

How Many Teams Should We Manage at Once? The Effect of Multiple Team Membership, Collaborative Technologies, and Polychronicity on Team Performance

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

We explore the relationship between multiple team membership (the extent to which team members are engaged in more than one team and switch between different teams in a work day) and team performance. We argue that the number of MTMs has an inverted U-shaped relationship with team performance while the team average daily MTM is negatively related to performance. We propose that the use of collaborative technologies moderates the above relationships: when MTM is low technology use helps teams attain higher performance, when MTM is high collaborative technology use reduces performance. Conversely, variance in perceptions of technologies' usefulness negatively moderates the above relationships. Finally, we expect teams whose members are more polychronic to perform better when MTM is high, but teams whose members are very diverse in terms of polychronicity to experience reduced performance. We are exploring these issues through a mixed-methods field study conducted in an IT consulting firm.

Keywords: Multiple team membership, daily multitasking, collaborative technologies, polychronicity, team performance

Introduction

To respond to fast-paced and dynamic environments, organizations often ask their members to allocate their work time between different projects in order to favor both the sharing of knowledge and an increase in productivity. As a consequence, knowledge professionals (e.g. software developers, R&D employees, and consultants) are frequently engaged in multiple project teams simultaneously (Mortensen et al. 2007; O'Leary et al. 2011). While extant research on teams has undoubtedly enriched our knowledge of the antecedents of single teams effectiveness (Cohen and Bailey 1997, Mathieu et al. 2008), it has largely overlooked the role played by the fact that members of a single team are, in practice, often involved in multiple teams simultaneously (for recent exceptions see: e.g., Cummings and Haas 2011, O'Leary et al. 2011). This recent research stream on new forms of team work suggests that such “multi-teaming” or multiple team membership (MTM) is likely to generate both positive and negative consequences at the individual, team, and organizational levels. On one hand, overlapping membership can facilitate the transfer of knowledge, best practices and other resources across teams, which may provide benefits for teams and the organization more broadly. At the same time, however, individual members' need and efforts to allocate their time across different teams can negatively affect those teams by increasing stress and coordination costs. Despite this early work in the domain, we have little empirical evidence of how the multiple commitments held by professionals working in a MTM context influence team-level outcomes.

Making matters more complex are factors likely to moderate the link between the extent of MTM and team performance. O'Leary and colleagues (2011) suggest that moderating factors can be at organizational (e.g. incentive systems), team (e.g. geographic dispersion), and individual level of analysis (e.g. time related individual preferences and practices). In this paper we focus on moderators that originate at the individual level of analysis, i.e. technology use and preferences for multi-tasking (or polychronicity). The explanation for focusing on these variables follows.

In today's organizations, the increased use of multi-teaming is often coupled with extensive use of information and communication technologies (e.g., email, instant messaging, phone). In multi-team context it is more difficult to access knowledge from colleagues in different teams and to schedule activities and encounters with colleagues. Tennenbaum and colleagues (2012) suggest that collaborative technologies, in a multiple team context, help to ensure that people in the team 'are represented'. Moreover, these technologies enable individuals to quickly access information and knowledge from the different team they are in. For instance, through 'invisible whispering' during a meeting with a team an individual can interact through IM with colleagues within another team that may need help or advice (Dennis et al., 2010). Collaborative technologies help individuals and teams in multi-team context in scheduling work activities and managing individuals' availability (Garrett and Danziger 2007). However, an intense use of collaborative technologies in a multiteam context can also be a source of interruptions (Herbsleb et al. 2002) making problematic the balancing of time and attention across project teams. For instance, a person who uses IM with colleagues from different team projects needs to continuously transition from one task to another, likely affecting not only her own work but also the processes and effectiveness of single teams she is involved in. As technology pervasiveness will improbably decrease, it is critical to understand how technology interacts with team design choices in affecting team performance. Beyond the extent of technology use, team dynamics can also be influenced by the extent to which members hold different perceptions of the technologies and their benefits, as such perceptions drive behavioral expectations.

