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TEAMWORK: A COMPARISON BETWEEN NONPROFIT AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present paper is to compare teamwork performance between Non profit and Public sector organizations. Some of the scales of the Aston Team Performance Inventory (ATPI) was administered to 400 employees from Non profit and Public sector organizations. The dimensional structure of the questionnaire was verified against the original version, through a factorial analysis run via SPSS 16.0. The ANOVA was used to test the relationship between team processes and satisfaction against the type of organization (Public vs NPO).

The two groups of participants showed differences both in terms of leadership processes and leadership style regarding teamwork as well as teamwork output. Non profit employees emerged as the group where the teamwork is more effective.

Practical implications: to understand which dimensions of teamwork are to be improved in each group and which ones can be considered as an example of excellence, therefore serve as a reference for good practice. Furthermore, it is often questioned whether instruments and methods used among Profit and Public organizations should be used also for NPOs, and ATPI emerged as an effective tool also for those organizations, where team work is quire widespread.

Key words: Teamwork; Non-Profit organistion; Public organisation; Team effectiveness; Team efficacy; Aston Team Performance Inventory

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Team work: relevance of the issue

Successful performance often involves interaction among individuals who work as a team, pooling togeter their resources in terms of knowledge, abilities, and experience to reach a common goal. Teamwork is widely recognised as a powerfull and effective way of reaching demanding goals, through the cooperations of several, different individuale. Individual performance is less effective in absence of support, co-ooperation of others who share the same responsabilities (Mathieu *et al.*,

2008). Researches and studies in the field of managent have shown that team work can be more efficient and effective than individual work, in terms of higher quality decision and innovation, diversity management, better financial performance and organizational performance (see e.g. Applebaum & Batt, 1994; Mathieu *et al*., 2008; Chau & Witcher, 2008). Not surprisingly, the use of teamwork has been expanding enormously in the past twenty years.

1.2 Team work and team performance

Different types of team have been conceptualized, but all the definitions of team included the following features: a group of at least two individuals, who share one or more goals and perform tasks, interact (also virtually) among them, and therefore are work interdipendently, having different roles and responsabilities, but also boundaries and linkages to the rest of their organization, to which they are collectively accountable for the work done (see e.g. Alderfer, 1977; Argote & McGrath, 1993; Hackman, 1992; Hollenbeck *et al*., 1995; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Mohrman *et al.,*1995). Team performance has been theorized and researched mainly using the input–process–output (I-P-O) scheme (e.g. Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Gladstein, 1984; Hackman and Morris, 1975; Guzzo and Shea, 1992). Inputs variables are the individual, organizational and team resources. Outputs are the results achieved, the fullfilling of the needs of each member of the team, the readiness of team members to stay in the team (Hackman, 1987). Processes translate inputs into outputs, since they are the activities that team engage to successfully perform their tasks and reach their goals.

In spite of the fact that teamwork can generate more efficiency and effectiveness, teams do not per se produce more productive than individual work. The introduction of teamwork in an organization, if not properly addressed, does not guarantee a successfull outcome; on the opposite, it might lead to decreased effectiveness, innovation and satisfaction (West & Markiewicz, 2004).

Literature review shows that several factors may promote (or jaopardize) team performance:

group design (team composition in terms of size and expertise of members, role and tasks performed by each of them; time assigned to perform its tasks and reach its goal); job design (tasks assigned should be better achieved through teamwork than individual work; clarity and meaningfullness of tasks and goals assigned, freedom to decide how better accomplish their tasks), context (e.g organizational context structured around individual work versus teamwork; time and resource assigned; training and support, information, reward); interdependence (outcome and tasks interdependence among the group, shared responsability for the final results; reflexivity; alignment), team synergy (conflicts management (team cohesion) and leadership (shared leadership, co-ordination, personality traits of the leader/s). (see e.g. Halfhill *et al*., 2008; Harrison *et al.,* 2003; Hoegl and Parboteeah, 2003; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Tekleab *et al*., 2009).

This means that both team members and managers should learn how to address either potential or real risks of mismanagement of teamwork (Brown, 2000). Organizations to achieve their best performance should therefore monitor and assess the effectiveness and efficacy of team work, in order to be able to deliver a timely and effective feedback to teams on their overall performance and not only on the results achieved. In addition, organizations might highly benefit from knowing how teams are working on the organizations as a whole (West & Field, 1995).

