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The Nonprofit Board as a Team: Pilot Results and Initial Insights

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Abstract

There is a growing desire for boards of nonprofits to deliver better governance to the organizations they control. Consequently, self-evaluation has become an important tool for nonprofit boards to meet these expectations and demonstrate that they are discharging their responsibilities effectively. This article describes initial results aimed at developing a psychometrically sound, survey-based board evaluation instrument, based on the Team Development Survey (TDS), that assesses the team attributes of an organization's board. Our results indicate that while constructs applicable to teams generally appear to apply to boards, there are also important differences. We highlight how a perception of board objective clarity, appropriate skills mix, resource availability, and psychological safety were positively and significantly associated with measures of board, management and organizational performance.

An organization's board can have profound effects on both organizational outcomes and personal well being. At one end of the spectrum, there is an increasing recognition of the positive roles that a board can play in creating value for the organization it governs (e.g. Huse, 2007), particularly in nonprofit boards (e.g. Brown, 2002, 2005; Jackson & Holland, 1998; Herman & Renz, 1998). At the other end are numerous well-documented instances of board failure affecting organisational performance (e.g. see Carman, 2011) as well as a string of significant cases highlighting potentially disastrous results for the individuals involved (e.g. see McGregor-Lowndes, 1995 discussing the National Safety Council case in Australia). The relationship between boards and organizational performance does not appear to be due to any single context; for instance board failure transcends national boundaries and regulatory systems (e.g., National Safety Council (Australia); the Singapore Kidney Foundation (Singapore); the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy (US); and Moonbeams (UK)).

Consequently there is an increasing interest in nonprofit capacity building, both in general and for the board of directors in particular (Nobbie and Brudney, 2003). Given the broad conclusions from a global study that ineffective nonprofit boards are linked to weak organizational accountability (Salamon and Chinnock, 2004), it becomes apparent that nonprofit boards will increasingly be called to ensure they are performing at their best. If not, it is likely that mandated public reporting practices will follow, along with the added complexity, red tape, and cost (Smith and Richmond, 2007).

An important challenge facing boards seeking to develop capacity is appropriate diagnosis of their weaknesses. Despite the increasing awareness of the importance of an effective board and a plethora of normative advice, surprisingly little has been done to enable the reliable diagnosis of problems facing nonprofit boards, particularly outside North America. Mirroring their for-profit counterparts (e.g. Finkelstein & Mooney, 2003), research conducted into nonprofit boards reveals a general belief that significant improvements are possible (Morrow and Bartlett, 2007) but that

measurement and diagnosis across a broad swathe of organizations is difficult (e.g. Nicholson & Newton, 2010).

In this paper we present initial results relating to the development of a new diagnostic tool for nonprofit boards and highlight that focusing on the nonprofit board as a team appears to be a fruitful avenue for continued research. First, we present the logic behind our approach, including a brief overview of the growing interest in the behavioral aspects of corporate governance and how the board operates as a group or team. We then briefly highlight peer-reviewed diagnostic tools currently available to the sector before presenting our results and concluding with the implications of our findings for research and practice.

Developing a team focused diagnostic for nonprofit boards

A challenge for any governance diagnostic tool in the nonprofit arena is the diversity and range of contexts (e.g. size, culture, industry, etc.) in which it will be used. Nonprofits vary from flat, feminist inspired structures to church theocratic bureaucracies that take many different legal forms. This means different nonprofits will have differences in legal requirements and expectations as to their tasks, responsibilities and attitudes to governance. For example, a recent survey of health and allied nonprofits in one region in Australia identified six different legal structures in use by the organisations in this narrow sample (Nicholson et al, 2008; see Figure 1). Consequently, the requirements and even operating procedures for governing bodies is likely to be highly variable if viewed primarily from a legal perspective.

Insert Figure 1 about here

A growing interest in group effectiveness at a board level (Finkelstein & Mooney, 2003; Forbes & Milliken, 1999; Hillman & Dalziel, 2003; Nicholson & Kiel, 2004) and human behavior within boards and governing groups (e.g. LeBlanc, 2005; Pye, 2005; Van Ees, Gabrielson & Huse,

2009) provides an approach to address this challenge. This strong and growing tradition in the general corporate governance literature recognizes that good governance relies on the behavior of people as much as the law (e.g. Sonnenfeld, 2002) and that the phenomenon of effective organizational governance is situated in multiple levels - it is an organizational, group and individual phenomenon (Dalton & Dalton, 2011).

