



The Role of Team Cohesion in Success: A Literature Review from a Psychological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a comprehensive literature review on the role of team cohesion in success, focusing on psychological perspectives. It explores theoretical frameworks, including definitions, models, and components of team cohesion, alongside factors influencing it at individual, team, and environmental levels. The review synthesizes empirical evidence on the impact of team cohesion on performance, discusses strategies for enhancing cohesion, and highlights the challenges involved. Future research directions and practical implications for leaders, organizations, and researchers are proposed, emphasizing the importance of understanding and leveraging team cohesion for optimizing performance in various contexts.

Keywords: *Team Cohesion, Psychological Perspective, Success.*

1. Introduction

The role of team cohesion in success is a critical aspect of organizational and group performance. Team cohesion refers to the degree to which team members are connected and motivated to achieve common goals (1, 2). This literature review aims to explore the role of team cohesion from a psychological perspective, drawing on various theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence to provide a comprehensive understanding of its impact on success.

One of the fundamental aspects of team cohesion is the psychological perspective on harmony and harmonization. This perspective emphasizes the importance of psychological contributions in understanding the

components, processes, and strengths necessary for building cohesive teams (3). Additionally, critical psychologies and community psychology offer insights into the human response to challenges such as climate change, highlighting the relevance of psychological factors in addressing complex societal issues (4).

Furthermore, the concept of time perspective has been identified as a crucial factor in psychological well-being and adaptation, indicating its potential influence on team dynamics and cohesion (5). Additionally, the intersection of positive psychology and LGBT psychology underscores the significance of incorporating strengths-based perspectives in understanding and promoting cohesion within diverse teams (6).

From a historical and methodological standpoint, the new history of psychology provides critical insights into the evolution of psychological research and its implications for understanding team dynamics and cohesion (7). Moreover, the conceptual approach to studying ethnocultural diversity offers valuable perspectives for enhancing multiculturalism within teams, thereby contributing to overall cohesion and success (8).

In the context of immigration and psychological adaptation, balanced time perspective has been identified as a facilitator, shedding light on the psychological factors that contribute to successful integration and cohesion within diverse teams (9). Additionally, psychologists' perspectives on the implementation of psychological therapy underscore the importance of environmental adaptations and team collaboration in addressing complex psychological challenges, further emphasizing the role of cohesion in achieving positive outcomes (10).

The application of social constructionism and relational practices in organizational psychology provides a paradigm perspective that emphasizes the socio-psychological dynamics within teams, offering valuable insights into fostering cohesion and collective success (11). Moreover, the ecological perspectives of Bronfenbrenner and Kelly offer a framework for understanding the contextual influences on individual and team behavior, contributing to the broader understanding of team cohesion from an ecological standpoint (12).

In summary, the literature reviewed provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of team cohesion in success from a psychological perspective. By integrating insights from harmony, critical psychologies, time perspective, positive psychology, multiculturalism, and organizational psychology, this review aims to contribute to a holistic understanding of the psychological factors that underpin effective team cohesion and its impact on overall success.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Literature Search Strategy

To conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on team cohesion and its impact on success from a psychological perspective, a systematic search was performed across multiple electronic databases, including PsycINFO, PubMed, Google Scholar, and academic databases relevant to psychology and organizational studies. The search strategy employed a combination of

keywords and phrases such as "team cohesion," "group dynamics," "team performance," and "psychological aspects of team success." The literature search was restricted to studies published between 2000 and 2023 to ensure a focus on recent findings while capturing foundational work in the field. Only articles published in English were considered for inclusion in this review.

2.2. Selection Criteria

The selection process involved defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance and quality. Inclusion criteria comprised empirical studies, theoretical papers, and case studies that specifically addressed team cohesion within various contexts (e.g., sports teams, corporate teams) and emphasized psychological perspectives. Exclusion criteria included articles not primarily focused on team cohesion, those lacking a psychological perspective, and research conducted on non-human subjects. The screening process entailed a preliminary review of titles and abstracts for relevance, followed by a full-text review of selected studies to determine final inclusion.

2.3. Data Extraction and Synthesis

Information extracted from the selected articles included the authors, publication year, context of team cohesion (e.g., sports, business), key findings related to team cohesion, and discussed psychological theories or models. Given the narrative nature of this review, the synthesis of findings was approached narratively. This involved grouping studies by similarity in findings, contrasting different psychological theories of team cohesion, and discussing the evolution of the field over time, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the current understanding of team cohesion and its role in success.