Because multi-teaming entails the need and ability of team members to balance their multiple time commitments, we argue that differences in individual-level preferences for – and abilities in – multitasking will also act as meaningful moderators. In particular, individual polychronicity (IP) - the preference or desire to work on different tasks in the same block of time (Bluedorn, Kalliath, Strube and Martin, 1999) may vary greatly across team members. Some may prefer to focus on one task at a time (highly monochronic) while others may opt to work on many things at once (highly polychronic). Individual polychronicity thus captures sequencing activities and reflects how knowledge workers prefer to allocate one of their most precious scarce resources, that is, their work time (Souitaris and Maestro, 2010). On the one hand, teams composed in prevalence by polychronic members seem more coherent with an organization of work based on multiple team membership. On the other hand, teams characterized by a high variance in terms of members' preferences for sequencing activities could suffer

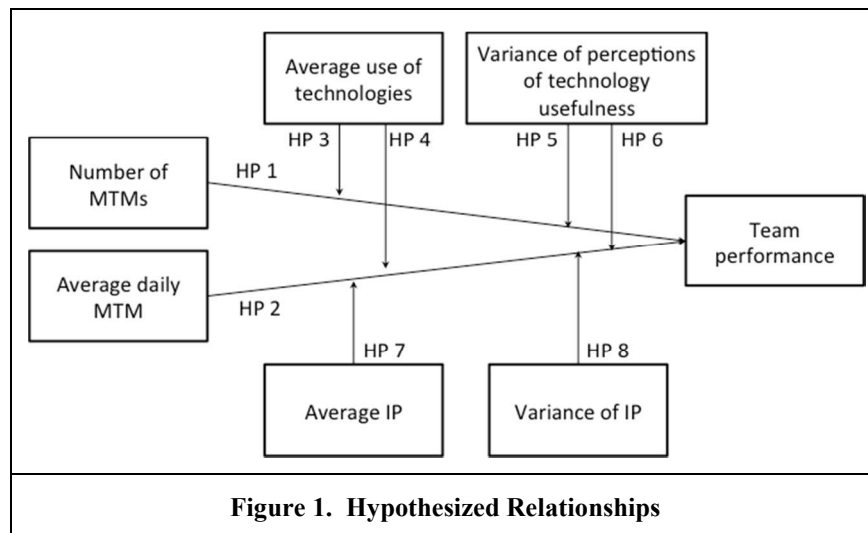
from a coordination standpoint, especially in teams where MTM calls for frequent contexts switching.

In this study we seek to build on the existing body of primarily theoretical work on MTM by providing empirical evidence and analyses of the relationships linking MTM to team outcomes. We focus specifically on two measures of MTM: *number of MTMs*, which captures the number of other teams members of a focal team are on in a given period of time; and, *average daily MTM*, which captures the extent to which members of a focal team work on multiple teams in the context of a single day. While it is reasonable to expect a positive correlation between the number of MTMs and the daily MTM as both variables speak to the simultaneous team commitments held by knowledge professionals, we argue and illustrate in the following paragraphs that those two variables affect single teams performance through different mechanisms. We draw on theories of knowledge acquisition and attention (e.g. Hansen 1999, Hansen and Haas 2001, Ocasio 1997) to contend that the number of MTMs has an inverted U-shaped relationship with team performance while the team average daily MTM is negatively related to focal team performance. We further hypothesize that both technology use and team member polychronicity will moderate the effects of MTM on team performance. We explore these issues through a field study based on quantitative and qualitative data collected in an Italian consulting firm that operates in the field of Business Intelligence Systems.

With this study we intend to make several contributions. To our knowledge, this is one of the few studies to empirically assess the relationship between MTM and team outcomes, specifically team performance. In so doing, we add to the recent but growing body of research that examines the complex and changing settings in which teams in today's organizations operate. In addition, we enrich our understanding by introducing new moderators (team's use and perceived usefulness of collaborative technologies and polychronicity) that may affect the relationship between MTM and team performance, offering new insights on how to better support organizations adopting MTM as a way of structuring work.

