

The immeasurable and the unchallenging effectiveness of team work excellence with individualism in achieving institutional goals a theoretical approach

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Abstract

Team work has become an essential tool emphasized by most of the companies today as one of the key ingredient leading to increasing corporate performance reflecting in high margin over competitors. The term has been incessantly mentioned theoretically by many social psychologists in the 1940s including the British interdisciplinarian Eric Trist, deputy chairman of the Tavistock Institute in London as one of the most important ways in which work can be reorganized. This new breed of work team is a whole different animal and call for further research because Organizations are now using teams to perform task that formerly belong to supervisors and middle level managers. This research took a theoretical approach and critically analyzed the very key important influencing factors in team environments. It discussed team work from many practical institutions that displayed “tremendous sense of fun, and that have realized distinct successes from Team strategies. It’s revealed that factors such as education, professionalism, simplicity, repertoire, commitment, innovation and repertoire nonconformity were common to both an ideal organizations and organizations where individualism and teamwork’s strategies are mostly emphasized. Based on patterns of these influencing factors, recommendation for future researchers and actions are suggested.

Keywords: Repertoire, professionalism, interdisciplinarian, unmeasurable, tremendous.

Introduction

Research Background and motives

Team work is something emphasized by most of the companies today as one of the key ingredient leading to increasing corporate performance reflecting in its high margin over competitors. Teamwork as a term has been mentioned theoretically by many social psychologists in the 1940s including the British interdisciplinarian Eric Trist, deputy chairman of the Tavistock Institute in London as one of the most important ways in which work can be reorganized. Trist’s was passionately committed to social justice and to being active in the world, but also deeply grounded in academic knowledge and in the detail of the situation he was studying. One of his former colleague recalled, he displayed “tremendous sense of fun, a tremendous sense of seeing the enjoyment in life – and really engaging with real life in a personal way and not only, as it were, in thinking or in conceptual terms”. Due to its perceived advantages over individualism, greater number of companies in this modern era have adopted the term as parts of their core values overlooking the cultural differences among team members and other training needs that go into making effective team work as well as the cases where even team work may not function effectively.

Statement of the problem

Critics still believe that there are instances team work may not be preferred over individual actions. For instance, in the case of IT industries where there are separations of job functions sometimes require separate professionals to initiate authorization and authentication due to the sensitiveness of the data involved. In a Software development cycle, most companies require developers to be different from other

personnel’s such as architects, Quality controllers and operators to put a demarcation between front and back end operations and also to safeguard company information. The degree of teamwork may be reduced by the company to a minimum if the company intends to prevent sharing of information among the developers working on different module of the project and may even require certain level of security clearance from those they hire to execute those projects. This article seeks to identify theoretically the special cases where these requirements may occur within a particular company.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study is to identify queer situations where individual actions will be most preferred over team work. The research also seeks to evaluate the factors that may be predominantly considered in a team work environment and individual oriented environment and the ideal situation where these factored are rated from theoretical perspective.

Research Objectives

The objectives that will leads to the achievement of my research question include: Identify and analyze companies where team work have been successful to achieve corporate profitability.

To identify different research opinions and philosophical views on team work and situations where it may or may not be used in an ideal work environment.

1.6 Limitations

This research examines practical firms from theoretical point of view. More generalization is required to cover firms in different geographical locations.

Literature Review

The frame work of excellence team and individualistic minds:

What then constitute teamwork and individualism? Teamwork superficially involves groups of interdependent employees who work cooperatively to achieve group outcomes. In individualistic societies, individual differences and motives are much appreciated and valued, whereas more collectivistic societies reinforce group-orientated values and behavior. In a collectivistic context, leaders encourage group loyalty and group members are expected to subordinate individual interests and goals. Collectivism can be defined as a set of cultural characteristics that emphasize relationships and social bonding instead of individual needs. Triandis and Suh (2002) added that those individuals living in collectivist cultures view environmental variables, such as cultural norms and obligations, as being relatively stable and that it is the individual that must be willing to change to fit into the environment. On the other hand, they suggest that those raised in individualistic cultures are much more likely to see themselves as being stable, in terms of attitudes, rights, and personality, with their environment being the variable that should change to fit the individual. The individualistic view, traditionally held by economists and psychologists, holds that groups are assemblies of individuals and that the goal of the assembly is the same as the goal of the individual but on the contrary, collectivist view holds that a group is not merely an aggregate of individuals but rather a social structure in its own right. In this view, institutions can take priority over the individual and the acts of individual can be evaluated in terms of their contributions and performance.

