

Group Cohesion and Sport Performance

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ABSTRACT

Several studies have shown a strong relationship between cohesion and performance. According to Carron & al. (2002), the team's definition will not be victorious. Moreover, Carron (1998) defined the cohesion of a team as "a dynamic process reflected in the tendency of the members of a group to remain close to each other and to remain united in the pursuit of its Objectives and / or satisfaction of their emotional needs ". The publications in the Field of the sciences of the sport is relative to the situations, so-called "collective" remain numerous and well located. They find an anchoring essentially in social psychology on the phenomena of group, from which they derive the methods. They are translated into sport around concepts that revolve mainly around the concepts of "cohesion" (under the impetus of Widemeyer, 1985, and Carron, 1982), and of "leadership" (Chelladurai, 1990). Indeed, there is no such thing as soldering a group to be attached together, in the primary sense of the term, and thus be able to take up a challenge that requires both to surpass itself and to show solidarity, all in a setting outside Of the common, for an unusual purpose.

Keywords: Sport, Performance

Cohesion

Cohesion is indeed essential for collective and individual efficiency

The concept of cohesion deals with mechanisms that tend to bring together individuals from the same group to be more effective in given situations. The work is organized on the study of two types of "variables" called situational or related to the structure of the group. It is shown that cohesion is an essential process that determines performance in collective sport groups.

The leadership approach aims to define the role of certain individuals, known as "leaders", in the collective functioning of groups. In sports , We questioned , how athletes perceived the actions of coaches in team sports (Serpa & coll., 1991) in terms of compatibility

or preference (Terry 1982; Horne & Carron 1985; Terry & Howe, 1984). Again, these approaches point to the fact that some situations remain more compatible with coach profiles, depending on the characteristics of the leaders (since Lippitt & White, 1965).

The characteristics of cohesion

Carron defines group cohesion as "a dynamic process that is characterized by a group's tendency to stick together and remain united in pursuit of its goals."

Another definition is proposed by Festinger (1950) who defines cohesion as "the set of forces that act on the members to make them remain within the group".

According to these authors, distinct forces act on the members to keep them in the group. The first is the attractiveness of the group, which refers to the individual wish to have interpersonal interactions with other members and the desire to participate in group activities.

The second category of force refers to the benefit that a member can derive from its association with the group. This second category of force is called the force of the means control.

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The research carried out in this field has revealed two concepts that allow us to grasp the link between cohesion and the behavior of a group: the distinction between operational cohesion (phases of task execution) and social cohesion. Cohesion is not limited to the emotional and social aspects but also refers to the task.

Operational cohesion and social cohesion are two independent components. Operational cohesion is the degree of collaboration of the members of the group in pursuit of a specific goal.

Social cohesion is the degree of attraction between the members of the group and the degree of satisfaction of the members of this group to evolve together.

These two components are therefore independent in the sense that the members of a group can strive

towards a goal without, however, a strong feeling between the members of this group. The sporting world offers us multiple examples in this sense.

In 1992, Carron and Spink demonstrated that there is a more obvious adherence to a physical activity program when the social cohesion of the group improves (Figure 1).

The determinants of cohesion

Environmental, personal, team and leadership factors are crucial to cohesion within a group and this will strongly influence performance.

Cohesion and performance

The concept of performance is not limited to winning. It encompasses both positive outcomes and the