Hypotheses Development

The model in Figure 1 summarizes the hypotheses presented in the following paragraphs.



Number of MTMs, Average Daily MTM, and Team Performance

As organizational achievements depend more and more on the work of teams, understanding how they function and how to improve their performance increases in importance. While organizations increasingly require their members to belong to multiple teams simultaneously, often switching among them multiple times within a single work day, to date research has focused primarily on the performance of single teams

(e.g., Chudoba and Watson-Manheim 2007, Mathieu et al. 2008).

In a recent exception, O'Leary and colleagues (2011) provide a theoretical model of the relationship between the number of teams people are on in a given period of time and both learning and productivity. In that model they propose the existence of an inverted curvilinear relationship. At intermediate levels of the number of MTMs, teams gain higher productivity because their members are prompted to develop better team work practices and to pay more attention to the way they allocate their time. When the number of MTMs is low, on the contrary, team members do not engage in these virtuous processes because they are endowed with enough resources and time to complete their tasks and do not search for new ways of improving their efficiency. When the number of MTMs is high team members' attention and cognitive resources are extremely taxed, leading to reduced productivity. O'Leary et al.'s arguments are supported by theories of knowledge acquisition (Cummings 2004, Hansen 1999, Reagans and McEvily 2003, Zellmer-Bruhn 2003) and attention (Hansen and Haas 2001, Leroy 2009, Ocasio 1997).

According to knowledge acquisition theories, working within different team contexts enriches professionals through the acquisition of different points of view, information and knowledge that can be transferred within the focal team (e.g. Cross and Cummings 2004, Cummings 2004, Reagans and McEvily 2003). Conversely, teams have a tendency to become entrenched in routines that while saving time and reducing uncertainty in the short term, may limit experimentation and innovation in the long run - especially in the case of knowledge intensive and innovative work (Gersick and Hackman 1990, Zellmer-Bruhn 2003). Bringing new perspectives inside one team through the participation in other teams - provided that teams will be able to reconsider existing ways of doing things in the light of the new information acquired and apply new knowledge to the team activities - can therefore have an overall positive impact on a single team performance. Consistent with this argument, Cummings and Haas (2011) found that the number of multiple team memberships was positively related to team performance.

Although an increasing number of MTMs exposes individual members and teams to new sources of knowledge that can improve performance, it simultaneously poses challenges for professionals in terms of time allocation. As the number of multiple team commitments increases, the amount of attention that is possible to dedicate to each team diminishes - eventually offsetting the benefits derived from the acquired knowledge diversity. For instance, Tucker and colleagues (2007) show the importance of knowledge coming from external sources to improve the implementation of new practices in hospital teams. In their study, a critical condition for a successful implementation of new knowledge is that learners have the opportunity to experiment with the new practice and to shape it. This is similar to the arguments put forth by Bresman (2010). Intermediate levels of the number of MTMs can offer team members the time to reflect on the knowledge acquired from external sources, to experiment with it, and eventually to modify it to fit with the specific focal team context and needs. Conversely teams working at high number of MTMs can have difficulties in fitting in their complex and fluctuating work schedules these exploration activities.

In addition to that, in terms of work coordination, the existence of numerous multiple teams where professionals are simultaneously engaged implies that by devoting time to one team, a professional's actions impact not only on that specific team, but also on the whole set of other teams whose work may need to be rescheduled or postponed with potentially negative consequences in terms of team outcomes.

Taken together, this suggests that very low and very high numbers of MTMS will be related to lower levels of team performance than will be intermediate numbers of MTMS. We hypothesize that:

HYPOTHESIS 1 (HP 1). The relationship between the number of multiple team memberships and team performance is curvilinear in the shape of an inverted U, such that teams whose members are engaged simultaneously in few or many teams experience lower performance.

