing group cognition". *Cognitive Systems Research*
7. *Encyclopedia of group processes and intergroup relations*. Sage Reference
8. Emily A. Parker and Lawrence W. Barsalou, "PERSPECTIVELESS CERTAINTY IN SOCIO-CULTURAL-POLITICAL BELIEFS".
9. <http://www.uwlax.edu/Sociology/zollweg/Soc334exam2.ppt>

10. The Effects of Vertical Leadership, Team Demographics, and Group Potency Upon Shared Leadership Emergence Within Technical Organizations...By Dennis M. Cashman