The multidisciplinary recognition of the group-based nature of effective corporate governance is another important advantage of focusing on group performance in the articulation and measurement of effective governance. For instance, legal scholars are clear that it is the group with the power to make decisions (Bainbridge, 2003) while other major disciplines, including sociology (Pfeffer, 1973), psychology (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997) and economics (Eisenhardt, 1989), highlight important behavioral factors thought to influence good board decision making and effective personal action. Quite simply, there is strong and growing evidence that the effectiveness of an organization's governance system relies on an effective board operating well together as a team. Thus, opening the "black box" of how the board operates is seen by many as the most important challenge facing the field (Huse, 2005; Daily, Dalton & Cannella, 2003).

By focusing on the board as a group or team, we are clearly delimiting organizational performance from governance task (or board role) performance. Board role and organizational performance do not form part of our primary research focus in this paper for important empirical and theoretical reasons. We do not include organizational performance for two important reasons. First, there is a long mediation process between what boards do and effective organizational performance - things like the business environment, management and luck matter (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003; Nicholson & Kiel, 2004). Second, the problems associated with comparing performance across a broad range of nonprofit organizations are well recognized (Herman & Renz, 1997; 2004) and are beyond the scope of a psychometrically valid self-diagnosis tool for boards.

Similarly, board role execution (or task performance) is a particularly difficult subject to diagnose and measure. Again, we exclude it from our diagnostic tool for two important reasons.

First, definitional problems abound, with different authors employing different typologies (e.g. compare Hillman & Dalziel, 2003; Johnson, Daily, & Ellstrand, 1996; Hung, 1998) and emerging evidence suggests that these typologies do not match how governors and managers think about their roles (Nicholson & Newton, 2010). A major insight of the general groups literature is that the group finds it difficult to assess its team product - i.e. what the team does. The alternative is to seek external measures of board role performance, a difficult and complex task that to date has provided different assessments of performance from different stakeholders (Herman & Renz, 1997; 2004). In summary, there are significant conceptual and practical difficulties in measuring board role and organizational performance.

In contrast, there is significant evidence that groups can validly measure their internal attributes (Hackman, 2002). Our approach builds upon the group effectiveness research agenda of Hackman, Wageman and colleagues (Hackman, 2002; Hackman and Wageman, 2005a, 2005b). Specifically, we utilize concepts and elements of their team development model and its associated instrument, the Team Development Survey (TDS) (Wageman, Hackman and Lehmann, 2005). The TDS model provides a strong empirical and theoretical basis for understanding the social forces at work in boards and we have adapted its key elements to assess group-based attributes of nonprofit board governance in the Australian context. Our approach involved the development of new constructs and items, revising existing items, and also removing constructs not relevant to our context. A full list of the items (grouped by construct) is provided in Appendix A, where an italicized item indicates a direct derivation from Wageman et al (2005).

A comparison with existing instruments for nonprofit governance diagnosis

Ensuring that a governing body or team functions appropriately and effectively necessitates evaluation. Yet there are few validated tools to assist governing bodies evaluate their work. Most relevant to nonprofits are the Slesinger self-assessment tool (Slesinger, 1991), the Board Self Assessment Questionnaire (BSAQ) (Holland, 1991) and the Governance Self Assessment Checklist

(GSAC) (Gill et al, 2005). These three are all North American tools that have been subject to significant peer review.

These tools have made valuable contributions to our understanding of nonprofit governance; however, there are three important reasons why an open, validated group-focused diagnostic for boards would build on this early work. First, the current tools do not provide a clear separation between organisational performance and board effectiveness. For instance, Slesinger's (1991) board evaluation tool explored by Herman and Renz (1997; 1998; 2004), provides high correlations between board and organisational performance, suggestive of a mixing of the two concepts. This is corroborated by their general conclusion that "both board members and chief executives apparently regard the financial condition of the organization as the true measure of board effectiveness" (Herman and Renz, 1998, p. 700). While this may be the *perception* of their performance by those involved in governance (put another way: their performance is organizational performance - and generally the single dimension of financial performance), this does not mean that it is accurate. For example, it might not be what others or society would perceive. The different ratings of performance provided by different stakeholders support this conclusion. Given the overlap between perceptions of organizational and board performance reported here, there are significant conceptual difficulties for unidimensional (or single factor) measures of board performance (as reported in the other diagnostic instruments we review below). As the academic literature clearly separates board and organizational effectiveness (e.g. Dalton & Dalton, 2011; Huse, 2007), addressing this issue is an important concern for boards seeking to understand their performance.