When we consider a short time span, e.g. a single workday, despite of the number of MTMs, individuals in a team may be engaged in the activities of the focal team only or in the activities of more teams simultaneously. The higher the daily MTM, the higher the number of switches among different teams, that entails for team members dealing with different colleagues, clients, timelines, activities, and team identities. We argue that daily MTM will affect single teams performance through different mechanisms. Recent studies on divided attention and attention switching (Leroy 2009), suggest that the attention switching may have negative effects on the performance of those teams involved. Leroy's study (2009) shows that switching between tasks in a short period of time often entails the presence of attention residue, that is to say the tendency to keep thinking about a previous task (or, in the case of daily MTM,

the previous project's task) even when entering into a different project's task with potential negative consequences on performance. Consistent with this argument, empirical studies show us that switching between tasks generates costly cognitive interferences from a previous task to a current task that diminish the effectiveness of the latter (e.g. Altman and Gray, 2008; Rubinstein et al., 2001). In contexts where professionals are engaged on multiple teams within the course of a day, we therefore hypothesize:

HYPOTHESIS 2 (HP 2). Average daily multiple team membership is negatively related to team performance.

The Moderating Role of Collaborative Technologies

Today's teams use a variety of technologies (e.g. telephone, email, instant messaging, video conference) to accomplish their tasks, to support collaboration and coordination, and to transfer information and knowledge (e.g. Suh 1999). Such collaborative technologies can bring both positive and negative effects on work related performance and call for more studies to disentangle their effects on corporate environments (Cho et al. 2005). For instance, the use of collaborative technologies increases interruptions that can facilitate information sharing and fast access to co-workers, but can also disrupt workflow (Herbsleb et al. 2002).

In cases where the number of MTMs is low, increased access and interaction can support work coordination, helping collaborators to ask questions, discuss task activities, and solve problems. For example, members can communicate quickly that additional work, sometimes unexpected, is required and can quickly understand who is immediately available. In other words, the increased interactions supported by collaborative technologies becomes a precious source of knowledge and information dissemination both within and across projects (Zellmer-Bruhn 2003). When the number of multiple team memberships is low, an intense use of collaborative technologies can help team members to coordinate their actions and efforts: helping them to identify new opportunities or tasks and to more effectively coordinate their work. In such low multi-teaming contexts, it is relatively straightforward for each to undertake such coordination, often simultaneously improving their working relationships and enhancing their team performance (Cho et al. 2005, Ou et al. 2010).

As the number of MTMs increases, so does the cost associated to the above interactions. When a set of actors are all members of a single team, all interactions among them are based in the same context. Conversely, if an individual is member of many teams and makes an intensive use of collaborative technologies he will likely receive requests from members of different teams even when he is working on activities related to another team. Because changes or interruptions of any professional will affect the entire set of projects she is involved in, a high level of interruptions coupled with the necessity to juggle and hoop between many different projects, will make coordination cumbersome likely decreasing individual performance and thus affecting overall team performance. Thus, we hypothesize the following moderated relationship:

HYPOTHESIS 3 (HP 3). The team use of collaborative technologies moderates the inverted U-shaped relationship between the number of multiple team memberships and team performance. Specifically, at low levels of multiple team membership, the positive relationship between multiple team membership and team performance is, in general, stronger for teams whose members make an intense use of collaborative technologies. At high levels of multiple team membership, the negative relationship between multiple team membership and team performance is, in general, stronger for teams whose members make an intense use of collaborative technologies.

We expect that the intensity of use of collaborative technologies also moderates the relationship between average daily MTM and team performance. When members of a team work on a single work day on only one or a small number of other teams, they can easily negotiate availability within and between teams increasing the opportunity for a satisfactory negotiation of the interruption timing caused by the collaborative technology uses or, put differently, they can manage strategically the timing of interruptions (Garrett and Danziger 2007, Nardi et al. 2000). Conversely, if team members switch in a single day between a high number of teams they will likely need to undertake multiple simultaneous and heterogeneous conversations and therefore reduce the opportunities for a negotiation satisfying all the involved parties, with negative consequences in terms of coordination of the activities within single teams and eventually team performance. In addition to that, as actors experience a high daily MTM, the

additional interruptions facilitated by communication technology often require them to cognitively switch gears between projects in a single day. It often takes time and effort for actors to get back up to speed on the project they have switched to and recent work suggests that such switches are often incomplete, resulting in attention residue (Leroy 2009). Furthermore, as the complexity and diversity of tasks increases, the time required to get “up to speed” and cognitively re-engage with a given team increases, thereby increasing the switching cost of transitioning between projects and making task switching between different projects detrimental to individual performance. Thus, we hypothesize the following moderated relationship:

