

10th International Strategic Management Conference**Team Effectiveness in Sport Teams: The Effects of Team Cohesion,
Intra Team Communication and Team Norms on Team Member
Satisfaction and Intent to Remain**Zeynep Onağ^a, Mustafa Tepeci^b, a^{*}^a*Celal Bayar University, School of Physical Education and Sport, Manisa, Turkey.*^b*Celal Bayar University, Faculty of Business, Manisa, Turkey.*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of team cohesion, intra team communication, and team norms on team member satisfaction and intention to remain of team players. The research data were obtained from 25 teams which are competing in İzmir province. Athletes' age range varied from 18 to 38. The distribution of athletes in branches are 155 football, 82 basketball, 62 volleyball, 34 handball and 27 water polo, totaling 360 (283 male and 77 female) amateur and professional team players. The SPSS and AMOS were used for the data analysis. The results reveal that team cohesion, team norms and intra team communication have significant impacts on team member satisfaction and intent to remain with the team. The findings, implications, recommendations and limitations of the study were stated.

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Keywords: Athlete satisfaction, intention to remain, team cohesion, team norms, intra team communication.

1. Introduction

The sports industry contributes great amounts to the economy in terms of business volume, investments, taxes and jobs. Transfers of athletes cost millions of dollars. Olympics, World and Europe championships host best athletes of the world who compete with each other in these challenging sports events. Most of the countries are competing with each other by their athletes and sport teams. Athletes and sport teams must achieve their best performance to honor the millions in their countries.

When we examine team sports success in Turkey, there has not been a consistent success story. For example in football, Turkish national team was in the third place in 2002 World Cup, but then Turkey lost in the next three elimination to be eligible to compete for the World Cup. Turkish professional sports clubs that are competing for championships have been trained by European coaches and there are very few senior managers of clubs that have sportsmanship background. In addition to these challenges and difficulties, stakeholders of sports (e.g., athletes, coaches, managers, followers and federations) do not get along with each other easily. Thus, effective teamwork and collaborations are needed by the stakeholders for ongoing success. However, there is a lack of knowledge and academic research for working as teams and team effectiveness in sport.

When we look for the studies about factors that facilitate sport team effectiveness and success, we see team effectiveness is dependent on many factors. Initially in sports sciences literature most of the studies give importance to

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the athletes' physical conditions, characteristics and training backgrounds. But nowadays studies focus on athletes' psychological factors that facilitate performance. When some athletes are under pressure, their performance level may increase. For instance, they apply tactics and line of attacks more efficiently, bear distress, focus better, detect additional original solutions to sport circumstances, force themselves to perform better, discover new abilities rapidly or set up themselves to contest more advanced than their substantial comparable peers (Brewer, 2009).

Recent sport teams studies investigated such independent factors as team cohesion (Carron, Bray and Eys, 2002), communication (Lausic, Tennenbaum, Eccles, Jeong and Johnson, 2009), cohesion, communication and leadership (Smith, Arthur, Hardy, Callow, and Williams 2013), norm (Høigaard, Säfvenbom, and Tønnessen, 2006; Patterson, Carron, and Loughhead, 2005;), coordination (Eccles ve Tenenbaum, 2004), cooperation, (García-Mas et al., 2006), leadership (Charbonneau, Barling ve Kelloway, 2001), motivation, (Vallerand, 2007), collective efficacy (Myers, Feltz and Short, 2004), athlete satisfaction (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980), financial situations, media, followers and facility and management (Gökçe-Onağ, Güzel and Özbek, 2013) on team effectiveness. Of these variables, team cohesion, team norms and intra team communication were determined to be investigated on the impacts of team member satisfaction and intent to remain in this study.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Team Cohesion

Cohesion was first formally defined by Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950) as “the total field of forces which act on members to keep them on working in the group.” Carron, Brawley and Widmeyer (1998) describe the concept as a dynamic process that addresses the inclination of a group to merge collectively and amalgamate due to the active purposes and also for the contentment of associates emotional requirements. “Team unity” and “team chemistry” are both used to replace the term “cohesion” that is the main group variable (Carron, Burke ve Shapcott, 2009).