A second issue common to all the board evaluation tools is the lack of clear empirical support for the theoretical structure of the measures of board effectiveness they posit. Slesinger's self assessment tool (1991), the BSAQ (Holland, 1991) and the GSAC (Gill et al, 2005) all report that all items load on the single factor of board effectiveness. Yet the diagnostics are positioned as measuring different dimensions of board effectiveness. For instance Slesinger's tool has been adapted to an 11 dimension, single construct model (Herman and Renz, 1997; 1998; 2004); the

BSAQ involves six dimensions of an effective board (Holland, 1991); and the GSAC (Gill et al 2005) has 12 dimensions but is only explained as a single construct of board effectiveness.

This point is critical in a diagnostic tool, as multi-dimensionality suggests (either explicitly or implicitly) that boards need action to improve their performance on the dimensions provided, to effect overall performance changes. The minimal evidence that these dimensions are validly measurable (and the lack of exploration of the relationships between the various dimensions) suggests understanding boards and providing interventions could be improved through further work. For instance, the dimensionality of Slesinger's (1991) tool does not appear to have been fully investigated. The BSAQ appears to mix the conceptually different categories of precise board role performance (e.g. strategic skills, political skills) with group (e.g. interpersonal) and individual based measurements (e.g. analytic, education). Similarly, the GSAC, while reporting differences in means across the dimensions, provides 144 items in 12 scales (average 12 items per scale) reflected in very high reliability scores (Cronbach alpha) and suggesting items could easily be dropped to improve the tool. Put simply, psychometric testing suggests that the more items included in a survey, the less clear are the underlying constructs.

Taken together, there is a common theme that current tools may not have the discriminant validity necessary to inform boards on what *aspect* of their performance they should improve. This is best done by reporting correlation tables and other results that highlight the relationships between variables (e.g. factor analyses) as important steps required to establish the structure of board effectiveness and its valid measurement. Without these steps, it is possible that boards are being directed to assess the wrong aspects of their performance, or (more likely) that some dimensions of effectiveness are more validly measured than others. End users and researchers need to understand these aspects of any diagnostic instrument, to advance the field in a consistent and coherent fashion.

A third challenge is one common to academic work, particularly with respect to boards: limitations arising from technical issues. Good psychometric measurement requires one of two approaches. In one approach, the researcher can concentrate on a very narrow aspect of

measurement, such as a single sub-dimension of effectiveness. In the current context, this would allow for a deep but narrow understanding of an aspect of board effectiveness. An alternative approach is to develop a committed program of research where the tools develop as researchers gain a better understanding of the concepts being studied and the items being used to measure these concepts across multiple concepts. The current diagnostics typically favor the second approach and could be improved through greater consistency in operationalization and application to more general populations. Perhaps the most rigorous development documentation is provided by the BSAQ where the number of items varied across the development cycle. The original article reports 69 items (Holland, 1991); the second 73 items (Jackson and Holland, 1998); the third did not report the number of items (Holland and Jackson, 1998); and the fourth reported 37 items (Brown, 2005). Given the range of reliability scores reported across the studies, the lack of detail on what or why items were removed, and the emphasis on a single dimension of effectiveness in the results, there are important limitations to any claims made about how the tool can guide board improvement. Similarly, several samples appear to be quite atypical and would benefit from a broader sample frame if they are to be applied in a wider governance setting.

Overall, while the peer-reviewed instruments available to boards and researchers are a positive step, they lack the discrimination necessary to highlight best the aspect of performance that a board needs to improve or address. These diagnostics all tend to focus on “overall” board performance and have not reliably established the requisite dimensionality that could guide board change. To use a metaphor, while it is important for a doctor to tell patients they are sick, it is more useful to tell them what part of their physiology is affected and how one symptom relates to another. The focus on overall board performance also introduces the problem that the diagnostics presented here fail to differentiate between organizational and board performance, to varying degrees. Given expected time lags between board action and performance and possible interactions with multiple factors (including management performance), this is problematic. For instance, if management is performing well, organizational performance measures may not reveal that a board

is performing poorly; it is only when management changes that these board deficiencies will flow through to organizational performance (Nicholson & Kiel, 2004). Thus, measures that conflate board and organizational performance could be misleading. Finally, there are some unique samples used in the research that would appear to differ substantially from many nonprofit contexts.

Conceptualizing the board as a team

One way to move beyond a unitary understanding of board effectiveness is to recognise the importance of team structure to board - and therefore governance - performance (Forbes & Milliken, 1999; Bainbridge, 2002; Huse, 2007). Focusing on the board as a team also addresses problematic measurement and validity concerns posed by differing legal structures, and compliance requirements of directors both within and between countries.