HYPOTHESIS 4 (HP 4). The relationship between average daily multiple team membership and team performance is positively moderated by the team use of collaborative technologies. Specifically, at low levels of average daily multiple team membership, teams whose members make an intense use of collaborative technologies attain higher performance. At high levels of average daily multiple team membership, teams whose members make an intense use of collaborative technologies attain lower performance.

An additional problem arises when team members hold different perceptions about the usefulness of certain collaborative technologies – often leading to negative consequences for team functioning. For instance, those who view instant messaging as a fundamental coordination mechanism may consider appropriate to send teammates repeated messages to get immediate information and proceed with their work. Others who dislike instant messaging may use strategies to limit the interactions through the technology (like turning IM off, putting a non available sign, postponing the timing of reply). When these approaches to the technology do not align, they risk misunderstandings and conflict. While the effect of variance of perceptions of technology usefulness is in general negative, we argue that for teams whose members hold a high number of MTMs and a high average daily MTM its influence on the relationship between MTM and team performance is stronger. The hectic organization of work in presence of both high number of MTMs and team daily MTM can make more difficult for the members of each focal team to find occasions for discussing mutual misunderstandings and negotiating norms for aligning behavioral expectations related to technology, as compared to a situation of low multi-teaming both within a single day and in a given period of time. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

HYPOTHESIS 5 (HP 5). The variance in team members’ perceptions of technology usefulness moderates the inverted U-shaped relationship between the number of multiple team memberships and team performance. Specifically, teams with higher variance in perceptions of collaborative technology usefulness experiences lower levels of performance when the number of multiple team memberships is higher.

HYPOTHESIS 6 (HP 6). Average daily multiple team membership is more negatively related to team performance when the variance of team members’ perceptions of collaborative technology usefulness is higher.

The Moderating Role of Polychronicity

When, on the same day, individuals are engaged in the activities pertaining multiple teams, they need to switch tasks a number of time at least equal to the number of teams they are in, minus one. At the team level, the highest the team average daily MTM, the highest the number of switches between tasks team members perform. While some individuals like to switch between different activities and tasks in short time periods, others do not. Bluedorn, Kalliath, Strube, and Martin (1999) defined polychronicity in organizational contexts as the extent to which people (1) prefer to be engaged in multiple tasks simultaneously, and (2) believe their preference is the best way to do things. The term “simultaneously” refers both to a situation of switching among tasks and simultaneously engaging in multiple tasks. When an individual switches among tasks (say tasks A, B, and C), s/he may “resume A from a previous time, stop A and begin B, stop B and begin A, stop A and begin C, stop C and return to A (Bluedorn et al., 1992: 17).” When an individual simultaneously engages in multiple tasks, s/he is answering emails, speaking on the phone, and eating lunch, all at once (Bluedorn et al., 1992:18). Polychronicity is conceptualized on a continuum, so that individuals who prefer to switch more among different tasks or do more tasks simultaneously and believe that this is the best way to do things, are more polychronic. Individuals who like it less – or not at all – are more monochronic.

Research has associated individual polychronicity to different variables such as lower levels of role overload, a larger average number of hours worked per week (Kaufman, Lane and Lindquist 1991), flexibility with plans, and higher information retention capacity (Hall and Hall 1990). Consistently with this literature, we argue that teams whose members are more polychronic strive better when team average daily MTM increases. In other words:

HYPOTHESIS 7 (HP 7). Average daily multiple team membership is less negatively related to team performance when the average team members' individual polychronicity is higher.

