

Personality Dispositions and Their Relationship with Team Cohesion

* *J. A. Yogalakshmi*

** *M. V. Supriya*

*** *Kirthana*

Abstract

Much research has been done to explore the relationship between personality dispositions and various concepts like career success, job satisfaction, organization's commitment, and so forth. The current study attempted to explore the impact of four personality dispositions on team cohesion, which is considered to be an important ingredient for the success of any team (team effectiveness). Correlation and multiple regression analysis were implemented to draw the results which predicted that emotional stability and conscientiousness are the most significant predictors of team cohesion, which confirmed the results of previous studies on team cohesion ; whereas, self-esteem and extraversion did not significantly contribute to team cohesion.

Keywords : personality dispositions, team, team cohesion, team effectiveness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, self-esteem, extraversion

JEL Classification: M540, L200, Y800

Paper Submission Date : February 18, 2016 ; **Paper sent back for Revision :** March 24, 2016 ; **Paper Acceptance Date :** April 18, 2016

An organization is a system, believing in team structure, which functions in a coordinated manner to attain the goal efficiently. Much research in the field of a team (Banker, Field, Schroeder, & Sinha, 1996 ; Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993) revealed that the transition from individual based work system to well-designed teams resulted in low turnover, absenteeism, and stress related illnesses , and so on. The success of a team rests on many factors, of these, the focus on “team cohesion” and “personality dispositions” and their relationship has been explored in this research.

Personality

Personality refers to an individual difference which makes one different from another ; it describes the way we act and react to others in an environment. Personality in a team has been studied in different orientations by exploring its impact on team effectiveness (Lassiter & Morgan, 1992), productivity group (Hackman, 1978), and so on. Many research studies have focused and have explored the role of team personality composition and categorized GPC (group personality composition) into two streams: task and relationship (McGrath, 1984). Task orientation

* *Research Scholar*, Department of Management Studies, Anna University, Sarder Patel Road, Old Highways Building, Guindy, Chennai - 600 025. E-mail : jagannisha87@gmail.com .

** *Associate Professor*, Department of Management Studies, Anna University, Sarder Patel Road, Old Highways Building, Guindy, Chennai - 600 025. E-mail : mvsupriya@annauniv.edu.

****Student*, Department of Management Studies, Anna University, Sarder Patel Road, Old Highways Building, Guindy, Chennai - 600 025.

of GPC includes dispositions that are oriented towards work tasks (e.g., conscientiousness and achievement motivation) and measures for success include quality ; whereas, relationship dispositions are oriented towards interpersonal interactions (e.g., agreeableness and cooperation) whose measures involve cohesion (Halfhill, Sundstrom, Lahner, Calderon, & Nielsen, 2005).

Team personality composition plays an immense role in determining the performance of a team. Personality factors also have a direct impact on the personal effectiveness (Sharma, 2015) ; hence, personality composition in a team is of vital importance for increasing team effectiveness. Previous research findings have proved that personality dispositions have an influence on individual outcomes - like work engagement via social exchange relationship with peers (Liao, Yang, Wang, Drown, & Shi, 2012), turnover and commitment (Kristof, 1996). One of the major determinants of the outcome is the interpersonal attraction between the team members as described by the similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971). It proposed the concept that team members with similar personality dispositions are more likely to experience higher well-being. The bonding among the team members is expected to be caused by the similarity which they see in other members. In addition, homogeneity prevailing inside a group affects the mean level of individual personality dispositions. It also has its major share in deciding team performance (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998). The group cognitive ability was correlated positively with the quality and quantity of team performance (Futrell & Sundstrom, 1996). Similarly, Tziner and Eden (1985) discovered that military tank crews composed of team members with uniformly high ability performed at a higher level over crews with members with different abilities. These reviews suggest that individual differences among team members affect numerous criteria of team effectiveness. In the current research, an attempt has been made to throw the light on the interaction between this individual difference or personality dispositions and team cohesion.

McDougall attempted to organize the personality dispositions in five dimensions which include character, temperament, temper, disposition, and intellect. Many research studies liked to discover a standardized measure and model of personality which resulted in the invention of 16 PF (Cattell, 1946) but unfortunately, replication of his findings became unsuccessful, which triggered Fiske to invent an uncomplicated version of Cattell's model (Barrick & Mount, 1991). After extensive research, Norman discovered the four personality dispositions with five important personality traits, namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness which are widely used in today's research studies worldwide (Amir, Naz, Hafeez, Ashfaq, & Dogar, 2014).