Research indicated that, based on personality and national culture, a person may prefer individualistic than working in a team (R &J, 2008). They also stated that developed countries like China, Israel, Germany, Japan, Spain, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan and United States show diverse cultural differences among persons and these influence their personality framework. Chinese company, for example, use the category of consciousness more often and the category of agreeable than US companies. One has to be careful in most cases in order not to misconstrued simple agreement to work with others as teamwork. For instance, there is high amount of agreement especially among individuals from developed countries. According to R&J (2008), a comprehensive review of studies covering people from 15-nation European Community found that consciousness was a valid predictor of performance across jobs and occupational groups. In some instances, the generation of individuals influences his/her preferences for each of these two types of approaches. For instance, Xers (Generation X) enjoy team-oriented work and they are willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of their employers than baby Boomers who enjoy true friendship, happiness and pleasure. Dechurch and Mesmer-Magnus (2010) in their article quoted Bill Walton as saying that: *"Winning is about having the whole team on the same page"* and also quoted from George Patton as saying that *"if everything is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking"*. This suggests that organizations are modifying their structures to reflect situations realistically as much as possible. For instance, many organizations closed their offices during the heavy snow seasons which fell early this year. It was said to be the most heaviest snow ever in the last century but those

companies, remained open for few hours especially the retail companies who sell snow removal equipment like Shovels, gloves and other preventive equipment that help people to protect themselves in case of serious storms. Most of the schools also closed to safeguard students travelling to campuses. In risky times like this, every organization is concerned about the safety of its employees and students and customers in general. People then feel the essence of team work, work together to remove snows, and to help those in need of any support to get to work. Some of the managers went to the extend of using their vehicles to pick up employees who don't have appropriate means of transportation to work to ensure that work is done and production is not halted.

Team work is inbuilt in people, because people have worked in a team since the dawn of time—going for hunting together, fishing together, growing crops and creating shelters together. Team work is seen in various way from playing games to the everyday social lives .But why these days people decide to distance themselves in team work in some cases and prefer to work alone sometimes ? . Advocates of collectivist and individualist say that it depends on the persons conceptualization of personal values or human values and persons in the domain of work. Gahan and Abeysekera (2009) mentioned that national culture and individual level characteristics (notably, self-construal) have been viewed as competing explanations of work values. The importance of understanding work values is further emphasized by increasingly diverse workforces within countries and through the internationalization of business and the need to manage people across culturally diverse workforces and across national borders. This is prevalent in multi-national companies where various people from cultural background work together to interact and learn certain things from each other. Cultures which portray the way a group of people live or as a way of live sometimes influences a person's attitude in the workplace. For example, in a lot of places in Africa, most workers are paid on monthly salary and therefore workers are accustomed to making expenditure budgets and payments at the end of the month. This has influence creditors to provide 30-day period terms of payment credit period most often to coincide with customers monthly income. However, in the western world, most workers are paid hourly and receive payment weekly, bi-weekly or semi-monthly and thus had patterned their expense life as such.

The world now is becoming a global village where culture from various nationalities is found in many companies. Companies are now welcoming and more tolerant to these cultural differences in the employees they hire. International companies are therefore require leaders with exposure to cultural differences to carefully provide the right kind of leadership to their assigned group in order to boost morale and eventually increase the corporate profitabilty. Leaders are supposed to unite the team to work in collective manner to achieve a common purpose. However, the strength of each individual has to be carefully evaluated to contribute better to the group without preference to one culture over the other rather to uphold the corporate culture to be key in guiding individuals performance. This is because, individuals in the organizations beliefs in their personal cultures to be right and influence them psychologically and these may influenced their bevaious in the work place if care is not taken .In their article "do collectivist know themselves better than individualists?"