Harrison and Klein (2007) observe that teams characterized by members with highly heterogeneous preferences regarding team processes (e.g. on how to schedule activities in a single work day) face reduced cohesiveness and interpersonal conflict. Having a mix of polychronic and monochronic individuals can be especially difficult when teams are engaged in many teams simultaneously, given that their time to manage conflict and deal with reduced cohesiveness in single teams is scarce or sandwiched between their multiple tasks. Thus, we hypothesize that:

HYPOTHESIS 8 (HP 8). Average daily multiple team membership is more negatively related to team performance when the variance of team members' individual polychronicity is higher.

Methodology

We are conducting a field study in a fast-growing consulting firm (BICorp), headquartered in Northern Italy. BICorp consultants are engaged in projects devoted to the development of business intelligence systems. The company was founded in 2001 with 10 consultants and currently employs approximately 100 professionals (80 consultants and 20 staff members). Each project is devoted to creating a specific business intelligence system customized for a specific client (usually a large company) and it is carried out by a unique team of consultants (i.e. a new team is created at the beginning of each project, tailored to that project's needs). Managers assign individual consultants to projects teams; even though they try, when possible, to match projects characteristics with professionals' individual preferences, there is no self-selection of consultants to teams.

To investigate the influence of MTM (number of MTMs and average daily MTM) on single team performance and the moderating effects of team members' polychronicity and the use and perceived importance of collaborative technologies, we designed a sequential mixed methods approach. A sequential procedure entails researchers expanding upon the findings of one method with another method (Creswell, 2003). Specifically, our study is composed of two phases. It began with a quantitative method to test our hypotheses and it is right now followed by a qualitative method involving detailed exploration with a few individuals. We first conducted preliminary interviews with one of the two founders, two macro area managers, two junior consultants, and a human resource specialist to better understand the context under study. During the interviews the issues of MTM, individual preferences in multitasking, and collaborative technologies emerged as particularly relevant in relation to project outcomes. Then, we developed a questionnaire submitted online to all the 78 consultants working on client teams. Seventy four out of 78 consultants returned the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 95%. They had worked in BICorp for an average of 3.1 years (s.d. = 2.6). Their professional tenure was, on average, 4.0 years (s.d. = 2.9).

We are also gathering data from BICorp's internally-designed management information system. Consultants are required to fill in the system daily detailing the project(s) they have worked on and how many hours they devoted to each single project. Through the system we are gathering data on the officially reported number of MTMs and the average daily MTM. Also in the system are managers' reported data on the performance of individual consultants (on a yearly basis) and data about the projects' performance.

Finally, while we rely on survey data to test the hypotheses, we also decided to interview some of our respondents to acquire a deeper understanding of the issues our study focuses on. Such evidence will help us in further interpreting the results. We are currently conducting additional semi-structured interviews with managers, team managers and consultants to grasp information about their work in the organization, how they manage their time across different projects, their interactions with colleagues and the use of collaborative technologies. We are in the process of transcribing and coding the interviews.

Measures and Analysis

As above described, we derived two measures related to working simultaneously on multiple projects teams. BICorp's management information system contains updated information about the active projects (specifying the clients with an unique identifiers) and the daily involvement of each consultants on the different projects. We were therefore able to measure from the system the number of MTMs and the Average daily MTM.

- Number of MTMs. According to O'Leary et al. (2011), we measured the number of MTM for a focal project team as the average number of simultaneous team memberships held by the focal team's individual members during the period of January-March 2013. For teams, the average MTM of their members was 6.0 (s.d.1.8, min 2.5, and max 10).
- Average daily MTM. First we measured for each consultant the average number of projects he/she worked on in a single workday averaging the values of the period January-March 2013. Then, for each focal team, we calculated the average number of projects on which team members are active in a workday. Average daily MTM was 1.7 (s.d.0.5, min 1 and 3.6).