1.3 Not for profit organizations (NPOs)

NPOs are organizations working for the public benefit who that show the following core characteristics (Anheier, 2000 pp. 1-2): a) Formally organised: they possess some institutional reality, which distinguishes them from informal entities such as families or gathering; b) Private: they are independent from governments and therefore separate from the public sector; c) Self governing: they have the capacity to control their own activities, which distinguishes them from units that are

de jure units of other organizations; d)Not-for-profit: they do not ridistribute return any profits generated to owners or equivalent, which distinguishes them from business organizations; e) Voluntary: they are not compulsory in nature and with some degree of voluntary imput.

The majority of the resarches developed in the management area have focused either on for-profit or on public organisations, but there is an incresingly and recognised need for research studies that focus on the management of not-for profit ones, since they can benefit from the application of management theories and practices already endorsed by business enterprise and public agencies. It is essential to improve the organizational management on a theoretical basis in third sector organizations by studying and verifying the reliability and applicability of the practices and procedures that are already being used.

Furthermore, delivery service NPOs are still a bit too far from professional management, from auditing and accounting for their (human, financial, logistic) resource and processes (Helming *et al.,* 2006). Therefore pratictionars and managers of NPOs might find researches and studies on management to be meaningful and useful.

On the othe hand, NPOs can offer an interesting field where the knowledge that has already being accumulated on the management of the for-profit and the public sector could be further verified and eventually developed, taking into consideration that management of NPOs needs more team work than in other types of organizations (Drucker, 1990)

It is therefore significant to compare teamwork among third sector and public organizations in order to understand which the critical areas are and, which instead are the positive models, behaviour and practices that could be applied and eventually mutuated from one sector to another. In addition, while monitoring team group both managers and team members may have a wider and more useful picture of their resources and their performance, addressing therefore a relevant issue for the development of their organizations.

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESIS

West and his collegues developed the Aston Team Performance Inventory (ATPI) after conceptualizating the core dimensions of team performance as follows: Inputs are task design, team effort and skills, organizational support and resources; Outputs are team effectiveness, team innovation, inter-team relationships, team member satisfaction, attachment; Processes are objectives, reflexivity, participation, task focus, team conflict, creativity and innovation, leadership processes (West, 2004). The questionnaire has been standardized and validated.

Through the administration of the ATPI it is possible to monitor and assess team work, understanding which area are to be improved and which ones are alredy well functioning.

We have been particularly interested, for the purposes of the present study, in comparing NPOs with Public Sector organizations about the dimensions of leadership processes as well as all the teamwork outputs, both at individual (member's satisfaction and attachment) and at team level (inter-team relationships, innovation, and team effectiveness).We therefore developed the following explorative hypothesis:

H.1: Unlike the Public sector organizations, NPOs have a quite strong attitude and tradition in terms of value assigned to team work and in terms of leadership processes, therefore:

H1a: NPOs are expected to have a stronger coaching leadership towards team work, in comparison with the Public Sector organizations..

H1b: Non profit organizations are expected to have have a stronger managerial leadership towards team work, in comparison with the Public Sector organizations.

H2: Public sector and Non Profit sector present different levels of teamwork outcomes, and in particular:

H2a: NPOs show higher level of member attachment to team work;

H2b: NPOs show higher level of member satisfaction for team work;

These hypothesis are consistent with the results of several research, according to which NPOs are able to elicit high intrinsic motivation and high commitment to work (Cruz *et al*., 2009).

H2c: Public organizations show higher teamwork effectiveness in comparison to NPOs;

H2d: Public organizations show higher ability in managing inter-team relationships, in comparison with NPOs;

H2e: Public organizations show an higher level of team innovation in comparison to NPOs.

These hypothesis is consistent with a recent group of research, according to which leadership style has an effect on teamwork (Schaubroeck *et al*., 2007). In particular, taking into consideration the difficulties that NPOs often face in adopting businesslike processes, it is possible to hypothize that they may lack of teamwork effectiveness, as well as inter-team relationships and teamwork innovation. At the same time, they might also show a deep coaching and supportive leadership style, as a consequence of having to manage not only paid staff but also voluntary workers, as well as of being very much involved in service delivery to disadvanted and needy people (Kong & Thompson, 2009).

3. METHOD

3.1. Sample and procedures

400 employees were contacted, working either in Non profit or in Public sector organizations.They live and work in organizations spread almost all over Northern and Southern Italy; 367 of them agreeded to fullfill a questionnaire composed by some of the ATPI scales, namely those on team work processes, leadership processes and teamwork outcomes.