Balcetis & Dunning (2008) stated that the one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status, or ethnic background, is that deep down inside, people believe that they're above average drivers because individuals have confidence of their abilities. This is generally true because every student always wants to obtain a better grade in class. It is not a good thing to be rated below an average student so called whiles in a group of first class rated students. Similarly, it's common for an employee on professional consulting assignment to be rated as an average initially until for sometime when the employee get used to the organizations way of doing things. In this case, if care is not taken, the evaluator will be perceived as underrated individual's personality traits or limited its potential for performance. On the other hand, it might also be that the evaluator did not looked upon the wholistic traits of the employee but considered just a single personality trait that wasn't predicted accurately based on the employee's cultural background or other unmet expectation such as effective communication or attention to details.

Traditional view of individualism and collectivism

One most important factor to consider which surpasses all other factors and easy to predict is the employee involvement in the collective work. That's whether he is a team player or an individualist minded in a team oriented environment. Balcetis & Dunning (2008) added that Collectivists know themselves better than individualists do, in that collectivists provide more accurate self-predictions of future behavior in situations with moral or altruistic overtones. Individualist cultures overestimated the likelihood that they would act generously in situations involving redistributing a reward, donating money, or avoiding rude behavior whereas collectivists were, in general, more accurate in their self-predictions. Both groups were roughly accurate in predicting the behavior of their peers. Collectivists were more accurate in their self-predictions than were individualists, even when both groups were sampled from the same cultural group. For instance, unlike western counterparts, individuals from Japan, Korea and Thailand are less likely to overemphasize the uniqueness of their own positive traits in relation to others. They are also less likely to claim that their futures will be filled with more Pleasants events than that of their peers and that the future of their peers will hold relatively more negative ones. However, self enhancement is reliably present in the western samples and absent in East Asian samples. The traditional views of individualism and collectivism suggest that Eastern countries exhibit collectivistic tendencies while Western countries will exhibit individualistic tendencies. However, Parkar, Haytko & Hermans (2009) in their research concluded that Chinese students were found to be less collectivistic and more individualistic than in the past and likewise, the U.S students were found to be more collectivistic and less individualistic than in the past. It is evidenced that as countries developed and industrialization increases, people from other parts of the world enter in with different kind of culture. For instance, China experiences rapid economic growth and progresses as an industrialized nation, their culture will be under environmental pressure to become more individualistic in nature. In addition, western countries are changing rapidly because of immigration. Hooft and Jong(2009) confirmed that people low on collectivism were more strongly motivated by

their personal attitudes about job seeking and by perceptions of social pressure than people high on collectivism but on the whole, cultural value orientations plays a role their attitude.

Materials and Methods

Research Design and Approach

This steps involves the methodological approach used to answer or test the research question.

From the theoretical standpoint, the procedure made use of secondary data from existing research literatures and analysis of these data in order to provide theoretical comparison between the traditional view and global view of teamwork over individualism particularly taken into consideration pros and cons and the methods of indentifying effective team work as well as instances and cases where individualistic view is much weighted than collective view. It also move forward to consider what is argued as ideal situation with carefully selected factors that will prevail in many countries.

Sampling and data collection procedure

Sample for the study consist of carefully selected articles from Secondary data which were analyzed from different authors' perspectives. The research took different perspectives by identifying uniquely the factors that may be considered very vital in a group- oriented or individual -oriented environment.

Results and Discussion

Martin (2006) identifies three key features that can be said to represent effective teamwork: A team product that exceeds customer expectations; Growth in team capabilities over time and a satisfying and meaningful group experience for team member.

When teamwork isn't working in an organization, Customers are often quick to notice. What happens when team members don't work well together? This is because most customers expect organizations to have customer focused groups and customer service minded employees that will provide good customer services. Customers expect companies to be consistent with their products. If a company is not working in a team, it affects every department and produce unfavorable results. The final effect is that, sales will be down and staff complaints will be high. For instance, supposing consulting business at a large insurance company that has a huge agile program aimed at unifying all products under one umbrella to let agents sell anything, anytime, anywhere. The project teams at first refused to synchronize their iterations. Some teams wanted two-week iterations, some wanted three-week ones. After several iterations, it was clear the program wouldn't meet the first deliverable, so the program manager mandated that each team move to two-week iterations and synchronize their work. They finally released the first chunk--a month late. A senior VP estimated the company lost up to \$100,000 per business day that the system was late. That's a cost of \$2 million for a one-month slip. That's a high price to pay for teams that couldn't agree on iteration length. Employees also perceived whether teamwork is working in a company or not especially in a technical environment like this where it is often difficult to separate technical teamwork from probably bad architectural and requirement decisions.