In this research, we focus on the collaborative technologies that our informants declared as more important and utilized during preliminary interviews, i.e. e-mail, instant messaging, and phone as well as other collaborative technologies (wikis, videoconference, and web-based collaborative technologies). We asked respondents to answer, for each of the above technologies, the following question: "how much do you use this technology in a typical workday?" Answers to this first question were on a five points scale, where 1 = never, 2 = less than once a week, 3 = Few times a week, 4 = Few times a day, 5 = all of the time. For each team and for each listed technology, we calculated the average value of the individual members' collaborative technologies use.

For each collaborative technology, we also asked respondents to answer the question: "how important is this technology to perform your work?" on a five points scale where 1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = average, 4 = much, 5 = very much. For each focal team then, we measured the extent to which members differ in perceptions of collaborative technologies usefulness in terms of standard deviation.

We assessed our respondents' preference for performing more than one task at a time using the Inventory of Polychronic Values Scale (Bluedorn et al., 1999) which consists of ten items. A sample measure is "I like to juggle several activities at the same time". A high score indicates that an individual is more polychronic, while a low score indicates that an individual is more monochronic. We measured the items along a 5-point Likert scale (Cronbach's alpha = .89). For each focal team, we averaged the members' individual polychronicity values to derive the average IP at the team level.

For each focal team we also measured the extent to which members differ in terms of individual preferences for working on multiple things at a time in terms of standard deviation.

To collect measures of team performance we asked (for those projects which are now completed) or will ask (for those project that are not yet completed) the managers responsible for each project team to assess them on four items (completing work on time, completing work within budget, satisfaction of the client with the team output, and overall performance) that are the most relevant to the founders' view of team performance. We employed a five-point scale ranging from "very poor" (1) to "outstanding"(5).

Empirical evidence informs us of the many variables that predict team performance. Therefore, we included several control variables in our model to account for the variety of team membership, i.e. 'the diversity that characterizes the teams that individuals are members of' (O'Leary et al. 2011, p. 464), in terms of size, tenure, consultants' seniority and task type.

Specifically, our teams varied considerably in size, ranging from 2 to 13 individuals. It is therefore important to control for the team size (Reagans and Zuckerman 2001) that we measured as the number of professionals belonging to the focal team.

Consultants also varied in terms of the average number of years they worked for the company. We therefore included as a control the average team tenure that we calculated as the mean value of the organizational tenure of the focal team's individual members.

Our consultants varied in terms of career path and actual organizational position. According to the

traditional career ladder in consulting firms, they could occupy one of the following positions: Trainee = 1, Application Consultant = 2, Application Consultant Expert = 3, Senior Consultant = 4, Senior Consultant Expert = 5, and Manager = 6. For each focal team we averaged the organizational positions of its members to assess if the teams were composed mainly by junior as opposed to expert consultants.

Finally, our teams carry out different types of projects. According to the managers we interviewed, a major distinction between projects refers to their classification into Business intelligence and Performance Management projects. Even though there is no difference in terms of project complexity (as they are both perceived as highly complex), they require different types of programming on the part of BICorp consultants. Thus project type was coded as a dummy variable.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses are used to test the proposed hypotheses (cf. Aiken and West, 1991, Cohen and Cohen 1983, Janssen 2001). As for qualitative data, the transcribed interviews are being coded using the techniques described by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). When analyzing the qualitative material, we will look for support and explanation of our hypotheses. In order to enhance the reliability of our analysis, two of the authors will meet periodically to consolidate the coding book and to look for discrepancies in the interpretation of the data.

Expected Contributions

The current research aims to contribute to the teams literature by providing empirical evidence on previously under-explored correlates of team performance, adding to the very recent literature that aims to understand how new ways of organizing based on multiple team membership influence the performance of individuals, teams and finally organizations. To our knowledge, this is one of the few empirical studies to investigate multiple team membership and its effects on team performance. Our work will also shed new light on the role of collaborative technologies use and perceived usefulness and individual preferences for managing work time as moderators of such relationship. Because multitasking and multiple-projects scenarios are becoming progressively commonplace, we believe that these results are especially important for those organizations that increasingly ask their employees to switch between several activities and work contexts.

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