

GROUP COHESIVENESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness in the Telecommunication Sector, Rivers State. Objectives were formulated to vividly explain the concepts of organizational effectiveness. Task and social cohesion were used as dimensions of group cohesiveness while goal accomplishment and adaptability to explain the concepts. Social cognitive theory, social identity theory and self-categorization theory were used as a backdrop of the study. It was revealed that group cohesiveness significantly relates to organizational effectiveness. It was concluded that relationship exists between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness. It was recommended that management should be involved in group cohesiveness in order to increase effectiveness and adaptability.

Introduction

Group cohesiveness is considered the bond or tie that keeps the work group together. Although group cohesion has been traditionally viewed as a unitary construct, recent researchers have provided considerable support for a two-dimensional construct that includes both the social and task aspects of cohesion (Carless & De Paola, 2000). Zaccaro and Lowe (2015) found that group cohesion predicted group performance on an additive group task whereas social cohesion impeded productivity by generating task-interfering exchanges among group members. Similarly, Zaccaro's (2000) study on a student military organization provided evidence that task cohesion was more strongly associated with group performance than social cohesion. However, Zaccaro and McCoy (2013) found that both social and task cohesion are needed when groups require interaction to succeed.

Communication and cooperation are also essential key components of effective teams (Lester & Meglino, 2002). Models of work group effectiveness are used to depict that communication and cooperation facilitate information flow and coordinate collective efforts as well as promote openness and interpersonal relationships. Researchers of communication and cooperation in groups suggest that effective communication and cooperation not only promote problem solving, but also allow groups to coordinate efforts towards a common purpose, thereby increasing the group's performance. According to Jones and George (2016), many organizations have sought to increase cooperation between people and groups by reengineering their structures into more flatter, team-based forms, in which authority is decentralized to empowered lower level employees.

Although communication and cooperation are considered to be important key concepts to effectiveness within work groups, they have not been extensively empirically tested and reported in the literature. Decision making in groups is another important factor that impacts both group cohesion and group performance (Chansler, Swamidass & Cammann, 2003). Many organizations have complex organizational structures that require input and participation from employees at multiple levels within the organization.

Statement of Problem

Group cohesion is central to understanding work group processes, behaviours, and effectiveness. Most people have had both good and bad experiences from participating in such group work. One important element that influences one's group work experience is cohesion. Group cohesiveness can be defined as a group session wherein which, group of people connects them with the help of similar interest and program. Moreover, it is a process where a group of people for a group or a team consider their similar interest and ability.

However, the problem identified in this study is lack of consensus in the groups; lack of team work, social cohesion, task cohesion and psychotherapy group contribute to low organizational effectiveness in the Telecommunication companies such as Mobile Telecommunication Network- Globacom, Etisalat and Airtel in Rivers State. The manifestation mentioned above if not timely handled may lead to low productivity.

The research will therefore investigate the effect of group cohesiveness on organizational effectiveness.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to examine the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between social cohesion and goal accomplishment
2. To determine the relationship between task cohesion and adaptability
3. To examine the relationship between social cohesion and adaptability
4. To investigate the relationship between task cohesion and goal accomplishment

Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Group Cohesiveness

Group cohesiveness can be defined as a bond that pulls people toward membership in a particular group and resists separation from that group. Group cohesion is the sum of all the factors causing members of a group to stay in the group or be attracted to the group. Group cohesion is a social process that characterizes groups whose members interact with each other and refers to the forces that push group members closer together (Carron, 2002). Group cohesiveness is a multidimensional concept. An excessive number of group cohesion definitions, from those that focus on interpersonal attraction among group members, to others that address various components that comprise group cohesion, can be found in the literature. As a result, defining the construct has caused confusion, inconsistency, and lack of uniformity among many researchers (Mudrack, 2017).

However, the different perspectives from different fields may account for the multitude of definitions and measures of group cohesion. Although a large variation of group cohesion definitions is found in the literature. Group cohesion in this study is defined as the process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives (Carron, 2002).

This definition of group cohesion has been chosen for the reason that it applies to work groups in particular and encompasses both task and social cohesion (Carron & Brawley, 2000). Group cohesion also depicts a broad and dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick, bond together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and institutional objectives (Widmeyer, Carron, & Brawley, 2005). Carron and Brawley (2012) in their cohesion conceptual and measurement studies suggested the necessity of evaluating and taking cognizance of the structure and context of groups in providing an operational definition for group cohesion.