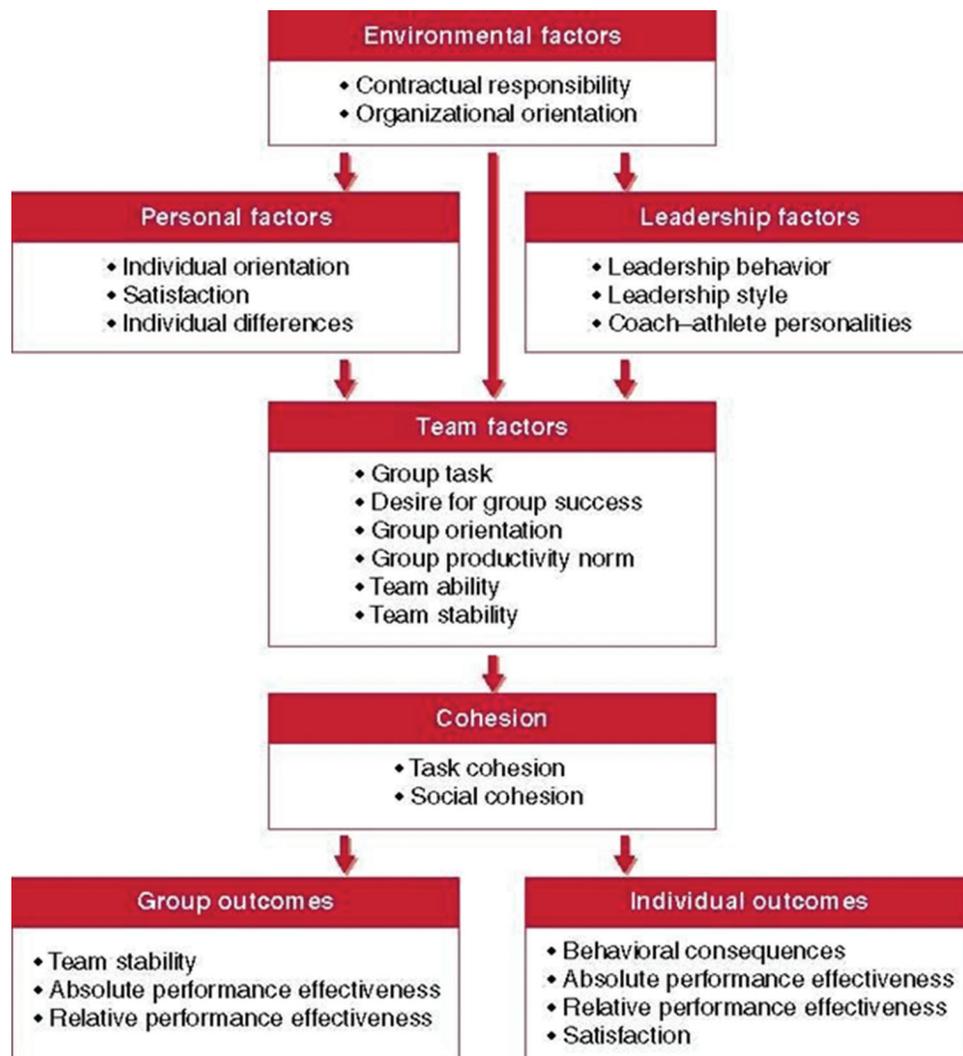


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the cohesion of sports teams of Carron

attainment of set goals. For example, a team may set itself the goal of remaining within the same division, and if achieved, it is a performance. Performance can also be related to the notions of transformation and progression, such as improving its lapel top in tennis for example.

Research has invariably shown that there is a strong correlation between cohesion and sport performance. This correlation is stronger for operative cohesion. This relationship between cohesion and performance is circular: if cohesion increases sports performance, success reinforces cohesion.

Similarly, sports groups that demonstrate a high level of cohesion, mainly operative cohesion, increase their collective effectiveness (Kozub and McDonnell, 2000). But this cohesion must be homogeneous, that is to say that the whole of the group must be concerned and not only the best performers. For example, this cohesion must be strong among the team members, but also among the substitutes, if the coach wishes to increase his collective effectiveness.

Thus the victory in a competition does not necessarily return to the constellated team of stars who combine the highest qualities in physical, technical, tactical and mental terms. And there are many examples.

For me, I see the team as a complex machine of skills and emotions where it is difficult to evaluate the mechanisms of stagnation and regression. A team works well if there is a consistent share of links, listening, joy of being together, those things that make one transcend naturally. Look at the 2010 Algeria national football team: the links counted more than the skills.

My concern, when I was coach, was always to extract the best relationship potential from a mix of personalities. On the field, there were warriors, artists, strategists. “

Cohesion in the sports field

Numerous studies conducted in sports show a positive effect of cohesion on performance. If sports teams have a stronger relationship between cohesion and performance than other natural groups (military groups, business groups); The perception of success or failure is more acute (the results of each team in each pool in each division are disseminated by the national or regional media); That sports groups have stronger models of excellence (each tends to reach a

higher sporting level) and a feeling as a larger group (membership in the sports team is a major contributor to the social identity of the players).

In addition, the sports sector differs from other areas in that the active participation of members in the formulation of group objectives is not necessarily linked to strong cohesion. The cohesion of a sports team does not depend on the joint development of the group's objectives, which are usually established by the club coach or club president. Thus, in teams, the preferred style of command is the “autocratic” style, only one person, usually the coach, deciding on the choices and behaviors to follow for the entire team.

We see the choice of the coach is not easy. If we could summarize, we would say that between the members of the team, it takes a dose of similarity and a dose of difference. Above all, accept it! Clearly, some coaches designing their team as a group of clones do not admit any differences. There are many examples: the former coach of the Algerian football team Waid Halilositc did not select a player because he refused to obey him, the player refused to be replaced. The similarity of the members of the group can in turn be influenced by cohesion. The tendency for members of a group to seek a uniformity of opinions, attitudes and commitments within the group is more important in cohesive groups. Thus, deviants in terms of opinions tend to be more strongly rejected when the team is cohesive.

Similarly, a newcomer arouses the group because it risks disturbing the homogeneous balance of the team. Thus, the case of a transparent player in one team and resplendent, following a transfer, to another (or vice versa) is not uncommon. The coach must ensure the integration of the new ones by the elders as soon as possible. Is it the new one that takes a year to adapt to the team or does it take a year for the team to accept him ?