Since a board has important differences from traditional work groups, in terms of structure and power, there are strong theoretical and practical reasons for developing a tool specifically designed for this context. First, unlike other work groups, boards are *sui generis* (or a separate legal entity) (Bainbridge, 2002) with members not reporting to a superior, but elected by Members and with equal formal power. Second, boards tend to be larger, composed of more outsiders and meet more episodically than traditional work groups (Forbes & Milliken, 1999). These differences tend to be even more pronounced in the nonprofit sector.

Our basic model follows the essential elements of Wageman et al's (2005) TDS model, adapted for the unique nature of the governing body. It consists of five components, illustrated in Figure 2. As Figure 2 indicates, we do not propose specific relationships between the model components, nor that these components, in themselves, ensure effectiveness, but rather that they provide the foundation for effective execution of governance tasks.

Insert figure 2 about here

First, we examine whether there is a clear delineation in the boundaries of the governance group, a widely cited attribute of an effective board (e.g. Carter and Lorsh, 2004; Fishel, 2008; Kiel and Nicholson, 2003). This aspect of the instrument aims to measure whether board members (1) know who is on their ‘governance team’; (2) know what they need to do; and (3) work together as a group. This component of the instrument is based on Wageman et al’s (2005) concept of a real team and an element of their model that deals with compelling direction.

Second, we address the widely acknowledged challenge of ensuring an appropriate mix of talent around the board table (e.g. Hough et al, 2006; Nicholson et al, 2008). This component of the instrument recognizes that there are many ways to organize the governing body and so does not prescribe a ‘best’ standard for governing board composition. For instance, it does not assess boards against any ideal list or mix of skills. Instead, the instrument seeks to prompt boards to reflect on how appropriate they see the board’s composition in three different dimensions. Items covering the level of diversity and experience base require board members to assess composition in light of their specific context.

Third, we aim to identify whether the board has a clear vision for its role and the organization. Defining what is strategy and a governing body’s role in the strategy development process is beyond the scope of this paper (see, for example, Hendry, Kiel, and Nicholson, 2010; Stiles and Taylor, 2001 for reviews of the board’s role in strategy). Instead, we follow Wageman et al (2005) to assess whether the board finds its work sufficiently challenging and engaging. If the board’s work is not challenging and engaging it is likely to lack a strategic focus and not engage all board members. The instrument seeks to measure whether the board believes it is in control of the organization and pursuing a worthwhile direction.

The fourth aspect of our model examines whether the board has the requisite information and processes to operate effectively. This element of the survey concentrates on whether a board’s processes and resources are adequate and appropriate. It seeks to measure the views of board

members about the adequacy and timeliness of the information they receive and if there are any other material resources the governing body may require to carry out its role.

Finally, an effective group needs to continue to evolve, and so the final element of the survey involves assessing the feedback mechanisms in the board. We particularly focus on peer to peer support, aspects of teamwork, group norms, as well as the nature of the relationships between board members and between the board and the management team.

The Diagnostic Instrument and Early Results

The aim of this project is to develop a psychometrically sound instrument to assist nonprofit boards measure the team-based aspects of their performance. In this paper we present initial results for the team-based constructs that were adopted and adapted to ensure contextual relevance to nonprofit boards. To improve face and construct validity, we circulated the draft instrument to a panel of governance practitioners. Unless we had strong theoretical reasons to the contrary, we made further changes and refinements to the survey based on their responses prior to conducting the survey.

Participants and Procedure

In total, 118 active nonprofit board members from 18 boards around Australia took part in the survey. Participants served on boards drawn from industries including education, research, health and social services. The mean size of each board was 9.90 members ($SD = 4.82$). Board members were invited to participate in the survey via invitation or word of mouth. The Chair of each board was provided with a code so that we could identify the board to which each participant belonged. This code was provided to each board member who was then able to access the relevant survey via a secure internet survey system. As part of this process, each board member also generated a unique code known only to them allowing future tracking of responses across different survey instruments and over time.

Preliminary Results

As the survey is still in its pilot phase, we are unable to provide exhaustive modeling of the data to explore in-depth multivariate relationships. However, we are able to present preliminary data analyses related to each construct and also consider the relationships of these constructs to subjectively rated performance outcomes to examine the relative efficacy of the team-based focus of the instrument. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for the constructs related to the board as a team, psychological safety and the single item organizational performance measures. The constructs and example items are presented in Appendix A.