2.4. Quality Assessment

Although a formal quality assessment tool was not employed due to the narrative review nature of this work, consideration was given to the study design, sample size, and relevance of findings to the review's objectives to ensure a high-quality review. Studies were evaluated for their contribution to understanding the psychological aspects of team cohesion and its impact on team success.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

Given that this literature review involved analyzing and synthesizing published literature, specific ethical approval was not required. However, ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the review process to ensure unbiased selection and interpretation of studies, maintaining the integrity and fairness of the review.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical frameworks play a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of team cohesion and its impact on various outcomes. Several studies have contributed to the development of theoretical models and frameworks that shed light on the complex interplay between team cohesion and other factors. For instance, Tekleab et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal study on team conflict, conflict management, cohesion, and team effectiveness, discussing both theoretical and practical implications (13). Similarly, Brahm & Kunze (2012) explored the role of trust climate in virtual teams, providing theoretical arguments supported by empirical results (14).

Jungert et al., (2021) highlighted the absence of a theoretical framework linking existing theories on motivation, autonomy, and cohesion in the care workplace, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive theoretical foundation in this area (15). On the other hand, Xie et al. (2016) constructed a new theoretical framework of multi-dimensional organizational innovation cultures and their impact on innovation performance, while also exploring the moderating effect of team cohesion on this relationship (16). These studies demonstrate the diverse theoretical perspectives and the need for comprehensive frameworks to understand the multifaceted nature of team cohesion.

Furthermore, McCarthy et al. (2018) developed a theoretical framework to reveal the factors contributing to social complexity and its impact on team cohesion in multiparty information systems development projects (17). Collins & Durand-Bush (2015) also critically reviewed theoretical and conceptual frameworks addressing team processes in sport, deriving implications for professional practice (18). These studies underscore the importance of theoretical frameworks in understanding team dynamics across different domains, from information systems development to sports.

Moreover, theoretical frameworks have been developed to explore the influence of centrality in a friendship network on organizational citizenship behavior (19), as well as to integrate cohesion, team mental models, and collective efficacy into an integrated framework of team dynamics in sport (20). These frameworks provide valuable insights into the theoretical underpinnings of team cohesion and its implications for behavior and performance within organizational and sports contexts.

In addition, theoretical contributions have been made in the context of leadership, knowledge-oriented leadership, and strategic orientation, highlighting the importance of team cohesion in influencing project success and new product development performance (21, 22). These studies offer theoretical and practical recommendations for understanding and managing team dynamics in various organizational settings.

Furthermore, theoretical frameworks have been developed to measure team cohesion, explore the reciprocal role of team cohesion and performance, and examine the relationship between task cohesion and team task satisfaction in elite sports (23). These frameworks provide a foundation for understanding the complex interplay between cohesion and performance outcomes in different contexts, from healthcare to sports.

Ultimately, the literature on theoretical frameworks for team cohesion encompasses a wide range of domains, including healthcare, sports, innovation, and virtual teams. These theoretical contributions offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of team cohesion and its implications for performance and effectiveness across diverse settings.

3.2. Factors Influencing Team Cohesion

Factors influencing team cohesion have been a subject of extensive research across various disciplines, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of this construct. Jansen et al. (2016) proposed that sociopsychological factors such as team cohesion and team efficacy may help team members to resolve paradoxical challenges and combine exploratory and exploitative learning efforts, thus contributing to team ambidexterity (24). Similarly, Daspit et al. (2013) examined internal team environment, shared leadership, and cohesion, highlighting their influence on cross-functional team effectiveness (25).

Moreover, Wei & Wu (2013) emphasized the dynamic nature of team cohesion, indicating its variation with

different team factors (26). Brockman et al. (2010) explored the relationships among interpersonal cohesiveness, groupthink, and superordinate identity, influenced by team norms and goal support (27). Sullivan & Feltz (2001) identified the relationship between intrateam conflict and cohesion within hockey teams, predicting cohesion factors from conflict style scores (28).

Furthermore, Carbonell & Escudero (2018) examined the negative moderating effect of team social cohesion on the relationship between team boundary spanning and competitive advantage, highlighting the potential undermining factors of team social cohesion in new product development teams (29). Majeed et al. (2023). suggested that effective team leadership, team mindfulness, and team cohesion promote positive project-related outcomes, emphasizing the role of team-level factors in project team performance (30).