Finally, the distinction between social cohesion and cohesion of task (operative) is found in sport. The cohesion-performance relationship observed in collective sports highlights a privileged influence of cohesion of task (operative) without neglecting social cohesion.

How to develop group cohesion and sport performance

Whatever the sector of activity, excellence has become a leitmotiv where each actor is constantly looking

for performance. For many years, the latter has been mainly regarded as an individual process. Nevertheless, behind every individual achievement, every record of an athlete, there is an enormous training work carried out with other athletes, a technical staff, a manager, etc. Moreover, like the exploits in collective sports, it would be incoherent to consider performance without henceforth focusing on the influence of the dominant interpersonal. Thus, in competitive sports, the optimization of group dynamics becomes a major field of activity in the sports psychology sector, as it is recognized as one of the key factors linked to sport excellence.

“A team of champions will never beat a champion team.” This maxim illustrates group cohesion then defined as “a dynamic process reflected in the tendency of the group to remain united and bound in the pursuit of its objectives and in meeting the emotional needs of its members”

First of all, a group can be really called cohesive if its members take pleasure in working together (social cohesion) and if they work at the same time to achieve a collective goal (operational cohesion). Nowadays, even though internal management practices tend to evolve within companies, the share devoted to the development of well-being and social relations within the working group is still under-exploited.

Thus, when cohesion occurs, very often this is illustrated by a rather high operating cohesion where the members work for the development of their company or club, while carrying out this work in a bland or anxiogenic atmosphere when the collaborators do not like to be together. It will be understood that this profile of interpersonal dynamics is not conducive to long-term corporate performance. The second element that a manager must be aware of is that group cohesion fluctuates over time as various factors increase or decrease its level. To the knowledge of this second element, the managers must then become aware “nothing is acquired, and everything can still be done”.

But how? What are these famous factors of influence?

1. Caring Coach Relationship Trained The leadership style of the manager has been recognized for many years as a major source of influence in the functioning of a group, whatever the field of intervention, sport or company. There are three key factors in leadership that promote group cohesion:

Valorisation, Autonomie and Partage (V.A.P.). Thus, a manager will largely develop the cohesion and productivity of his group if he leaves a margin of initiative and responsibility to his employees, if he values their results, but also their investment, their state of mind, and it remains accessible, open to communication and if it involves its collaborators in certain choices that it may have to make.

2. Carrying out collective values It will be difficult to envisage a group to be cohesive if it has no common connection. Thus, if the values of the company are generally imposed by the context, it is first and foremost necessary that the manager conveys and shares his own values, those in which he believes, to all the members of his group. The task will then lie in the fact that each member shares these values, finds himself there, and flourishes through them. This will make it possible to reinforce the homogeneity of the group in its knowledge to be and thereby strengthen its cohesion.

3. Sharing a common goal One of the fundamentals of group cohesion is the pursuit of a collective goal. As much as it can be a variable “easily” accessible in collective sport, as much, it becomes much more difficult in the world of the company. The primary motivation for everyone is the basic needs that naturally translate into the professional world through the search for wages. However, if it remains an indispensable lever of attractiveness and valorization, the fact remains that remuneration does not guarantee an optimal individual investment. Thus, one of the solutions will be to add to pecuniary valorization the strength of the group in order to induce in each employee a moral investment encouraging him to adopt individual behaviors that are in line with the objective of the group.

In this sense, some high-level coaches in collective sport do not hesitate to do what is called a “sharing of objectives” where a discussion is held within the group to determine together (hence the notion of sharing) The collective objectives and the means to achieve it. Too often, in the corporate world, the manager will have a tendency to impose individual objectives, to the detriment of a sharing of the objective by all the members of the working group. This in turn implies fundamentally individualistic or even navel-based strategies on the part of the employees, in a total denial of real collaboration and mutual assistance, and even sometimes of professional deontology

Ensuring the working environment If the sports world has fully understood the stakes of the working environment, yet too often, the entrepreneurial logics still hardly combine work and productivity. Thus, as we have been able to mention, the working atmosphere, reflected in particular in the well-being of members of a group in social relations.

Finally, it can be concluded that performance is closely tied to the atmosphere or climate that reigns within the group to create by interaction the coach/trainer and by the realization of the different needs of the members of the group.

That said, the group can be considered as a field of realization of the different social, emotional and material needs of individuals. In my opinion, the task of managers and coaches consists in identifying and categorizing their needs in the first place. The second task, managers and ensure that, the fulfillment of the needs of each member. Can only be achieved through the realization of the needs of the other members of the same group. So the main task of the coach or manager is to create a situation of interdependence between individuals, their needs, and their objectives.

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