Insert Table 1 about here

The diagonal of Table 1 displays the reliability coefficients for the multi-item constructs. Inspection of the table reveals that the majority of scales satisfied the generally accepted threshold for internal reliability using Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient (i.e., $\alpha > .70$). Two other variables, 'resources' and 'independent', were above .60, and were retained, given the exploratory nature of this research. Three other original variables had alpha coefficients that fell well below the threshold ('challenge', 'stable', and 'set by the board') and were excluded from further analysis. For these variables we have developed additional items and/or re-worded existing items for further analysis in future surveys.

Overall the results are generally favorable for this part of the survey development process. The significant correlations between variables are logically interpretable and generally in line with expectations. In addition, those variables that might be considered independent variables in future models are not correlated so highly as to present potential multicollinearity issues in any future research.

Tests of the Predictive Ability of the Model

Four multiple regression analyses were performed to investigate the predictive ability of the team-based model and psychological safety on self-reported performance. Performance variables assessed board, organizational, board–management, and management team performance. All team variables and psychological safety were entered on step 1 simultaneously. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

As in Table 2, entry of the team variables and psychological safety at step one accounted for significant increments in variance for ratings of board ($R^2 = .64$, $F(11,102) = 16.59$, $p < .001$), management team ($R^2 = .31$, $F(11,98) = 4.01$, $p < .001$), board–management collaboration ($R^2 = .48$, $F(11,100) = 8.22$, $p < .001$), and organizational ($R^2 = .43$, $F(11,102) = 7.09$, $p < .001$) performance. The value of the model we propose is supported by the differences in significance between constructs seen across these analyses. For instance, board performance was significantly and logically predicted by clarity of board objectives ($\beta = .30$, $p < .01$), appropriate skills of board members ($\beta = .27$, $p < .05$), and board resource availability ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$). For management team performance, clarity ($\beta = .34$, $p < .05$) and resources ($\beta = .29$, $p < .05$) were most important, and for board–management collaboration performance, team psychological safety was the most significant driver ($\beta = .23$, $p < .05$). Lastly, from an organizational performance perspective, the key team-level predictor was the clear objective of the board ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$). Overall, these results point to differential importance and prediction of key team level and psychological variables that are vital to consider in assessing and advising the many facets of board and organizational performance.

Discussion

This paper seeks to respond to the increasing emphasis placed on board effectiveness in the nonprofit sector by outlining initial results for a diagnostic tool designed to assess the team-based aspects of a board's performance. We chose a team focus for the diagnostic tool for three main reasons: (1) it is likely applicable across many different legal and contextual differences facing nonprofit boards; (2) it answers many calls in the general governance literature to understand the nature of the board's work better (e.g. Daily, Dalton & Cannella, 2003; Van Ees, et al., 2009); and (3) it provides feedback to boards on various aspects of their activities that are clearly differentiated from organizational performance and within their ability to change.

Our first major conclusion is that conceptualizing boards as a team appears to hold a great deal of promise. Although we needed to adapt and expand the well-recognized TDS diagnostic survey (Wageman et al, 2005), the various constructs from the team-based diagnostic survey performed well in the first major test. The reliability statistics reported here, together with the strong explanatory power for ratings of board and organizational effectiveness suggest the tool is a reliable measure of things that matter to board effectiveness. At the same time, the differences reported (in both the correlation results and subsequent regression analyses) suggest that the constructs we measure are significantly different and appear to influence different aspects of performance in different ways. Initial results also suggest that some aspects of the team-based approach (notably clarity in objectives) appear to be global in their effect on perceptions of performance while other constructs may point to different elements of governance effectiveness (e.g. how well the board works with management or even stakeholders).

A second major conclusion is that while conceptualizing the board as a team may be a useful frame, our initial findings also indicate that wholesale application of the general small groups literature to boards may not be appropriate. Our findings suggest that some aspects of how boards operate may differ from general team models, possibly due to the important differences between a board and other small groups typically examined in the business context (Forbes & Milliken, 1999).

For instance, the low reliability of the Interdependent scale suggests that this concept may not be as applicable to boards. This makes sense: the episodic nature of the board's work varies dramatically from most work groups that meet on a far more regular basis. Similarly the heavy emphasis on a singular group interaction in the formal environment of a board meeting may well mean that we need to rethink how board members work together rather than just applying the findings from the groups literature.

A third major conclusion from the research is that the aspects of group performance we measured appear to be related with perceptions of performance, both at the organizational and board level. This is important if we are to understand better how the board's work contributes to overall organizational outcomes.