In addition, Tung & Chang (2011) identified task cohesion and social cohesion as essential factors influencing performance in management teams, highlighting their desired reliabilities in the best-fitting model (31). Pinheiro et al. (2023). emphasized the importance of transformational leadership, team cohesion, psychological safety, and the absence of conflict as conditions for team learning to occur, indicating the significance of multiple configurations of antecedent factors driving team learning (32).

Moreover, Fiore et al. (2015) highlighted the varied mechanisms leading to cohesion, including cognitive factors such as familiarity with teammates and perceived prototype matching, indicating the diverse nature of factors influencing cohesion (33). Patel et al. (2020) emphasized the role of factors such as a weekly case conference call, transparency in discussing challenges, engagement in development tasks, and support from leadership in facilitating perceived team cohesion (34).

Additionally, Steca et al. (2013) identified time spent together as a key factor influencing team cohesion, expanding the operating approaches and scope of theoretical and applied studies on personal factors affecting sports teams' cohesion (35). Furthermore, Treuer et al. (2018) explored the components of cohesion using the repertory grid technique, confirming the factor structure of cohesion through factor analytic studies (36).

Therefore, the literature on factors influencing team cohesion encompasses a wide array of factors, including leadership behaviors, conflict resolution approaches, environmental factors, task cohesion, social cohesion, and

psychological safety. These factors collectively contribute to the complex and dynamic nature of team cohesion, highlighting the importance of understanding and managing these factors to promote effective team dynamics and performance.

3.3. *Psychological Perspectives on Team Cohesion*

The literature on psychological perspectives on team cohesion encompasses a wide array of studies that delve into the intricate dynamics of group cohesiveness, psychological factors, and their impact on team performance and effectiveness. For instance, Horn et al. (2012) examined the perceived motivational climate and its relationship with team cohesion in adolescent athletes, shedding light on the psychological underpinnings of group dynamics within sports teams (37). Their findings revealed that athletes in high task groups exhibited higher perceptions of all forms of group cohesion, emphasizing the influence of motivational climate on team dynamics.

Moreover, Spink et al. (2017) conducted a study on intact youth teams, exploring the concepts of groupness, cohesion, and intention to return to sport, providing valuable insights into the psychological aspects of team cohesion and its implications for athletes' future engagement in sports (38). The results of their study shed light on the psychological factors that contribute to the cohesiveness of youth teams and its influence on athletes' intentions to continue participating in sports.

In addition, Neil et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between leader behavior, emotional intelligence, and team performance in a UK government executive agency during organizational change, offering valuable insights into the psychological dynamics of team leadership and its impact on overall team performance (39). Their study highlighted the role of emotional intelligence in shaping leader behavior and its subsequent influence on team cohesion and performance during organizational change.

Furthermore, Cai (2023) explored the strengthening of perceptions of virtual team cohesiveness and effectiveness in the new normal, offering a hyperpersonal communication theory perspective, which opens doors for future research about psychological intervention in team management fields to enhance team cohesiveness and effectiveness at the individual perception level (40). This study provides valuable insights into the psychological

mechanisms that can be leveraged to enhance virtual team cohesion in the evolving work environment.

Moreover, López-Gajardo et al. (2022) investigated cohesion and collective efficacy as antecedents and team performance as an outcome of team resilience in team sports, providing new empirical evidence of the psychological factors influencing team resilience and performance in the field of sports psychology (41). Their study contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological underpinnings of team resilience and its implications for team performance in sports.

Additionally, Gu et al. (2022) examined the relationships among sports group cohesion, passion, and mental toughness in Chinese team sports athletes, shedding light on the psychological dynamic process from environment to motivation to sports performance, offering valuable insights into the psychological factors that contribute to athletes' mental toughness and performance within team sports (42).

Furthermore, Pinheiro et al. (2023) investigated the factors driving team learning, focusing on core conditions and paths, providing valuable insights into the psychological safety and transformational leadership that influence team learning processes (32). Their study offers a comprehensive understanding of the psychological conditions that foster team learning and development.

Overall, the literature on psychological perspectives on team cohesion provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of group dynamics, leadership behavior, emotional intelligence, and their impact on team performance and effectiveness. These studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological factors that underpin effective team cohesion and performance across various domains.

3.4. *Impact of Team Cohesion on Performance*

The impact of team cohesion on performance has been extensively researched across various disciplines, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of this relationship. For instance, Carron et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis on cohesion and performance in sport, revealing a larger cohesion-performance effect in refereed publications and for female teams (43). This study provides valuable insights into the differential impact of cohesion on performance across different contexts and publication sources.