(1) Conscientiousness : It is the tendency of an individual to possess dispositions like self - discipline, being dutiful, hardworking, organized, and well planned. Barrick and Mount (1991) explained that individuals who are labeled as conscientiousness reflect self- control and the active process of planning, organizing, and carrying out tasks. This dimension has a great effect on a person's value and behavior. Conscientious people are concerned about doing their duties and making sure that the task gets done perfectly. They are responsible, well organized, focused, determined, strong-willed, and dependable. On the negative side, a high conscientiousness degree may cause annoying, extra perfectionist, compulsive neatness, or workaholic behavior. Conscientious individuals are more flexible and spontaneous. A person with a very low scoring on conscientiousness tends to be unorganized in nature.

(2) Emotional Stability : Neurotic people have high levels of negative emotions such as anxiety, worry, bad temper, depression, and guilt. A neurotic person is found to be highly impulsive and emotionally reactive; they usually find it difficult to overcome the depression and shocks easily. Low level of neuroticism indicates a high level of emotional stability where people believe that they have a strong control on their emotions, have the ability to regulate and react accordingly to the situational context. Emotional stability was proved to be the predictor of adaptive work performance (Huang, Ryan, Zabel, & Palmer, 2014). Hence, if a team consists of emotionally

stable members, then it will be easy for the team to tackle uncertain situations and overcome them, resulting in achieving success.

(3) Extraversion : An individual coming under this category holds dispositions like assertive, talkative, and sociability (Kichukk & Wiesner, 1998). Extrovert people are more sociable, extremely strong in the interpersonal skills, thereby making friends and being popular in drawing the attraction towards them in the social circle. They can express their emotions via communication smoothly and prefer to be a part of the group after being alone. Extroverts are distinguished by positive feelings and expressions, and it will have a positive effect on their work life. In a team, the extrovert dimension of personality has its effect depending upon the level of proportion of expression, as if high or low, it may lead to a negative problem ; hence, an appropriate level of expression is desirable to maintain good team cohesion and team effectiveness. Popular belief tells us that extroverted people work better in teams due to their social nature and ability to act as an encouragers and supporters (O'Neill, Goffin, & Tett, 2009). This belief makes sense considering the definition of extraversion as the degree to which someone is outgoing, sociable, and energetic (O'Neill & Kline, 2008). However, this assumption has not been fully substantiated by researchers. Much debate exists about the role that personality plays on teams. Extraversion may affect individuals' general predisposition to team experiences (Kline & O'Grady, 2009), making them more inclined to form cohesive teams.

(4) Openness to Experience : This personality is distinguished by being confident and original in their viewpoints, being open & broad-minded, have confidence in their activities, do like to have variety in every aspect of work, and be innovative and independent in nature. People who score high on these dispositions have a high level of learning agility. Team members who possess these dispositions will be beneficial as they help the team by taking initiative and exploring new areas, thereby finding out the new opportunities which ultimately help to increase the team effectiveness.

Team Cohesion

Much research has been undertaken on the most critical factor known as team cohesion in order to understand how this factor influences a team's success (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002), team performance, (Evan & Jarvis, 1980), team culture (Sánchez, & Yurrebaso, 2009). Team cohesion is a kind of force which helps the team members being attracted to their team as a whole. Cohesion is defined as a distinct process which helps the group to stick together and engage keenly to achieve team goal, thereby attaining the satisfaction of member affective needs (Carron et al., 2002). Past findings have supported task cohesion as a better and stronger determinant for team performance (Mullen & Copper, 1994). Some researchers have supported that social cohesion is crucial. The relationship between team cohesion and team performance is also supported by other disciplines (Singh & Ghai, 2014). It has a direct relationship with the team satisfaction (Onağ & Tepecib, 2014). Many research studies have distinguished that cohesion is of two types: task cohesion and social cohesion. According to Gully et al. (1995), there are only a few empirical studies, which have examined how these two types : task cohesion and social cohesion influence team performance. Hence, in this research, we attempted to study team cohesion with the personality dispositions.

Past research has suggested that the interaction among group members leads to higher levels of cohesiveness (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). Group cohesiveness directly affects the quality of decision- making, which is the core element of Janis's (1972) theory of group thinking (Mullen, Anthony, Salas, & Driskell, 1994). This team cohesion also plays a crucial role in determining the success of any team, as if the team members are bound to one another efficiently. The completion of the task will have a higher efficiency, resulting in goal achievement.

Similarly, if team cohesion is low in the team, then members may not feel comfortable to work with one another, resulting in the mismanagement of tasks, ultimately leading to non-attainment of team purpose. In summing up, cohesive groups usually seem to outperforming non-cohesive groups have greater performance and personal satisfaction (McGrath, 1984). Group cohesion has positive effects on an individual's contribution to a group (Carron et al., 2002).

Personality and Team Cohesion

A team consists of a group of persons who interact with one another involved in setting the goals, forming plans and strategies to achieve the common team goals. The success of any team is dependent upon many intrinsic factors such as team culture, team cohesion, personality (Peeters, van Tuijl, Rutte & Reymen, 2006), and so on.

