

Group cohesiveness essay sample



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1. Introduction

Cohesion can be broadly defined as the tendency of a group to stay unified while working towards a goal and satisfying the emotional needs of its members. It affects levels of participation in a group, conformity to norms and emphasis on goals accomplished. Cohesion has multiple dimensions which changes over time in terms of strength and starts when a group is formed. The bonds that link group members are not formed spontaneously. They lie in the task commitment and the interpersonal attraction that exists among group members. Cohesion can also be seen in group pride. In sporting activities, it is seen that performance successes facilitate feelings of greater cohesion and satisfaction. Similarly, cohesion itself also results in a greater sense of satisfaction. The measurement of cohesion is in terms of mutual positive feelings that exist for members. Certain factors like ethnic diversity and external competition also have a positive correlation with group

cohesiveness. If an individual has a sense of belonging and has committed himself to team goals, satisfaction will also be gained from the process of combined effort. In turn, this provides a source of satisfaction and the subsequent feelings of worth can provide motivation to carry on.

This cyclical effect is highly desirable; however it is difficult to measure individual factors without considering the effect of others. Coaches often try to open channels of communication trying to address conflict whenever it arises and discussing positive aspects of a performance before the negative. They also develop pride and a collective identity by setting realistic goals with the team and gain their commitment by involving them in the process. Formations of cliques are also avoided by random assignment of members for training exercises. Similar factors affect all group activities. Cohesion can thus be used by managers for increasing participation. Since cohesion is dynamic, it is capable of change, growth and improvement. In this project the individual need for belonging and the individual need for power will be correlated to the level of perceived cohesion in a study group. Gender and ethnic diversity shall also be used to confirm the hypotheses offered about the impact on group cohesion.

2. Literature Review

“ Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress, and Working together is success.” – Henry Ford A formal definition of group cohesiveness is, “ The resultant of all the forces acting on members to remain in the group.” [1]. In other words, group cohesiveness is the ‘ stick togetherness’ of the group, it’s the peanut butter. It is responsible for holding the group together. In this study, we analyzed the impact of factors like need for <https://assignbuster.com/group-cohesiveness-essay-sample/>

power, need for belonging, gender diversity and ethnicity on group cohesiveness. “ Theory of power states that power results from the build-up of conflicts within the group. Within this approach, power appears to be a composite of three qualitatively different powers, institutional, generative and ecological. [2] “ Based on our literature review, we see that power conflicts is more when there is no designated leader and leadership is participative in nature. “ Teams comprised of members from different national cultures can be faced with unique challenges during the creative process [3]” Hofstede’s cultural dimension of power distance says low power distance is one factor that minimizes potential conflicts.

Rather than viewing themselves as a group of individuals from different cultures, the group tends to develop their own culture. “ Friendship was found to be weakly and negatively related to symptoms of groupthink, while group identification and social attraction were strongly and, with some exceptions, positively related to symptoms of groupthink”[4] Need for belonging is the tendency of group members as to identify themselves with the group as a whole. It definitely has a positive correlation with group cohesiveness. Another theory of power states the concept of theory breakdown.

The organization – associated power complexity is the decreasing function of group size. “ The group challenge is then to reach the transitional state which enriches the group possibilities through the inclusion and stabilization of internal conflicts [5]” Our literature review suggests that there is expected to be a high correlation between need for belonging and group cohesiveness. Gender diversity is given a lot of importance in today’s date because of its

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expected positive influence on group cohesiveness. Ethnicity is also an important factor in group cohesiveness. It may lead to strong centre of power and potential formation of sub groups which would have detrimental effect on group cohesiveness. Power conflict determines group dynamics and influences group cohesiveness. It has been seen that group where the leader establishes a warm interpersonal relationship with subordinates demonstrates better group cohesiveness than a group governed by a dictator style leadership.

3. Hypothesis and Research Design

4. 1. Our hypothesis is based on the following factors:

* Gender – It doesn't affect cohesiveness.

* Ethnicity – Similar ethnic backgrounds lead to more group cohesiveness. *

Need for Belonging – The higher the need for belonging of all members, the more cohesive is the group * Need for Power – More the number of people with high need for power, the lesser the cohesiveness.

4. 2. Research Design:

We will be following the approach given below:

1. We intend to study 15 groups with 8-10 members in each group. 2. Collect FIRO-B scores for each member. We will also be conducting interviews and surveys through questionnaires to determine the above mentioned input variables. 3. Collate data group wise and predict the cohesiveness on basis of our hypothesis 4. Interview group members to determine perception of individual about the cohesiveness of their group. 5. Map the expected

cohesiveness with observed cohesiveness to either accept or reject our hypothesis. NOTE – The size of groups is one of the moderating factors and will be considered during surveys.

4. Data Collection and Collation

Tools used for data collection:

5. 3. Survey:

To measure the perceived group cohesiveness, 11 groups were surveyed. We could not survey the law groups as we had intended to. A 5-Point Likert Scale was used to translate their subjective responses to statistics. Four individual questionnaires to measure different parameters were combined into one questionnaire.