Some common pros and cons associated with collectivism and individualism.

Although it is sometimes difficult to outrightly pinpoint that

collectivism has more advantages than individualism depending on the organizational type and culture. However, on the whole, Collectivism has various advantage than individualism in certain cases. Even in a one man business usually called sole proprietor, family member's contribution and cooperation account for the success or the failure of the business. In other words, a single manager works in a team with his family to ensure the success of the business. Commitment from the family towards the organization is most needed especially if the manager is sick. This is the same commitment corporations expects from their employees. Employees are expected to work in a team and sometimes common name such as team members are mostly used by companies as a reminder to employees to work as a family to achieve a common goal. Felfe and Yan (2009) pointed out in their research that there is an empirical evidence that establish stronger relationship between workgroup commitment and outcomes in a collectivistic context than in an individualistic context. In short, when people work in the group, they become committed to each other even extends outside the organization and this result in a better achievement of results for the organizations. However, the disadvantage is that the more commitment individuals become to the group, the less they give to the organizational commitment. Workgroup commitment sometimes is stronger than organizational commitment especially when the group has other intentions that seem to be deviating from the organizational norm. For example, such as working in a group to have one voice in the negotiation of salary structure or pay increase or other forms of work incentives. This is more prevalence in the states or countries where labor union is most common. Due to these organizations in non-unionized countries or states, most companies often prefer individualistic approach stressing on commitment at the individual level rather than group level though want the members to usually work in a team to accomplish a common goal. Ozdemir & Hewett (2010) found out that collectivism increases the importance of relationship and service quality. Quality of customer service is very paramount to organizations and service industries because customers are the reasons for their existence. Some service industries such as banks and even schools provide opportunities for the students and customers to evaluate their customer service experience with them. Some employed bilinguals and people with different cultural backgrounds to attend to customers with different language other than English. Culture and relationship build trust so some service industries such as credit unions and other Businesses allow family members to become automatic members or offer some form of employee discount to the family. Individualism and collectivism stem from the cultural orientations of people and their reflection of individual values and believes. When people of common believe and values work in a particular environment, their expectation is that they will tend to be more closely together than people with different cultural orientation and believes and that is one advantage of building teamwork. This is not with referenced to people from only a particular country, society or one city but it applies to professions as well. People might also tend to work together because of the solidarities in profession. Many professionals such as teachers, accountant, lawyers and Engineers come together to form a joint venture or another form of partnership business to advance their career and pursue their interest. Members of

each association agree on common professional and ethical values and they form businesses to have a solid network among themselves and share the proceeds that might arise from the team efforts. Though individual performances in such a business are required but the effort of the team are more important in the professional associations. Members therefore value the essence of leaning on each member to accomplish task and the important of a team are very much encouraged. The disadvantage of individualistic environment is that, high individualists will seek information that summarized and evaluates their personal performance as opposed to the group performance. In an environment where individual's performance are measured, individualistic minded people dominate such as the schools and colleges where individual participation of examinations, assignment and tests are required to compute the required score for each an every students in the class. Students then valued the need of individual performance because any achievement at the end of the day is the reflection of the target the individual have set for himself/herself. Group discussions and presentations are the means to promote collectivism in college institution.

Does some institution require Individualistic performance over another?