This current study focuses on two variables of the four personality dispositions: conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, and self-esteem and team cohesion. Attaining team goals need not necessarily fulfill individual and team goals both, this indifference affects the performance of the team (Sinclair, 1992). Hence, the personality of the team members plays a vital role substantiated by much research on personality, which has reported and got considerable attention in the team literature (Bell, 2007; Humphrey, Hollenbeck, Meyer, & Ilgen, 2007; Peeters et al., 2006). This is because personality is considered to be an important predictor of individual performance following team performance (Black & Mouton, 1991) and from an intuitive point of view, personality has an impact on other team variables like team knowledge, skill, and team cohesion.

Team members do not leave the relationships they have with other people behind when they act as a part of a team. Team members do not leave the relationships they have with other people behind when they act as a part. Similarly, team cohesion acts as an invisible thread which weaves the team members as a single entity (Cartwright, 1968). Other definitions established cohesion as the attraction of individuals towards the group or team (Libo, 1953 ; Lito, 1961). Empirical research has also shown that when group personalities are complementary to one another, they have a higher team cohesiveness and perform effectively (Evan & Jarvis, 1980). The current study focuses on four personality dispositions that have been identified to be instrumental to team cohesion.

Methodology

(1) Research Design : The research design is descriptive in nature as the study aims to collect the data through a descriptive design like questionnaire, which describes the existing characteristics of a defined target population.

(2) Sample and Procedure : This study includes a sample of 120 employees from 20 working teams in a well-established auto electrical company in India. About two third of the respondents were male and the remaining one third were female. The age group of the respondents ranged from 25 – 43 years. The respondents recorded their responses by using a structured questionnaire. Participation in this research study was voluntary, and it was informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. In order to verify the validity of the data collection instruments, a pilot study was conducted among 30 respondents. The data were collected by direct administration of questionnaires to respondents and the result of the pilot test was used for reviewing and refining the questions in the final survey. The reliability of the questionnaire in the pilot study was found to be 0.792. The time period of the study was from June 2015 - January 2016.

Measures

(1) Independent Variable - Personality Dispositions Measures : Personality dispositions are measured using

Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) 20 item scale. Participants were asked to indicate their response to each item on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from “1- strongly disagree” to “5- strongly agree”. This scale consists of items to measure the dimensions of four personality dispositions namely extraversion, emotional stability, self-esteem, and conscientiousness. The questionnaire involved statement like “I find it difficult to keep a cool head in a conflict situation”. The reliability of this scale is 0.896.

(2) Dependent Variable - Team Cohesion : Team cohesion was assessed from a questionnaire developed by Carless and De Paola (2000). It was measured on a 5- point Likert rating scale ranging from “1- Strongly Disagree” to “5- Strongly Agree”. The reliability for the current team cohesion scale has an alpha reliability of 0.78.

Data Analysis and Results

Data of the study were analyzed in three stages. First, we used the confirmatory factor analysis to test the goodness of fit. Secondly, we used Karl Pearson's correlation method to test whether there is a relationship between personality dispositions and team cohesion. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis framed for this research study.

The Table 1 displays the fit statistics for the model. Confirmatory analysis for each factor was done and the following indices were used to evaluate fit which included (a) chi-square value, (b) *p*- value, (c) *GFI* (goodness of fit), (d) *AGFI* (adjusted goodness of fit index), (e) *CFI* (comparative fit index), (f) root mean square residuals, (g) *RMSEA* (root mean square error of approximation).

Past research studies have suggested that the satisfactory model fit is indicated by *p* - value $n > 0.05$ (Hair et al., 1998), *GFI* value > 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), *CFI* values of > 0.90 (Daire et al.,), *RMR* value < 0.08 (Hair et al., 1998), and the *RMSEA* values not higher than 0.08.(Hair et al., 1998). The CFA indicates a good model fit.

The Table 2 provides the summary of the correlation relationship between the four dimensions of personality dispositions with team cohesion. The correlation indicates a positive correlation of 0.284, 0.135, 0.321, and 0.198 for conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and self-esteem with team-cohesion respectively at the 1% level of significance. Of all these, except for correlation between extraversion and team cohesion, the rest are significant.

Multiple regression analysis between personality dispositions and team cohesion was analyzed. The results are depicted in the Table 3. To assess the extent to which four personality dispositions were related to team cohesion, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The multiple regression model with all four predictors produced $R^2 = .0168$, $F(4, 120) = 5.807$, $p < .001$. The Table 3 shows emotional stability ($\beta = 0.272$, sig < 0.05) and conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.096$, sig < 0.05) have a significant positive regression with team cohesion. On the other side, self-esteem ($\beta = 0.009$, sig > 0.05) and extraversion ($\beta = 0.096$, sig > 0.05) personality are not significantly related to team cohesion, indicating if team members possess emotionally strong and organized personality, they may contribute to team effectiveness by increasing team cohesion.

