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Team Effectiveness-Relationship between Team Empowerment and Team Functioning

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to recognize the predictive value of team empowerment for Team functioning of a cross section of MBA students. From this purpose statement of the study, the following specific objectives have been derived:

1. To recognize the impact of team empowerment on Team functioning.
2. To determine empirically the relationship between team empowerment and Team functioning.
3. To formulate recommendations regarding team empowerment and Team functioning.

Key Words: Team effectiveness, Team Empowerment, Team functioning, Collaboration and Confrontation.

Introduction

A team is more than a group of people in the same space, physical or virtual. Social basis of cognition in teams is being taken into consideration in the recent literature in order to understand how performance of teams and groups can be improved through social process. Mutually shared cognition results in more perceived team performance, which can be understood by taking into account interpersonal and social cognitive process. (Kirschner et al 2006). Managers must understand and take into consideration the proper mix of expertise when formulating teams. (Vegt and Bunderson 2005) Companies can encourage collective team identification by developing the appropriate blend of tasks and goal interdependence between members of team, by providing support and recognize team members to maintain long and health relationship and finally by maintaining contacts between team members. . Process improvement and customer satisfaction can be greatly enhanced through better team empowerment (Veget 2003)

Review of Literature

Team empowerment concept has been introduced in literature in mid seventies with emphasis on employee empowerment (Kanter 1977). It has been observed that by empowering employees and teams within organizations shows tremendous impact on management practice. It has also been observed that almost 80 percent of business organizations have introduced the concept of empowerment into their teamwork (Lawler et al 2001). Empowerment has generated a considerable debate in the

research context but most aspects of team empowerment needs to be elaborated and worked upon as most of the queries still remain unanswered (Spreitzer 2008). It is therefore necessary to formulate a better knowledge about empowerment, understanding the factors that create a feeling within employees about empowerment and outcomes related with empowerment within empowered workforce. Teams are important component of any organization which helps them to perform most of the work. Effectiveness of the organization therefore greatly depends on the functioning of these teams in an efficient and effective manner. Hence attention must be given on the effectiveness of these teams in an organization. The first major importance of teams to the organizations was first identified in a famous experiment known as Hawthorne Studies (Alton Moyo 1930). Teams were considered to be an important factor for organizational performance and must be given special attention (Mc Gregor 1960). Teams are also an important element of humanization for organizations and find out various factors of effective teams (Likert 1961). The factors identified by Likert include role clarity, openness to feedback, supporting leadership etc. As per Udai Pareek (2001) team effectiveness has been studied on two dimensions team empowerment and team functioning. Team empowerment include task clarity, autonomy, support and accountability and team functioning include cohesion, confrontation and collaboration. We will be analyzing the relationship between these two variables. Overall it can be presumed that Team empowerment will have a profound positive impact on Team functioning. The following hypotheses can be stated.

H: - More the teams empowered to carry out their tasks more will be the Team Functioning.

Further it has been observed that if teams have clarity of tasks they are supposed to perform better and the members of team will develop close association with each other. Teams will also be having low dysfunctional conflicts. Hence we conclude more the task clarity spelled out for teams, they will show high cohesion, collaboration and low confrontation.

H1: More the Task Clarity high will be cohesion, collaboration and less confrontation.

Autonomy is an important criterion for team effectiveness in any organization. Based on several findings we can hypothesis the following premise.

H2: More the autonomy given to the teams more cohesion and collaboration and less confrontation will be found in teams.

Top managements support for teams will also be an important factor for teams to function in an effective manner. Hence we propose as

H3: More the Support to teams more cohesion and collaboration and less confrontation will be in teams.

Similarly for accountability we propose as given

H4: More the teams accountable more cohesion, collaboration and confrontation in the teams.

Research Methodology

The study has taken a sample of 15 teams composed of MBA Students (n=139) from university of Kashmir. The size of each team ranges from seven to ten students. The mean of 15 teams was 9.27 students. Sample students were 20 to 24 years old (mean age= 22). In this sample the distribution of male to female students was 54% and 46% respectively. Participants were 56 percent business graduates, 33 percent science, 5 percent arts, and 5 other backgrounds. The tasks each team was assigned were almost similar and time periods for accomplishing the tasks were also same for each team. Hence the sample was very appropriate for testing our hypothesis because no mitigating factors were present in this study. Teams were engaged in summer projects wherein each team was given a single project for a period of three months to work. Data was collected through surveys administered after the projects were completed and submitted to the university. The survey was conducted to get independent source of team performance and obtained response from all 139 students (a 100 % response rate)

Team effectiveness has been measured by Team Effectiveness Assessment Measure (TEAM) developed by Udai Pareek (2001). The members of team rate their team on seven components, which are grouped into two main aspects of team effectiveness: Team functioning and team empowerment. All these seven components are measured on a five point Likert type scale.