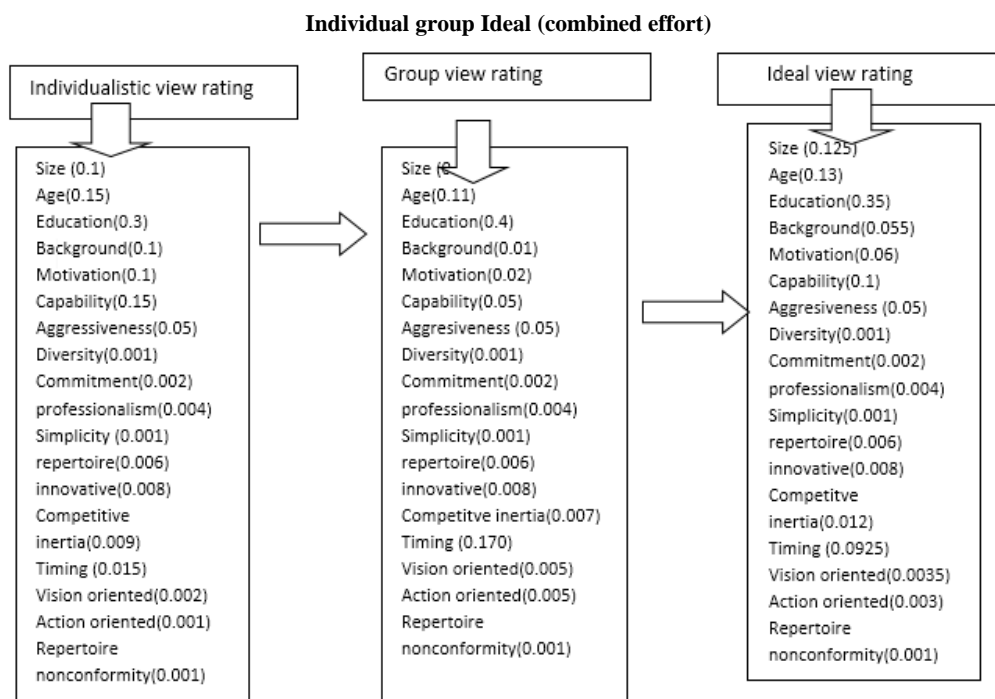
Although each approach is very important but George, Marrett and Giordano (2008) stated that individualistic theories are seen as prevalent in GSS research. GSS is a group support system used in information technology. His research was a theoretical basis for group support system that combined five theories that support GSS into two camps: individualistic and collective. From the individualistic perspective, technology is an active tool that works to enhance individual power and overcome human limitations. There is therefore the tendency to give crucial importance to a technical object which demonstrates the influence of individual theories. From a rational standpoint, and more especially in this modern times, people are more objects- oriented and want to get used to computers to facilitate their daily work. Companies that used automation as their method of processing transactions, such as semi-conductor industries like intel, Motorola and other manufacturing industries, such as General Motors, Honda etc. are able to produce more volumes of products they need within the shortest possible time and able to even produce excess stock for future demands. Manual method of performing functions in these companies are reduced and employees are trained to upgrade their technical and computer skills to use machine operated equipment to produce the right kind of product specification and the quantities required to meet market demands. Employees who failed to upgrade their skills are usually left behind or misses promotional opportunities. In computer environment, work done in a team are though common but the individual role in a team are very much important because individuals are entrusted with security passwords to change certain vital information which are not given to the group as a whole. Individualism becomes extremely important in work environment as this where individual work effort is being tracked. For instance, in a typical manufacturing environment, a team leader may be given an access to change some product lots information and describe the reason for making such changes to establish responsibility and accountability. This access might not be available for other team members though a team leader is supposed to work together with the team.

What should be the ideal model for the organizations today? History of organizations might shown tremendous increases in profit margin and growth but organizations are not only concerned with broken-even with the current financial crises but also what kind of appropriate work approach to adopt which is very suitable and appropriate for the work force. The organization that retained employees in times of the recession are thinking about how to make maximize use of labor resources in the best way to achieve target market share and to promote the well being of the work force in terms of job satisfaction and job growth. One of the recent challenges of international management research has been to help managers understand business ethics across different culture. The normal model of individualism vs. collectivism which was depicted in the work of Husted and Allen (2008), is that individual domain of morality (perception of ethical dilemma) influence his moral judgment (justice based reasoning or relationship based reasoning) which finally influences his/her behavior. If Managers want to build a place where employees will not only find a work to do but a place to develop their career and motivate them to stay longer with it, relationship

type of moral judgment will be an ideal form to adopt where employees will be encouraged to work in a collective work rather than assigning them on individual projects work. No matter the way

it is perceived, culture plays a role in the relation base judgment so if organizations want to promote a particular kind of culture in the organisation, people with similar backgrounds are usually hired to promote the organizational culture. Some organizations have special day for team member meeting and dinners to promote the sense of belongingness. The ideal method depends on the missions, the leadership style as well as the type of the organization. Justice based reasoning are more prevalent on the governmental organization and institution such as journalism or some artistic work where criticism are very predominant and usually associated with piece of work done by a particular person.