Table 1. Model Fit Statistics of the Measurement Model

Variables	Chi-Square value	<i>p</i> - value	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMR</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	8.693	0.275	0.9780	0.933	0.987	0.032	0.045
EXTRAVERSION	4.137	0.530	0.987	0.960	1.000	0.028	0.000
EMOTIONAL STABILITY	4.351	0.114	0.982	0.908	0.945	0.049	0.059
SELF ESTEEM	3.510	0.622	0.988	0.964	1.000	0.029	0.000
TEAM COHESION	3.571	0.168	0.985	0.923	0.971	0.040	0.061

Table 2. Correlation Between Four Personality Dispositions with Team Cohesion

S.no	Big five personality	Correlation	TEAM COHESION
1	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	Pearson correlation sig.(2 tailed)	0.284** 0.002
2	EXTRAVERSION	Pearson correlation sig.(2 tailed)	0.135 0.142
3	EMOTIONAL STABILITY	Pearson correlation sig.(2 tailed)	0.321** 0.000
4	SELF ESTEEM	Pearson correlation sig.(2 tailed)	0.198** 0.030

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (Significant at the 1% level of significance)

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis Between Personality Dispositions and Team Cohesion

MODEL	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t- value	Significance	R ² value	F value	Df
	B	SEB	Beta					
(Constant)	4.133	2.440		1.694	0.093	0.168	5.807	4
Extraversion	0.093	0.083	0.096	1.122	0.264			
Emotional Stability	0.276	0.093	0.272	2.975	0.004			
Conscientiousness	0.169	0.067	0.234	2.540	0.012			
Self Esteem	0.007	0.083	0.009	0.088	0.930			

Note: B : the regression coefficients, SEB : the standardized errors, Beta the standardized regression coefficients.

Discussion

The current research focused on the relationship among four personality dispositions namely conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and self -esteem and team cohesion. Only few research studies have been done in analyzing the relationship between these factors of personality and team cohesion and the relationship among them. The results of this present work are supported by some previous studies. The Table 3 shows that emotional stability and conscientiousness are the important predictors of team cohesion. These results are in line with the results obtained by Barrick et al. (1998) ; whereas, self-esteem and extraversion did not significantly predict team cohesion, which is found to be contradictory to the findings of van Vianen and De Dreu (2001). Yet, some past research did support that self-esteem has an opposing effect on team performance (Neal et al., 2012), which is found to be the supporting point for our research. Hence, the differences may be due to different sample and other factors.

This research clearly suggests that if a team contains well-organized and structured personalities, it will help the team to increase its team cohesion systematically. It will also have an impact on the performance of the team (Barrick et al., 1998). As a well-organized personality shows higher task cohesion, it will have an overall positive impact on team cohesion. Individuals high in emotional stability are not easily confused, stressed, and anxious, which helps them to understand themselves and others' expectations. At the same time, self-confidence in them will help them to gear up, resulting in handling changes or turbulent situations ; thereby, taking effective decisions and helping the team be united. Extraversion is not positively related to team cohesion because extroverts are distinguished by being active and energetic in all situations, which may not facilitate team cohesion due to conflict of ideas and views. Increase in team cohesion mainly depends upon the content and availability of

communication done by extroverts in a team (Barry & Stewart, 1997). Hence, this research confirms that extroversion is insignificantly related to team cohesion. The interpretation of our findings shows that there exists a significant relationship between emotional stability and conscientiousness with team cohesion, and there is an insignificant relation between self-esteem personality and team cohesion, which impacts team cohesion adversely.

Managerial Implications

A team plays a vital role in the organization's performance through a team process. It is found that there exists a strong relationship between team process and team effectiveness (Barrick et al., 1998). We assumed whether personality trait and team cohesion may indirectly influence team performance. This research has shown that the personality composition will have an impact on the team cohesion, which may indirectly influence team performance. The present research shows that if a team has emotional stability and conscientiousness personality dispositions, then it will show a high level of team cohesion as these two personalities are considered to be the important predictors of team cohesion ; whereas, extroversion and self-esteem can impede team cohesion. This can be helpful for an organization in the team formation process to increase the productivity of the team.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

This research consisted of a sample size of 120 respondents. The limitations of a small sample would apply, and generalizations may not be possible. Therefore, for future research, this study should be replicated to cover a large sample from different heterogeneous sectors. Further research should explore the other personality dispositions and understand how it will help in targeting the right candidate for the right job in a team so that an exact success composition of the team is acquired in order to achieve team cohesion, which is instrumental for team effectiveness.

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