Dimension of Group Cohesiveness

Task Cohesion

Task cohesion refers to the degree to which group members share group goals and work together to meet their goals. Task cohesion is defined as a shared commitment and motivation to coordinate group efforts to achieve common work-related tasks or goals (MacCoun, 2016). Task cohesion is unity or commonality based on skill and ability to do the task at hand whether by one's self or with others.

By task cohesion, it works toward a conflict or a point of interest with ways and possible solutions in mind. According to Mullen and Copper (2014), task cohesiveness can be enhanced by emphasizing similar goals and ensuring that the pursued goals are important to all members. Both social and task cohesiveness can be promoted by encouraging voluntary interaction among group members or by creating a unique and attractive identity of the group, for example, by introducing a common logo or uniform.

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is defined as motivation to develop and maintain bonds within a group (Carless & De Paola, 2000). Social cohesion is unity or commonality like the task form, but unlike it (which focuses on skill and ability). Hogg (2012) noted that social cohesiveness can be enhanced by increasing liking and attraction among group members. Liking can be enhanced through increasing similarity of group members (people like those who are similar to them or share similar experiences).

Also, social cohesion is referred to a group of employees who were established formally, are assigned some autonomy, and are also interdependent (Rasmussen & Jeppesen, 2006).

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is an all encompassing concept that described the level of proactiveness and ability to achieve goal of an organization. The managerial responsibility is to maintain an optimal balance among these components. Effectiveness generally refers to the extent to which an organization is able to achieve its goals. Bernard (2014) defines effectiveness as the accomplishment of recognized objectives of cooperative effort and adds for emphasis that the degree of accomplishment is the degree of effectiveness. But these goals are at times difficult to define and measure, inconsistent, seen differently by different organizational members or even used as camouflage for the hidden agenda of the powerful forces within the organization.

Furthermore, Steers (2000) reminds us of the difference between operative goals (what organizations actually do) and official goals (what they claim they do) and that what matters are the operative goals. To address some of these shortcomings, Zamuto (2014) adopts a stakeholder approach by defining organizational effectiveness as human judgments about the desirability of the outcomes of organizational performance from the vantage position of the varied constituencies directly and indirectly affected by the organization.

Organizational effectiveness is the ability to achieve goals, survive in the environment, continuously adapt to changing environment, which in itself requires a sequence of events. Organizations pass through different stages; they grow, develop and decline, in line with environmental realities. They thus operate in their own life cycles (even whole industries and segments thereof also have life cycles) and the appropriate criteria for effectiveness should reflect the stages in this life cycle. Managers and others interested in organizations have indicators for assessing the probability of survival and there are usually short run indicators for long run survival.

Goal accomplishment is the ability to identify and prioritize activities that lead to a goal. Those with a capacity for goal achievement can execute a plan to get the desired results. In other words, goal achievement is the end result of leaders leading themselves. Zamuto (2014) noted that goal approach states that organizations effectiveness must be appraised in terms of the accomplishment of ends rather than means. The effectiveness of the organization can be measured in terms of the degree to which these goals are achieved.

Adaptability means how quickly organizations adjust their business processes and improvise themselves to achieve their goals. In short, adaptability is essential for competitive advantage. Zamuto (2014) expressed that adaptive systems is the extent to which self-organizing systems and highly networked systems work, learning from them and the tangible ways by which they can be put to play to make organizations more effective.