Implications for practice

The insights from this research will, we hope, prove useful for boards, their advisors and regulators. First, the applicability of team-based diagnostic tools to the board suggests that group-based interventions may prove useful in developing an effective board. For instance, the strong relationship between clarity in board objectives and various aspects of perceived importance corroborates regulatory guidelines and practitioner advice to ensure there is a clear sense of agreed purpose for the board and its role.

Second, the diagnostic tool that we have developed provides an additional resource for those boards seeking to improve their performance. Specifically, it isolates a reliable way to measure aspects of what they do, so that the group can concentrate their energies more appropriately on the aspects of their performance that require development. While further research will, we hope, provide more guidance on which aspects of team performance are associated with which aspects of board and organizational performance, this is nevertheless an important step.

Limitations and future research

While this study provides a promising start, there are clear limitations to our results. First, there is a limited sample size (n=118) in a specific context (Australian nonprofits). In addition, the sample was drawn from organizations that volunteered to participate, which may have introduced sample bias into the study. Future research could concentrate on broadening and deepening the sample so as to ensure the results are generalizable.

A second key limitation is that we have only demonstrated the relationship between our diagnostic tool and perceptions of performance. While this is an important step, understanding the relationship between the constructs in the model and more objective measures of performance (e.g. stakeholder perceptions, financial performance) would provide more clarity around the usefulness of the tool. It would also overcome possible problems of common method variance that might have influenced our results.

Despite these limitation, our findings provide a clear path for a group-based or behavioral approach to studying boards of directors. There are many other aspects of group performance that we have not included in this study that are worthy of investigation (e.g. conflict resolution behaviors). Similarly, the multi-level nature of boards (i.e. that board members and managers are individuals who come together as a single group) poses exciting challenges and opportunities for the study of boards. Finally, identifying the differences and similarities between different board contexts and aspects of group performance appears to hold promise for further research.

Conclusion

All groups require feedback if they are to improve their performance (Sonnenfeld, 2002). A key challenge for nonprofit boards has been sourcing a rigorous, appropriate way of gaining feedback about issues that they can influence directly. The diagnostic tool outlined in this paper provides an empirically-based frame, applicable across the vast majority of nonprofit boards. It offers the first step in an alternative to tools sourced from Australian for-profit products or from a

different culture, and is the subject of a careful and thorough approach to psychometric validation.

As a result, we hope it will lead to valid and insightful feedback for nonprofit boards and,

ultimately, better outcomes for them and their organisations.