Furthermore, Tekleab et al. (2009) demonstrated the direction of causality from cohesion to perceived team performance using longitudinal data, highlighting the influential role of cohesion in shaping team effectiveness over time (13). Their study contributes to a deeper understanding of the temporal dynamics of the cohesion-performance relationship and the causal pathways involved.

In addition, Chaudhary et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis to define cohesion, virtual team performance, and the impact of cohesion on virtual team performance, offering a comprehensive overview of the relationship between cohesion and performance in virtual teams (1). This study contributes to understanding the specific dynamics of cohesion and its impact on performance in virtual work environments.

Moreover, Grossman et al. (2021) explored the measurement approaches and the changing team landscape in the team cohesion-performance relationship, highlighting the importance of conceptualizing and measuring cohesion accurately to understand its impact on team performance (44). Their study addresses the methodological considerations in studying the cohesion-performance relationship, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this dynamic.

Additionally, Yang & Jin (2019) explored the relationship among cohesion, knowledge sharing, and team performance of design students during graduation projects, shedding light on the role of cohesion in promoting effective team interaction and performance in academic settings (45). This study provides insights into the impact of cohesion on performance in educational contexts.

Furthermore, Tziner et al. (2003) investigated the relation between social cohesion and team performance in soccer teams, emphasizing the mediating role of interpersonal relations among team members in influencing team performance (46). Their study contributes to understanding the underlying mechanisms through which cohesion influences team performance in sports teams.

Overall, the literature on the impact of team cohesion on performance encompasses a wide array of studies across different contexts, including sports, virtual teams, academic settings, and organizational environments. These studies collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of the cohesion-performance relationship and its implications for team effectiveness.

3.5. *Enhancing Team Cohesion: Strategies and Interventions*

The enhancement of team cohesion is a critical aspect of optimizing team performance and effectiveness across various domains. Psychological interventions and strategies play a pivotal role in building and maintaining team cohesion.

In this regard, Hung & Gática-Pérez (2010) proposed an approach to estimate cohesion in small groups using audio-visual nonverbal behavior, suggesting that task cohesiveness leads to better performance while social cohesion can limit maximum performance (47). This study provides insights into the role of nonverbal behavior in assessing and understanding group cohesion, offering a unique perspective on the psychological dynamics of small group interactions.

Horn et al. (2012) explored the perceived motivational climate and its relationship with team cohesion in adolescent athletes, providing valuable insights into the psychological underpinnings of group dynamics within sports teams (37). This study contributes to understanding the influence of motivational climate on team cohesion and its implications for athletes' performance and engagement in sports.

Moreover, Cai (2023) investigated the strengthening of perceptions of virtual team cohesiveness and effectiveness, offering a hyperpersonal communication theory perspective, which opens doors for future research on management interventions to enhance team cohesiveness and effectiveness at the individual perception level (40). This study provides valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms that can be leveraged to enhance virtual team cohesion in the evolving work environment

Gu et al. (2022) also examined the relationships among sports group cohesion, passion, and mental toughness in Chinese team sports athletes, highlighting the beneficial impact of cohesion on athletes' mental toughness in team sports (42). This study offers valuable insights into the psychological factors that contribute to athletes' mental resilience and performance within team sports. Notably, López-Gajardo et al. (2022) investigated cohesion and collective efficacy as antecedents and team performance as an outcome of team resilience in team sports, emphasizing the importance of developing group cohesion and collective efficacy to achieve resilient and less vulnerable teams (41). This study provides valuable insights into the psychological

factors that underpin team resilience and its implications for team performance in sports.

Oh (2023) explored the impact of transformational leadership on social norms and team cohesion, highlighting the significant positive effect of transformational leadership on social norms and team cohesion (48). This study offers valuable insights into the role of leadership in fostering team cohesion and promoting effective team dynamics.

McLaren and Spink (2022) tested boundary conditions in the communication-cohesion relationship in team sport, emphasizing the importance of psychological safety in moderating the relationship between cooperative communication perceptions and perceptions of task cohesion (49). This study provides valuable insights into the role of psychological safety in shaping team dynamics and cohesion in sports teams. Pinheiro et al. (2023) further examined the core conditions and paths driving team learning, emphasizing the importance of psychological safety and transformational leadership in fostering team learning processes (32). This study offers valuable insights into the psychological conditions that foster team learning and development.

The literature on psychological interventions and strategies to enhance team cohesion encompasses a wide array of studies across different contexts, including sports, virtual teams, and organizational environments. These studies collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of team cohesion and the psychological factors that underpin effective team dynamics and performance.