The final sample is pretty well balanced in terms of public and non profit sector, with 206 public employees and 161 NPO employees. The reached group consisted of 122 male (33,2 %) and 243 female (66,2 %). The mean age is 39,3 (S. D. 11,5).

3.2 Measures

We divided the dimension of teamwork between leadership process on the one hand and teamwork outcomes on the other one. To measure the first one, we administered the scale on “leadership style towards team work” and to measure the latter one, we administered the subscales named “innovation”, “inter-team relationships”, “team effectiveness”, “member satisfaction”, “member attachment”. All the scales administered come from the ATPI.

4. MAIN RESULTS

First of all the dimensionality of our data matrix was checked, against the original one developed by West and collegues (Dawson *et al*., 2006). We first focused first on the dimension of leadership processes and style. After having checked the normality of distribution, we run both the Sampling Adequacy test and the Test of Sphericity (tab.1), to verify if our data matrix could be “factorialized”. Results were excellent.

Table 1. Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.949
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6238.514
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis, varimax rotation, was then performed (tab. 2), with the Maximum Likelihood (ML) extraction method, together with both the the eigen-values criteria and the scree plot of Cattell (fig. 1) in order to avoid extract too less factors, which is to be considered a more serious mistake than overfactoring (Cattell, 1978; Rummel, 1970). Notwithstanding, the results show a reduction from the three original factors to two factors, *namely coaching* style and *managerial style* towards teamwork, where the first one refers to the dimension of interpersonal support (e.g. item: "The leader of my team provides encouragement and support when the team has a difficult or stressful task") and the second one refers to the dimension of control and task management (e.g. item: "The leader of my team helps the team organise and co-ordinate work activities to avoid delays, duplication of effort and wasted resources").

Table 2. Total Variance Explained (Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood)

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11,729	68,991	68,991	11,429	67,227	67,227	8,048	47,339	47,339
2	1,286	7,563	76,554	1,052	6,190	73,417	4,433	26,078	73,417
3	,897	5,278	81,832						
4	,534	3,143	84,975						
5	,416	2,448	87,423						
6	,306	1,798	89,221						
7	,267	1,572	90,793						
8	,256	1,506	92,299						
9	,231	1,361	93,660						
10	,218	1,282	94,942						
11	,168	,991	95,933						
12	,151	,887	96,820						
13	,125	,736	97,556						
14	,118	,696	98,253						
15	,117	,687	98,939						
16	,104	,613	99,553						
17	,076	,447	100,000						

For both the subscales of coaching (13 items) and managerial (4 items) styles towards teamwork, we have controlled for the reliability, with the first one showing an Alpha of Crombach of .97 and the latter one of .90. Also for the questionnaire sector related to team work outcomes, we first checked the dimensionality against the original version of ATPI.

After having checked kurtosis and skewness, both the Sampling Adequacy test and the test of sphericity was run (tab. 3) in order to be sure that our data matrix can be "factorialize" (Giannini and Pannocchia, 2006), with excellent results.

Figure 1. Scree plot of Cattell

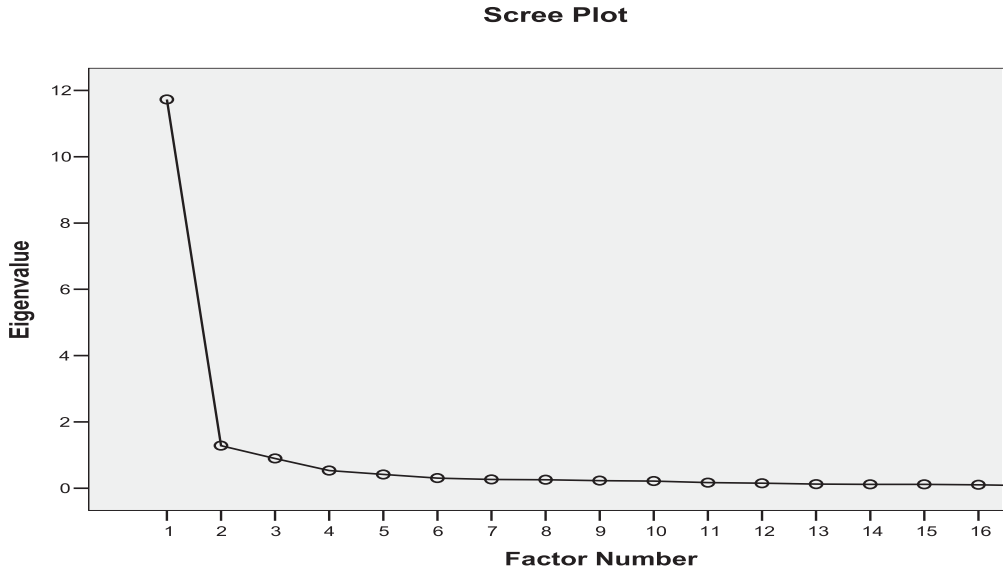

Table 3. Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.922
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5371.677
	df	210
	Sig.	,000