Cohesion was thought to be as an adhesive which holds team members together. The instruments were developed to measure the strength of the adhesive. Carron et al. (1985) developed the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) to measure four manifestations of cohesion in sport teams: (1) individual attractions to the group-task (ATG-T), which indicates a member's feelings about his or her personal involvement with the group's task; (2) individual attractions to the group-social (ATG-S), a member's feelings about his or her personal social interactions with the group; (3) group integration-task (GI-T), a member's perceptions of the similarity and unity of the group as a whole around its tasks and goals; and group integration-social (GI-S), a member's perception of the similarity and closeness of the group as a social unit (Carron et al., 2002).

Numerous studies have shown a positive correlation between team cohesion and team success. For example, Carron et al. (2002) analysed the relationships between task cohesion and team success and found a strong relationship between cohesion and team success. Cohesion is regarded as significant variable in team sports. Previous sport studies found relationships between cohesion and collective efficacy, (Heuzé, Raimbault, and Fontayne, 2006) role involvement, (Eys and Carron, 2001) leadership, (Caperchione, Mummery and Duncan, 2011; Hardy, Eys, and Loughhead, 2008) and communication (Sullivan and Feltz, 2003; Sullivan and Short, 2011). Spink, Nickel, Wilson and Odonokon (2005) found that higher perceptions of cohesion are related to higher levels of satisfaction and leadership behaviours for athletes. Martin, Paradis, Eys and Evans (2013) found high cohesion in teams increases the team members' satisfaction.

2.2. Intra Team Communication in Sport Teams

Intrapersonal communication (self-talk) is the communication we have with ourselves (Weinberg and Gould, 2007). The communication process involves both sending and receiving information and it can take several forms. Verbal communication is the spoken word, while nonverbal communication contains actions, facial expressions, body position, and gestures. Communication can occur in one-on-one or in group settings, and in visual formats (e.g., pictures, videos, and observational learning). Communication involves not only the content of a message but also its emotional impact, or the effect the message has on the person receiving it (Burton and Raedeke, 2008).

Hanin (1992), portrays a number of performance-enhancing qualities of effective communication practices between sport team members. In other words, effective intra-team communication may serve to aid athletes of an interactive sport team by orienting (i.e., planning), stimulating (i.e., motivating), and evaluating (i.e., appraising) each member's

performance. Hanin (1992) conceptualized team communication with a focus on task-orientated messages. Hanin defined these three different types of messages based on team performance. Orienting messages were seen as messages of encouragement that usually occurred prior to team performance. Stimulating messages were suggested to be motivating messages that were communicated during competition. Evaluating messages were characterized as strategic diagnoses that generally took place after team performance (Cotterill, 2013).

Sullivan and Gee (2007) define effective team communication as “interactions between teammates that result in enhanced team attributes and/or functioning”. Effective intra-team communication in sport teams can be measured with the Scale for Effective Communication in Team Sports (SECTS). Effective team communication is a four-factor construct, consisting of the exchanges of Acceptance, Distinctiveness, Positive Conflict, and Negative Conflict (Sullivan and Feltz, 2003; Sullivan and Short, 2011). These factors include both verbal and nonverbal indicators (Sullivan and Feltz, 2003). Sullivan and Feltz defined *Acceptance* as the communication of consideration and appreciation between teammates. *Distinctiveness* is defined as the communication of a shared, but unique identity. *Positive Conflict* is defined as communication regarding intra-team conflict that expresses constructive and integrative ways of dealing with the disruption. In contrast, *Negative Conflict* refers to exchanges of intra-team conflict that are emotional, personal, and confrontational. Sullivan and Gee (2007) found that effective communication was positively associated with athlete satisfaction.