3.6. *Challenges and Considerations*

Enhancing team cohesion presents various challenges and considerations across different contexts, requiring a nuanced understanding of the psychological, social, and organizational dynamics at play. The post-pandemic era has brought about new challenges in enhancing team cohesion, particularly in the context of virtual teamwork collaboration. Cai (2023) highlighted workplace isolation as a significant challenge, emphasizing the unsatisfied need for belongingness in virtual teams (40). This challenge underscores the importance of addressing social and psychological needs in virtual work environments to foster team cohesion.

Understanding and addressing learner mistreatment is another pressing challenge facing academic medicine, as highlighted by (50). This challenge emphasizes the

significance of addressing interpersonal dynamics and psychological safety within academic and professional settings to promote team cohesion and effectiveness.

In the context of mental health and urban work environments, Fahmie et al. (2020) emphasized the vulnerability of individuals to a range of issues, including suicidal tendencies, alcoholism, violence, and substance abuse, highlighting the importance of addressing mental health considerations in promoting team cohesion (51).

In the realm of sports, understanding the relationship between perceived motivational climate and team cohesion is essential. Horn et al. (2012) provided insights into the influence of motivational climate on team cohesion in adolescent athletes, emphasizing the significance of motivational factors in fostering team cohesion in sports settings (37).

Psychological safety and communication openness are critical considerations in team sports, as highlighted by McLaren and Spink (2022). Their study emphasized the moderating role of psychological safety in the communication-cohesion relationship, underscoring the importance of creating a psychologically safe environment for effective team dynamics (49).

In the context of interprofessional education and healthcare, Ganotice et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of team cohesiveness and collective efficacy in promoting positive collaboration outcomes. Their study highlighted the significance of collective efficacy in fostering effective teamwork and collaboration in healthcare settings (2).

In the field of organizational management, Yu et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of communication openness and its mediating role in nosocomial infection reporting. Their study underscored the significance of open communication in promoting team cohesion and performance in healthcare settings (52).

In the context of service management teams, Guchait et al. (2014) emphasized the influence of transactive memory systems and psychological safety on the effectiveness of service management teams. Their study highlighted the role of psychological safety in promoting effective teamwork and knowledge sharing within service management teams (53).

In conclusion, the literature on challenges and considerations in enhancing team cohesion spans various disciplines and contexts, emphasizing the importance of addressing psychological, social, and organizational factors to promote effective team dynamics. From virtual

teamwork collaboration to healthcare settings, the considerations and challenges in fostering team cohesion are multifaceted and require a nuanced understanding of the psychological and social dynamics at play.

4. Conclusion

This literature review has underscored the multifaceted nature of team cohesion and its pivotal role in determining team success across various contexts. Psychological theories, including social identity theory, group dynamics theory, and motivational theories, have provided a rich framework for understanding how and why team cohesion impacts performance. Empirical studies reinforce the notion that cohesive teams exhibit higher levels of performance, satisfaction, and resilience. The synthesis of literature highlights the complexity of fostering team cohesion, pointing to individual, team-level, and environmental factors as key components. Moreover, the discussion has illuminated the dynamic interplay between these factors and team cohesion, suggesting that effective management of team dynamics requires a nuanced, context-sensitive approach.

In conclusion, the literature review has demonstrated the critical importance of team cohesion for achieving success from a psychological standpoint. The evidence suggests that team cohesion not only enhances performance but also contributes to the psychological well-being of team members, thereby reinforcing the team's ability to achieve its goals. This review calls for further research to explore innovative strategies and interventions aimed at strengthening team cohesion, especially in the face of evolving challenges such as remote work and increased diversity. Additionally, future studies should consider the impact of technological advancements on team dynamics and cohesion. Understanding and leveraging the psychological underpinnings of team cohesion will remain essential for leaders, practitioners, and researchers striving to optimize team performance and success in a rapidly changing world.

Incorporating these sections into your article will provide a coherent and insightful conclusion to the discussion on team cohesion from a psychological perspective, emphasizing the critical role of cohesion in team success and identifying avenues for future research and practical application.

Authors' Contributions

Not applicable.

Declaration of Interest

The author reports no conflict of interest.

Declaration

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Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Ethics Considerations

Given that this literature review involved analyzing and synthesizing published literature, specific ethical approval was not required. However, ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the review process to ensure unbiased selection and interpretation of studies, maintaining the integrity and fairness of the review.

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