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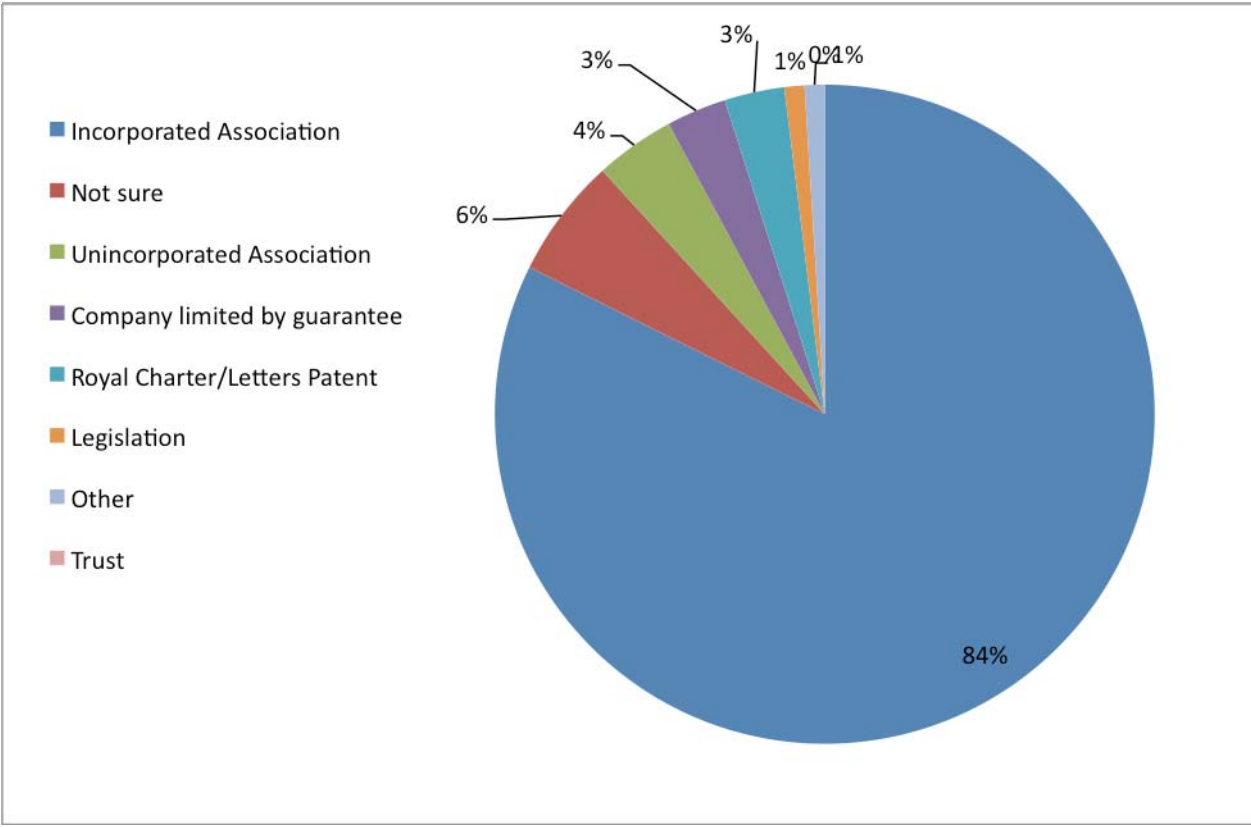
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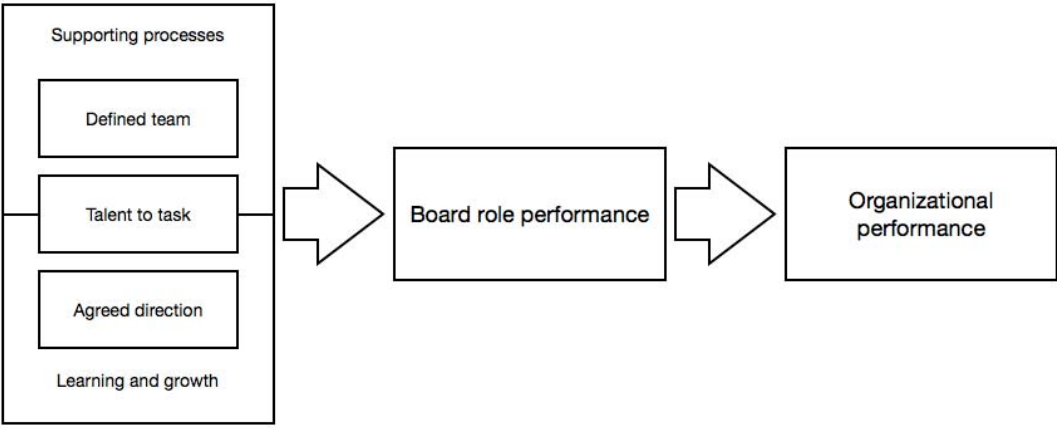
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Figure 1: Legal forms of Nonprofit Health Organizations in one Australian State



Source: Nicholson Newton and Sheldrake 2008

Figure 2: Board as a team - how the board's team structure contributes to organizational performance



Adapted and extended from Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients of focal variables

Variable	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Defined	3.43 (.95)	(.74)													
2. Interdependent	3.54 (.75)	.18	(.61)												
3. Clear	3.86 (.88)	.19*	.38**	(.75)											
4. Consequential	4.14 (.74)	.20*	.42**	.44**	(.73)										
5. Diversity	3.78 (.72)	.27**	.35**	.54**	.30**	(.72)									
6. Skills	3.78 (.78)	.24**	.27**	.59**	.31**	.71**	(.75)								
7. Information	3.85 (.55)	.08	.06	.50**	.41**	.21*	.35**	(.71)							
8. Resources	3.85 (.65)	.14	-.00	.51**	.18	.27**	.34**	.66**	(.65)						
9. Task	3.78 (.73)	.22*	.50**	.56**	.38**	.55**	.68**	.37**	.37**	(.90)					
10. Unhelpful	2.21 (.65)	-.13	.10	-.12	-.00	.04	-.10	-.21*	-.05	.07	(.84)				
11. Psychological safety	4.05 (.56)	.21**	.38**	.57**	.42**	.48**	.54**	.46**	.40**	.70**	-.09	(.83)			
12. Organization performance	4.03 (.79)	.20**	.20**	.58**	.27**	.42**	.41**	.37**	.47**	.46**	.08	.46**			
13. Board performance	3.84 (.86)	.26**	.29**	.69**	.36**	.53**	.67**	.46**	.51**	.64**	-.05	.60**	.71**		
14. Management team performance	4.29 (.62)	.09	.09	.48**	.10	.32**	.31**	.27**	.41**	.19*	-.13	.28**	.63**	.56**	
15. Board-management collaboration	4.15 (.80)	.20*	.30**	.56**	.46**	.36**	.45**	.49**	.46**	.51**	-.00	.56**	.60**	.65**	.50**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2. Multiple regression: board as a team characteristics on performance outcomes