2.3. Norms in Sport Teams

Norms are an important part of group processes. Whether or not policies, procedures, and rules are in place to guide behaviour, every group eventually develops group norms, unwritten rules about how things are done. Norms are the group's shared expectations of members' behaviour. Norms determine what should, ought, or must be done for the group to maintain consistent and desirable behaviour. Developing the norm of trusting the other team members is important to higher performance (Lussier and Kimball, 2009). Norms denote the standards for behavior expected of members of a sport team. They are informal; that is, they are not rules or policies although they could evolve around the importance attached to team rules or policies, or into team rules once they have been decided upon or formalized. (Carron, Shapcott and Burke, 2008).

Norms are vital for development and functioning of groups, and they play a crucial role in sport teams because they provide legitimate and eminent standards of excellence (Carron et al, 2002). A great deal of studies examined the relationship between sport team norms and team performance (Colman and Carron, 2001; Kim, 1995; Patterson et al., 2005) and their results showed a positive correlation between team norms and team performance. Kim (2001) found that sport team members who hold higher performance norms than those of the majority of their teammates had higher satisfaction levels than those who hold lower performance norms.

2.4. Athlete Satisfaction

Athlete satisfaction represents “a positive affective state resulting from a complex evaluation of the structures, processes, and outcomes associated with the athletic experience” (Chelladurai and Riemer, 1997: 135). This evaluation is based on discrepancies between what is wanted and the perception of what is received within the psychological, and environmental domains. Further, these affective states are affected by the attributions associated with the outcomes as well as the socially constructed realities resulting from the observation of those within the environment (Chelladurai and Riemer 1997).

Riemer and Chelladurai (1998) noted some of these reasons, such as the link between satisfaction and performance, the importance of the athlete to athletic programs, and the relationship between satisfaction and other constructs in the group dynamics framework (e.g., cohesion and leadership) (Jones, 2006). Riemer and Chelladurai (1998) developed a multiple-item, multiple dimension scale to measure athlete satisfaction. The Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire is a total of 56 items that cover the following facets of athlete satisfaction: (a) individual performance, (b) athlete satisfaction with team performance, (c) ability utilization, (d) strategy, (e) personal treatment, (f) training and

instruction, (g) team task contribution, (h) team social contribution, (i) ethics, (j) team integration, (k) personal dedication, (l) budget, (m) medical personnel, (n) academic support service, and (o) external agents.

2.5. *Intent to Remain*

In sport area, there were very few studies that investigated for intent to remain of players with the team. Hopton, Phelan and Barling (2007) report that strong leadership in a team positively influence team performance, job satisfaction and intent to remain of members with the team. Rusbult and Buunk (1993) inform commitment plays important influence on intent to remain. If we review the literature about intent to remain concept, there are lack of studies that subjects intend to remain in sport teams, which is associated with team success.

3. Methodology

3.1. *Research Goal and hypothesis*

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of team cohesion, team norms and intra team communication on team member satisfaction and intent to remain of team players.

H1: Team cohesion has significant influence on team member satisfaction and intent to remain with the team.

H2: Team norms have significant influences on team member satisfaction and intent to remain with the team.

H3: Team communication has significant influence on team member satisfaction and intent to remain with the team.

3.2. *Population and Sample*

The data were obtained from 25 teams which are competing in İzmir province. Athletes' age range varied from 18 to 38. The distribution of athletes in branches are 155 football, 82 basketball, 62 volleyball, 34 handball and 27 water polo, totaling 360 (283 male and 77 female) amateur and professional team players. %78,6 of the sample is male and %21,4 is female. %85,3 of the sample is single.

3.3. *Instruments*

In the research, Group Environment Questionnaire was used to assess team cohesion. This questionnaire, which was developed by Carron et al. (1985) was adapted into Turkish by Öcel and Aydın (2006). In the evaluation stage of team norms, Team Norm Questionnaire that was developed by Carron, Prapavessis and Estrabrooks (1999) was used. In measuring of communication among team players, Sullivan and Short's (2011) Scale for Effective Communication in Team Sports (SECTS) was used. In the assessment of players satisfaction, Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASQ) which was developed by Chelladurai and Riemer (1997) that was adapted into Turkish by İnce (2006) was used. Tepeci's (2005) Intent to Remain Questionnaire for work teams was adapted for sports teams and used to measure team members' intent to remain with the team in this research.

