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Team Effectiveness in Sport Teams: The Effects of Team Cohesion, Intra Team Communication and Team Norms on Team Member Satisfaction and Intent to Remain

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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

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