Independent Variables	Board Performance	Management Team Performance	Board–Management Collaboration Performance	Organizational Performance
Defined	.07	-.04	.07	.07
Interdependent	-.05	.05	.03	-.11
Clear	.30***	.34**	.19	.39***
Consequential	.03	-.10	.13	.02
Diversity	-.02	.17	-.09	.10
Skills	.27**	.08	.09	-.07
Information	-.03	-.08	.15	-.05
Resources	.18**	.29**	.11	.20*
Task	.16	-.30*	.06	.12
Unhelpful	.03	-.06	.11	.14
Psychological safety	.12	.12	.23**	.12*
R ²	.64***	.31***	.48***	.43***

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

Appendix A: Survey items from our study

Construct	Item*
<p style="text-align: center;">Defined (i.e. clearly defined board)</p>	<i>Everyone knows who is a member of our board, and who is not</i>
	<i>People who know this board could name all its members</i>
	<i>It would be nearly impossible to accurately name who is and who is not a member of the board in this organisation**</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Interdependent (i.e. board members rely on each other and work together)</p>	<i>There is little need for board members to work together on this board**</i>
	<i>Our board's success relies on much coordination and communication between board members</i>
	<i>On this board, the nature of our roles or tasks requires board members to rely heavily on each other</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Clear (i.e. the objectives or goals of the board are clear)</p>	Every member of this board knows the board's purposes and roles - what it is here to accomplish.
	<i>It would be difficult to outline precisely what the purposes or roles of the board is in this organisation**</i>
	There is a clear delineation in this organisation between the roles of the board and the roles of management.
<p style="text-align: center;">Consequential (i.e. the board's role makes a difference)</p>	<i>This board's roles are of great consequence for the organisation</i>
	<i>This board's roles don't make much difference to the organisation**</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity (i.e. composition has the right diversity)</p>	<i>This board has the right mix of members with a diverse range of skills and experiences required of the group</i>
	<i>The membership of this board is too diverse - people are so different that they don't work well together**</i>
	<i>There isn't a sufficiently wide range of perspectives and experiences on this board if we are to carry out our roles**</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Skills</p>	Between them, board members have the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to carry out the board's roles and achieve its goals.

Construct	Item*
(i.e. the knowledge, skills and experience of the board are appropriate)	<i>Some board members do not possess the knowledge, skills or experience required to contribute to the board's work**</i>
	<i>All board members have knowledge, skills and experience that contribute to the board's work.</i>
Information (i.e. the board has access to the information it needs)	<i>Board members find it easy to get the information they need to carry out their roles or tasks</i>
	<i>The board has difficulty accessing the information we need to carry out our roles or tasks**</i>
	<i>The board often finds itself unaware of information it needs to carry out its role**</i>
	<i>The board can get the information it needs to carry out its role</i>
Resources (i.e. the board has the resources it needs)	<i>On the whole, the board is provided with appropriate resources for the job required of it</i>
	<i>There is a definite lack of resources for the board considering the role required of it**</i>
Task (i.e. board members provide each other with feedback on their task performance)	<i>Board members help motivate each other and stimulate greater commitment to the board and organisation</i>
	<i>Board members act to ensure the board continually develops and takes the most effective approach to its role.</i>
	<i>Board members act to ensure all members' skills, experience and knowledge are used.</i>
Unhelpful (i.e. board members provide unhelpful feedback on performance)	<i>Board members tell other board members what they should do</i>
	<i>Board members tell other board members how they should do tasks</i>
Psychological Safety (i.e. board members can speak their mind)	<i>If you make a mistake on this board, it is often held against you**</i>
	<i>Members of this board are able to bring up problems and tough issues</i>
	<i>People on this board sometimes reject others for being different**</i>
	<i>It is safe to take a risk on this board.</i>

Construct	Item*
	It is difficult to ask other members of this board for help**
	No one on this board would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts
	When working with members of this board, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilised
	There are certain issues/matters which are off-limits for discussion**

*Italicised items indicate a derivation of the TDS (Wageman, Hackman and Lehmann (2005))

**Indicates a reversed item