Team cohesiveness data were collected using the *Group Environmental Questionnaire*. The, GEQ contains 18-items measuring four components of cohesion: Group Integration-Task (GI-T) (5 items), Group Integration-Social (GI-S) (4 items), Individual Attractions to Group-Task (ATG-T) (4 items), and Individual Attractions to Group-Social (ATG-S) (5 items). The mean scores of each scale are derived independently, but in all cases, higher scores indicate perceptions of higher cohesiveness. The respondents rates their level of agreement or disagreement on seven ordered response level from strongly disagree to strongly agree for the 18 items.

The *Scale for Effective Communication in Team Sports* (SECTS; Sullivan & Short 2011) is a 15-items questionnaire designed to assess perceptions of the quantity of intra-team communication within one's sport team environment. Intra-team communication has four dimensions. These are acceptance (4 items), negative conflict (4 items), positive conflict (four items) and distinctiveness (three items). All items begin with the statement "When our

team communicates, we . . .” Statements were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (hardly ever) to 5 (very frequently). Higher scores are indicative of a greater quantity of perceived intra-team communication.

The participants in the study were asked to complete the *Team Norm Questionnaire* (Carron et al., 1999), designed to estimate the strength of collective expectations for team norms. The questionnaire contained a total of 52 items that focused on norms for competitions, practice, the off-season, and social situations (Patterson, 2003). In this study “norms for competitions” dimension was assessed. 16 situations were presented that were associated with normative expectations for attendance (four items), concentration (four items) productivity (four items) and supportive behaviours (four items). Responses were obtained on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The ASQ is multidimensional scale (56 items, 15 sub-scales) designed to measure an *athlete's satisfaction* with his/her athletic experience. In this study team performance dimension was assessed. This facet refers to an individual's satisfaction with his/her team's level of performance. Task performance includes absolute performance, goal achievement, and implies performance improvements. Responses were obtained on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

Tepeci's (2005) *Intent to Remain Questionnaire* for work teams was adapted for sports teams and used to measure team members' intent to remain with the team in this research. 3 items were asked to measure athlete's intent to remain attitudes. Responses were obtained on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

4. Analyses and Results

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The data obtained from 360 sport team members were analyzed by the use of SPSS and LISREL. This study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the factor structure of the cohesion, communication and norm scales in a sample of sport teams athletes. The aim of CFA is to test the hypothesized factor structure or model and to assess its fit to the data. CFA tests a model that specifies in advance the relations between observed variables and latent factors and the relationship among the factors themselves.

In order to evaluate the fitness between the data and the research model, there are diverse statistical analysis which are named goodness of fit statistics. In this study we use χ^2 , RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, GFI and AGFI statistics to test the goodness of fit. In χ^2 statistics $\chi^2/df < 2$ will be accepted as the good fit of the model and $\chi^2/df < 3$ also should be accepted as the acceptable level of fit (Kelloway, 1998). Root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) value should be between 0 and 1 and $0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$ accepted as a good fit, $0.05 < RMSEA \leq 0.08$ accepted as an acceptable level of fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). Standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) statistic value should be $< .10$ in order to accept the model fitness (Bryne, 2001). Comparative fit index (CFI) statistics, should have a value $> .90$ and result was originally considered representative of a well-fitting model (Hu and Bentler, 1995). CFI values $0.97 < CFI < 1$ accepted as a good fit and $0.95 < CFI < 0.97$ accepted as an acceptable level of fit (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Müller, 2003). The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) can be classified as absolute indices of fit because they basically compare the hypothesized model with no model at all (Hu and Bentler, 1995). Although both indices range from zero to 1.00, with values close to 1.00 being indicative of good fit (Bryne, 2001).