Conceptual Framework

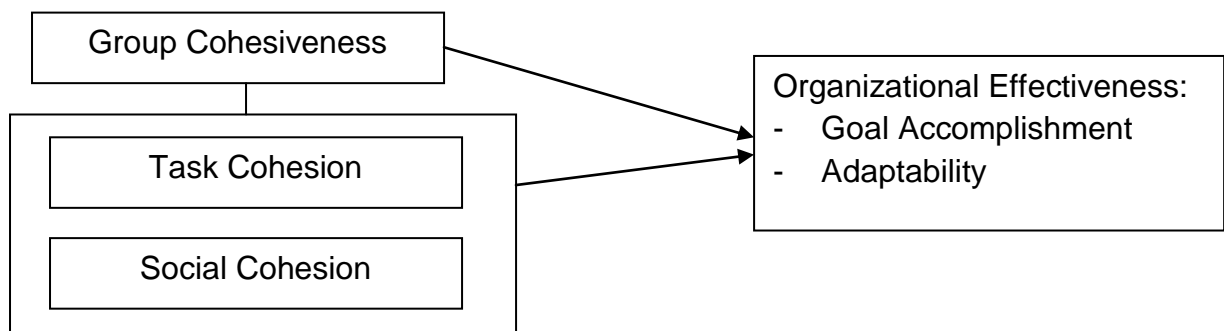


Fig. 1.1
Researcher's Conceptualization, 2020

Relationship between Group Cohesion and Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness remains the most widely studied variable in the group cohesion literature and researchers have continually explored the cohesion-organizational effectiveness continuum due to its complexity and relevance to group studies (Mullen & Cooper, 1994). Studies on the two constructs have been examined within groups at different levels and the plethora of meta-analyses conducted on their relationship reinforces the growing attention enjoyed (Chiocchio & Essiembre, 2009).

The divergence in outcomes in these meta-analysis and research reinforces the complexity of these constructs and time dimension effect on the findings (Levine & Mooreland, 1999). The debate on which impacts the others suggest that performance leads to cohesion and group cohesion leads to organizational effectiveness (Chang & Bordia, 2001). Components of cohesion had different levels of effect and correlation between effectiveness (Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003) The nature of cohesiveness in a group is a reflection of the level of communication and bonding among group members and results in task, role commitment, group pride and interpersonal attraction (Rosh, Offermann, & Van, 2012). Campbell and Martins (2009) also noted that group cohesion has been studied among diverse groups and it positively influences organizational effectiveness.

Group pride plays a positive role in situations where the relationship between effectiveness and cohesion are positive and often dependent on the level of effectiveness in past performances (Rosh, Offermann & Van, 2012). Over all, the relationship between cohesion and organizational effectiveness has been found to be positive in some studies and negative in other studies, this seeming contradiction confirms the complexity of research in group cohesion (Hornaday, 2014). Mullen and Copper (1994) experimental and associational method are relevant in investigating the nature of the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness, the former suggests the creation of high and low level group cohesiveness to examine the effect each type would have on group effectiveness and the latter requires an in-depth appraisal of the group's opinion of cohesion with both methods leading to different outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory posits that both individual and group behaviour are shaped by reciprocal causality as behaviors, personal characteristics, and environmental factors interact. As such, social cognitive theory may offer a fitting model for the causal individual socio-psychological processes that influence the level of group cohesion (Campbell & Martens, 2009). Thus, group cohesion may be influenced by enactive attainment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state.

According to Bandura (2000), performance or task attainment is based on one's personal accomplishments and is the most influential source of information, followed by vicarious experiences, i.e., observing others while they perform a task, and persuasion, in which motivation or positive feedback is given. According to Campbell and Martin (2009), enactive attainment, repeated positive performance, when combined with verbal persuasion between groups members would conceivably lead to increases in group cohesion, while repeated failures would lower beliefs about group cohesion.

Social cognitive theory is an important concept that applies to groups because it may be used to explain how individuals learn while they're in social situations by interacting with and observing other individuals (Swanson and Holton, 2001). Socialization can be defined as the process by which organizations pass on the culture of the organization to new employees and teach them how to be effective in the organization (Swanson and Holton, 2001).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory has also been used as a theoretical framework to explain group cohesion. Social identity theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1981) and is used to explain when and why individuals identify and behave within social groups.

There are three psychological processes of social identity theory:

1) social categorization- individuals often place themselves and others into categories; 2) identification- individuals relate to certain groups (in-groups) that emotionally impact their self-concept; and 3) social comparison- group members compare their groups (the in-group) to other relevant groups (out-group) and usually favor the group to which they belong (in-group) over other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Self-categorization Theory

Self-categorization theory is a sub-set of self identity theory; it has also been used as a theoretical framework for group cohesion. For example, Hogg (1992) used identification with a group to define cohesion. Self-categorization is the process by which individuals self-identify as a member of a social group context or situation surrounding the categorization. In other words, the context of the group forms the self-concept or categorization of each group member.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the study concludes that there is a relationship between social cohesion which relates to the success of an organization, while task cohesion also has a strong relationship with organizational success.

The study therefore concluded that relationship exists between group cohesion and organizational effectiveness which leads to a positive impact in the business setting.

Recommendations

Based on my finding and conclusion, the study recommended that:

1. Management should be encouraging social cohesion in order to fuel accomplishment of group goals.
2. Management should allow group members to share group goals together so as to enable employees to be more proactive and adapt to the organizational climate.
3. Social cohesion should be used by management to enhance group commitments and improve adaptive system.
4. Management should focus more on task cohesion so as to achieve quick goal accomplishment.

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