Instances of analysis of companies where teamwork and individualism have been used to achieve success.
Predictions of individual actions to group:



From the researchers view, factors such as Aggressiveness,diversity,commitment,professionalism,simplicity,repertoire,innovative and nonconformity repertoire are very common in either team environment, individual or ideal situation.

A company called Mayo Clinic used team building effort to achieve a success. Patients at the Mayo Clinic meet with a team of specialists who help them understand what is happening so they can decide about treatment together. This kind of teamwork contributed to winning top leadership award from the National centre for Healthcare Leadership. Why healthcare often lack collaboration of patient and doctors, research traced the cause to medical school where students take exams alone and even in clinical practices ,most rewards pertain to individual practices and doctors are going into sub-specialties where it's easier to build all-in knowledge in that area where they operate alone. However, Mayo clinic was doing something different in that, a conference call up front to

plan out services to customer problem was put in place. A whole team descends on the customer's problem immediately to resolve the issue. Similarly, great team work pays off for Xerox Business services (www.ExecLeadership.com). Xerox is an assets management company which has different branches and uses team work to achieve its purpose. Gilbert (1994) indicated that in 1994, the Houston branch of Xerox completed a big project from continental Airlines .The operation was to manage 700 copiers and other assets located at different operation. Not only that but other major projects considered the best were accomplished in 1996 and January 1999 and the corporation attributed the success to "team work" and quoted customer-supportive representative in the assets

management operation as saying: “Our teamwork is what made it all happened. We’re always working together to take care of our customers and we really do our best to help each other out.”

Boston-based Vitale, Caturano & Co (VC) has also experienced significant growth over the past four years, tripling revenues and expanding employee ranks. Richard Caturano, the firm's president and CEO, thinks the success is in the culture that they've created, citing teamwork as a major part of that success. Employees under one roof in a team oriented environment in these companies communicate with each other and act like a family to achieve a goal. Toner Quinn (2010) summarized it that singing is one of the things that parents do with babies when they are born and parents are constantly singing to toddlers. The cartoon wonder pets on children television channel demonstrate the benefits of teamwork. But it's not just the photo –puppetry animation, the message of teamwork is put across.

Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned literature reviews and analysis, the depth and effectiveness of using team work is still not fully explored. There is more room for future practical research to establish actual benefits of team work within organizations either in monetary form or goodwill. What has teamwork achieved for corporations in terms of increasing its profitability or creating goodwill for the company?, can some corporation been able to achieve where they're now without teamwork? These are open for further practical research. Teamwork is a common terminology in many organizations but it is not used to profit members. Consequently, Youth are being advised to join organizations such as churches, music groups and other non-profit volunteering groups to develop the attitude of team work such as students union. However, certain common places such as schools and colleges encourage the individualistic attitudes. At schools, individual project works are encouraged in order to obtain a better grade. Corporations and schools that give awards to college students are done basically on merits based on students' performance or academic achievement such as the Grade point Average .This new breed of work team is a whole different animal and call for further research because Organizations are now using teams to perform task that formerly belong to supervisors and middle level managers. For example, some manufacturing organization decided to train all its production operators to take the responsibilities of manufacturing technicians to allow Technicians and engineers focusing on hard pressing production issues. This does not only develop the technical skills of operators but it increases their rate of pay and is one smart way of promoting lower level employees with wage increases. It is interesting that teams are being used differently now than traditionally known to achieve a corporate goals. Finally, Lieberman (1987) suggested that learning can be duplicated rapidly in most industries as firms increase their cumulative output and move down the learning curve. It was experimented by segev, Raveh and Farjoun (1999), among 25 leading business school's MBA programs. It was detected that the structure content (the particular mix of core and concentration areas) is, in itself, not a source of superior performance as measured in the 1994 rankings. The challenge for future researchers and leaders is to find out how these teams can be used so differently to achieve corporate goals

while at the same time achieving the needs of the employees and developing their job skills and potential for growth.

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