Table 1 represents the indices for goodness of model fit. χ^2/df value for group cohesion (2.00) has a good fit and intra-team communication (2.34) and team norms (2.59) have an acceptable level of fit. RMSEA values of group cohesion (0.078), intra-team communication (0.061) and team norms (0.067) have an acceptable level of fit. SRMR values of group cohesion (0.058) has an acceptable level of fit whereas intra-team communication (0.04) and team norms (0.03) have a good fit. If we consider CFI values of fit index, group cohesion (0.96) and intra-team communication (0.95) have an acceptable level of fitness and team norms (0.97) has a good fit. GFI values of group cohesion (0.96) has a good fit and intra-team communication (0.95), team norms (0.95) have an acceptable level of fit. Finally AGFI values of all group cohesion (0.91), intra-team communication (0.92) and team norms (0.92) have a good fitness. We can conclude that the initially hypothesized model fits the data well.

Table 1. Variable indices for goodness of model fit

Goodness-of-Fit Indicators	Good fit	Acceptable level of fit	Group Cohesion	Intra-Team Communication	Team Norms
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/sd \leq 2$	$2 < \chi^2/sd \leq 3$	2.00	2.34	2.59
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 < RMSEA \leq 0.08$	0.078	0.061	0.067
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR \leq 0.05$	$0.05 < SRMR \leq 0.10$	0.058	0.04	0.03
CFI	$0.97 \leq CFI \leq 1$	$0.95 \leq CFI < 0.97$	0.96	0.95	0.97
GFI	$0.95 \leq GFI \leq 1$	$0.90 \leq GFI < 0.95$	0.96	0.95	0.95
AGFI	$0.90 \leq NNFI \leq 1$	$0.85 \leq NNFI \leq 0.90$	0.91	0.92	0.92

Note: χ^2 =minimum fit function test; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation. SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index.

4.2. Reliability and Validity of the Scales

Confirmatory factor analysis was used for assessing construct validity. The internal reliability of the scales assessed by Cronbach's alpha. Tables 2 provides internal consistencies of group cohesion, intra-team communication, team norms, athlete satisfaction and intent to stay. Besides, numbers of items for each dimensions was also shown on the related lines. The internal reliability scores for the dimensions range from .64 to .76, which are acceptable for the newly developed or translated scales.

Table 2 Study variables, their dimensions and reliability scores

Variables	Dimensions	Number of Items	α
1. Group Cohesion	1. Group Integration-Task	2	.65
	2. Group Integration-Social	2	.65
	3. Individual Attractions to Group-Task	4	.75
	4. Individual Attractions to Group-Social	2	.68
2. Intra-team Communication	1. Acceptance	2	.72
	2. Negative conflict	3	.64
	3. Positive conflict	2	.66
	4. Distinctiveness	4	.68
3. Team Norms	1. attendance	2	.74
	2. concentration	2	.65
	3. productivity	2	.64
	4. supportive behaviours	3	.66
4. Athlete Satisfaction		2	.72
5. Intent to Remain		2	.76

4.3. Regression Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore whether demographics (age, tenure, team tenure, and training), team cohesion, team communication and team norms contributes to the explanations of team member satisfaction and intent to remain with the team. To explore these relationships the demographic variables were entered into the equation first, cohesion dimensions second, team norms third, and team communication fourth as a set.

The results indicate that, for team member satisfaction, demographics explained 4 percent of the variance ($F=3,851$, $p < .05$). Age (Beta=-.191, $p < .05$) accounted for that 4%. Team cohesion explained 16% ($F=17.515$, $p < .01$). GI-T (Beta=-.169, $p < .01$), GI-S (Beta=-.105, $p < .05$), and ATG-S (Beta=-.116, $p < .05$) accounted for that 16%. Team

communication explained an additional 11% ($F=13,970, p< .01$). Finally, team norms explained an additional 14% ($F=21,847, p< .01$), totaling explained variance to 45,2%.