The Findings

The validity and reliability of measures used in this study has been performed (Bhat and Parray 2016). The instrument has been found to be valid and reliable in the J and K context.

As it is evident from the correlation matrix there is no multicollinearity issue and normality assumption is not also been violated. The hypothesized relationships are analyzed to see the relationship between team empowerment with team functioning. It has been observed there is a strong relationship between these two variables of Team Effectiveness. We employed stepwise multiple regression analysis for examining the impact of each of the team empowerment on the team functioning scores of the students in the sample. These results show strong relationship for all the team empowerment with team functioning at a statistically significant level. Overall it explains 48 percent of variation. Table 2 presents beta coefficients and t- values.

Table-1 Matrix comparisons of Reliabilities and correlations of variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Team empowerment									
Task Clarity	0.69								
Autonomy	0.72	0.61							
Support	0.63	0.78	0.79						
Accountability	0.74	0.68	0.62	0.79					
Team Functioning	0.45	0.43	0.27	0.51	0.10				
Cohesion	0.36	0.39	-0.44	0.38	-0.51	0.54			
Confrontation	0.35	-0.39	0.36	-0.40	-0.33	0.52	0.56		
Collaboration	0.55	0.43	0.16	0.21	0.38	0.62	0.63	.61	

Table- 2: Stepwise regression results for total team functioning

Team empowerment	Beta-coefficients	t-value
Task Clarity	.39	4.2
Autonomy	.33	5.3
Support	.56	6.7
Accountability	.07	5.1
R^2	0.48	

Table-3: Stepwise regression results for each component of team empowerment and team functioning along with beta coefficients and t-values

Team empowerment	Team functioning		
	Cohesion	Confrontation	Collaboration
Task Clarity	0.43 (5.8)	-0.41 (5.4)	0.37 (4.7)
Autonomy	-0.38 (4.6)	0.44 (4.9)	0.31 (4.0)
Support	0.56 (6.7)	-0.52 (6.1)	0.39 (5.3)
Accountability	-0.45 (5.6)	-0.49 (5.7)	0.47 (6.1)
R^2	0.48	0.53	0.49

Discussion: The results will be discussed separately for each of the team empowerment variables briefly below.

Task clarity: It has been observed as predicted in H1 task clarity increases cohesion and collaboration and at the same time reduces conflict among team members. The probable reasons for the same when all the team members are aware about the task they are supposed to perform and have the clarity about the team task. They are willing to collaborate with other team members to share maximum possible information to complete not only their task but the task of the whole team. It provides ample evidence that team members will be having less conflict and at the same time are strongly held together.

Autonomy: when we analyse results we find contradictory outcome as predicted in H2 that autonomy decreases cohesion and increases confrontation. The reasons could be when team members perceive that team has an absolute authority to make certain decisions. It may lead to conflict between team members as to who will be given this authority to make decisions within the Team. The same reason provides sufficient support for decreased cohesions among team members.

Support: When top management provides the necessary support to the teams they show high cohesion and collaboration. The support helps them to clear much of the constraints in the way of performance. Support acts as factor that helps them to live a collective working life in the organization. In this way more the support coming down from higher ups helps team members develop better working relations and collaboration.

Accountability: - We have seen accountability has a negative impact on team cohesiveness but increases collaboration among team members. We could cite the probable reasons that when members are liable and responsible for their individual actions. This can lead to more individual focus rather than collective. Team members remain focused more to their work and are ready to give and take other members necessary support which leads to collaboration. Team members having more accountability are very cooperative when it comes to their work hence have less confrontation possibility among them.

Summary and Conclusions;

The purpose of this study is to recognize the predictive value of team empowerment for Team functioning of a cross section of MBA students. Based on the observed findings we have hypothesized that more the teams empowered to carry out their tasks more will be the Team Functioning. The sample of this study consists of 15 teams comprised of MBA students [n = 139] from university of Kashmir. We have employed Team Effectiveness Assessment Measure (TEAM) developed by Udai Pareek for this study. We have employed the techniques of correlation and regression statistics for data analysis. Our results show that various aspects of team effectiveness interact with each other differently. These results suggest very interesting outcomes discussed above. The main conclusion drawn from this study is that in order to increase team effectiveness they must be given sufficient empowerment to carry out different functions. In order to improve cohesiveness in teams' members must be

given clarity of tasks they and other members are supposed to undertake. They must also be given necessary support from other corners of the organization especially higher ups. In order to reduce confrontation we must focus on task clarity, support and team members must be held accountable to their tasks. Finally in order to generate collaboration among team members the fundamental requisite for team effectiveness. We should focus on improving overall team empowerment that is task clarity, autonomy, support and Accountability.

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