Interviews were conducted with members of both senior and junior batches of both committees, asking their opinions on the gender shift seen in the committees. Excerpts from these interviews have been included in the appendix. The gist of our interviews encompassed how performance has improved, and potential problems that have emerged because of the heterogeneous junior batch. We also questioned the juniors about the work till now, and any changes they would have preferred in the committee composition. Our observations were that most members preferred the diversity, but also accepted that a number of external factors contribute to the efficiency and good coordination between the committees, than just gender heterogeneity. 2. Questionnaire based observations for different OB II groups We posed questions to multiple members of same groups, to corroborate the data we had from our individual perception questionnaires.

These questions helped us correlate our observations from the perceived group cohesiveness scores, with the impact that individual attitudes have on the same. Our questions had both positive and negative implications, for instance groups that accepted that members had to be called repeatedly but also said that they worked out a system to ensure equal work distribution showed more cohesiveness reflecting a better understanding of the group's priorities. On the other hand, groups that were confused as to whether they were the part of the best group in the entire batch, and whether their OB 2 group was the best group they were a part of, showed confusion between the personal and professional targets of the group, and hence showed low cohesiveness. Detailed analysis of these findings is attached in the appendix.

5. Hypothesis Testing

Parameters| Equations|

G – Gender Diversity| $-0.0556 * G + 23.69 = Y$ |

P – Need for Power| $-3.446 * P + 49.14 = Y$ |

B – Need for Belonging| $-1.45 * B + 47.66 = Y$ |

E – Ethnic Diversity| $2.17 * E + 6.28 = Y$ |

Y – Perceived Group Cohesiveness

6. 5. Gender Diversity

It doesn't affect cohesiveness.

The gender diversity scores ($a*X$) are taken with a moderating factor which would include all other variables including external factors multiplied with the coefficient ($b*Y$) to form a linear equation which amounts to the perceived cohesiveness (C). Taking the points close to each other (straight

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line), the equation was solved and coefficients recorded. The average coefficient score -0.0556 shows that gender diversity does not affect the cohesiveness score. Coefficients show a range from -2 to 1.89 while most groups show values close to 0. The higher range scores can be explained by the perceived individual attraction among members of the same sex. This supports our previous hypothesis.

6. 6. Need for Belonging

The higher the need for belonging of all members, the more cohesive is the group. The data from the need for belonging was taken with a moderating factor encompassing all other variables to form an equation leading to the perceived cohesiveness. The calculated coefficients for need for belonging showed an average value of -1.445. The values moved in the range -3 to -0.056. The group showing maximum negative correlation could be said to associate need for belonging with groupthink or with the formation of subgroups, leading to a lower task orientation. This refutes our previous hypothesis.

6. 7. Need for Power

More the number of people with high need for power, the lesser the cohesiveness. As per our data analysis, calculation of coefficients for each factor was done. We observe that for all the groups, need for power is negatively related to group cohesiveness. The range obtained varies from -8 to -0.11. The average obtained after analysis of our data set renders an average value of -3.446 for this factor. This implies that more the power struggle in a group, its cohesiveness suffers. This is due to conflict among

the members that might arise due to high expressed need for control.

Hence, the hypothesis is proved.

6. 8. Ethnicity

Similar ethnic backgrounds lead to more group cohesiveness.

As per our data analysis for ethnicity, we observe that ethnicity is positively related to group cohesiveness for most of the groups. However, we also observe mild negative correlation between ethnicity and group cohesiveness for a few groups. This can be due to the formation of sub groups within a group based on ethnicity leading to a power centre and increased power conflict within a group. For our data, the range varied from -0. 373 to 5. 74. The average value is 2. 166. Hence, ethnicity is positively related group cohesiveness. Hence, the hypothesis is proved.

6. Conclusion

Our project studied the effect of four parameters on group cohesiveness – need for belonging, need for power, ethnicity and gender diversity. Our sample for observation constituted 62 students, and the tools we used in our survey ranged from questionnaires to interviews. We recorded their responses, and depending on the questions we converted them to numerical equivalents. We collated the values from individual members, to obtain a relation between the different parameters and group cohesion, including a moderating factor to account for all the additional factors that we have not studied. In these calculations the value for cohesiveness was the perceived cohesiveness of the entire group, which we obtained using questionnaires that asked candidates to reply in our group context. We used the final values to test our null hypotheses. 3 of the hypotheses were validated by the

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survey results but the one for need for belonging was refuted. This could be attributed to the formation of sub-groups because of high affection and less task orientation.

7. Drawbacks

1. Cohesiveness is a behaviour which can be observed over a period of time and there is no concrete method of measuring it. We have considered the perceived cohesion value of each group as a benchmark to validate our study. 2. Cohesiveness is assumed to be a linear function of the four individual factors. 3. Groups with varying sizes could not be surveyed.

4. The scope of the study is limited in the number of factors leading to group cohesiveness. 5. All factors are considered independently. For example, gender diversity and ethnic diversity can be overlapping factors, which has not been taken into account.