Table 3. Regression analysis results for the effects of demographics, team cohesion, intra team communication and team norms on team member satisfaction and intent to remain of team players

Dependent Variables	Model	Predictors	Beta	t- value	p-value	R-square (Adjusted)	F change	Sig.F change
Team Member Satisfaction	1 Demographics	Age	-,191	-2,685	,008	,042 (.031)	3,851	,004
		Tenure	,084	1,201	,231			
		Team tenure	,027	,636	,525			
		Training	,025	,541	,589			
	2 Cohesion	GI-task	-,169	-3,671	,000	,201(.183)	17,515	,000
		GI-social	,105	2,280	,023			
		ATG-T	,054	1,211	,227			
		ATG-S	,116	2,315	,021			
	3 Communication	Acceptance	,054	1,029	,304	,312 (.288)	13,970	,000
		Neg conflict	,168	3,524	,000			
		Posi conflict	,012	,212	,832			
		Distinctiveness	,059	1,210	,227			
	4 Norms	Attendance	,059	1,192	,234	,452 (.426)	21,847	,000
		Concentration	,139	2,386	,018			
		Productivity	,155	2,960	,003			
		Supp behavior	,200	3,335	,001			
Intent to remain with the team	1 Demographics	Age	-,164	-1,968	,051	,014 (.003)	1,230	,298
		Tenure	,131	1,595	,112			
		Team tenure	,016	,308	,758			
		Training	,001	,011	,991			
	2 Cohesion	GI-task	-,004	-,067	,947	,113 (.093)	9,806	,000
		GI-social	,104	1,857	,064			
		ATG-T	,178	3,293	,001			
		ATG-S	,189	3,274	,001			
	3 Communication	Acceptance	,127	2,018	,044	,183 (.155)	7,458	,000
		Neg conflict	,060	1,051	,294			
		Posi conflict	,126	1,933	,054			
		Distinctiveness	,061	1,049	,295			
	4 Norms	Attendance	,127	2,174	,030	,243 (.208)	6,830	,000
		Concentration	,133	1,952	,052			
		Productivity	,152	2,478	,014			
		Supp behavior	-,057	-,811	,418			

For intention to remain of team members, demographics did not significantly explained the variance ($F=,298, p> .05$). Team cohesion explained 11% ($F=9,806, p< .01$). GI-S (Beta=.106, $p< .05$) accounted for that 11%. Team communication explained an additional 5% ($F=7,458, p< .01$). Finally, team norms explained an additional 6% ($F=6,830, p< .01$), totaling explained variance to 24,3%. These results indicate that all three hypothesis were supported. The effects of team cohesion, intra team communication and team norms on team member satisfaction and intent to remain of team players were substantiated.

5. Conclusion

The most important findings of this study is that it has provided evidence of the effects of team cohesion, intra team communication and team norms on team member satisfaction and intent to remain of team players. For team member satisfaction, each variable increased the explained variance when they were added to the regression model. Previous studies separately investigated the influence of cohesion (Carron et al., 2002), communication (Sullivan and Gee, 2007), and norms (Colman and Carron, 2001; Kim, 2001) and found influences of these variables on athlete satisfaction and intent to remain. The regression analysis indicated that team cohesion, team norms, and team communication jointly explained variance on team member satisfaction ($R^2=.452$, $p<.01$) and intent to remain ($R^2=.243$, $p<.01$). The variance explained for an individual's satisfaction with his/her team's level of performance (%45.2) was almost twice as the variance explained on intent to remain of team members (%24.3).

Confirmatory factor analysis supported four-factor structures of cohesion, intra-team communication, and team norms that were previously validated in the literature. However, further investigation is warranted for the scales used so that greater guidance for academicians and practitioners may be raised. Quantitative instruments have been recently in use in sport management literature in Turkey. The use of five quantitative scales in this study contributes to the sport management literature for the findings and offers future researchers reliable and valid instruments to utilize.

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