A confirmatory factor analysis, oblimin rotation, was then run, choosing to consider the only eigen values greater than 1 as extraction suggestion, since the scree plot actually was not at all able to discriminate, with a first factorial solution including four factors, in spite of the five ones of the original version of ATPI. In order to be sure to extract the right number of factors (actually 4 factors seemed to be an ideal solution, not only in comparison to the original version of ATPI but also in terms of the items' congruity), and in order to be sure to avoid an underestimation of the numbers of factors, which is always, as we have already stressed, a more serious mistake in comparison to overfactoring. Finally a CFA was run, using as extraction criteria the maximum likelihood method (ML). Results are shown on table 4.

The final factorial solution includes five factors, as the original dimensionality of the scale suggests, with an adequately strong goodness of fit Chi-Square (115, N= 367) = 467.69, $p < .001$, and with high theoretical coherence in terms of items' contents.

The reliability test for the subscales showed thay are all satisfactory: Effectiveness (3 items) shows an Alpha of Crombach of .78; Member Attchment (3 items) of .83; Team Innovation (4 items) of .86; Inter-team Relationships (5 items) of .85; Member satisfaction (6 items) of .89. To test our hypothesis concerning the different leadership styles towards teamwork, which is a dimension considered in the model of West as an important predictor of all the teamwork outcomes, we run an ANOVA. Results are shown in table 6.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained (Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood)

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10,514	50,068	50,068	10,170	48,429	48,429
2	1,756	8,364	58,432	1,430	6,811	55,240
3	1,244	5,923	64,355	,905	4,308	59,548
4	1,226	5,837	70,191	,857	4,080	63,628
5	,895	4,263	74,454	,684	3,257	66,885
6	,736	3,505	77,959			
7	,565	2,689	80,648			
8	,529	2,518	83,166			
9	,483	2,299	85,465			
10	,424	2,020	87,485			
11	,382	1,819	89,304			
12	,326	1,553	90,857			
13	,297	1,413	92,270			
14	,263	1,254	93,524			
15	,258	1,230	94,754			
16	,242	1,154	95,908			
17	,196	,934	96,842			
18	,187	,893	97,735			
19	,176	,837	98,572			
20	,165	,783	99,356			
21	,135	,644	100,000			

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Coaching Leadership				
	Public	200	2.54	1.02
	NPO	113	4.06	.70
	Total	313	3.09	1.17
Managerial Leadership				
	Public	201	3.00	1.13
	NPO	122	4.03	.74
	Total	323	3.39	1.11

Table 6. Results of ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Coaching leadership	Between Groups	166.476	1	166.476	194.986	.000
	Within Groups	265.527	311	.854		
	Total	432.003	312			
Managerial leadership	Between Groups	80.201	1	80.201	79.707	.000
	Within Groups	322.989	321	1.006		
	Total	403.190	322			

Results confirm and H1b, since Non profit organizations present stronger leadership towards team work both in terms of ability to coach and ability to manage. We finally run another group of ANOVAs tests, to understand which were the differences between public sector and non profit sectors in terms of team work outcomes and effectiveness. Results are shown in tables 7 and 8.

Table 6. Descriptives statistics

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
Dimension	**Org.Type**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**	**Min.**	**Max.**
Team effectiveness									
	Public	206	2.6262	1.05357	.07341	2.4815	2.7709	1.00	5.00
	NPO	154	3.6753	.81110	.06536	3.5462	3.8044	1.33	5.00
	Total	360	3.0750	1.08830	.05736	2.9622	3.1878	1.00	5.00
Member attachment									
	Public	205	3.8146	1.07269	.07492	3.6669	3.9624	1.00	5.00
	NPO	155	4.2280	.71447	.05739	4.1146	4.3413	2.00	5.00
	Total	360	3.9926	.95647	.05041	3.8935	4.0917	1.00	5.00
Team innovation									
	Public	205	2.9451	.92704	.06475	2.8175	3.0728	1.00	5.00
	NPO	153	3.7353	.75286	.06087	3.6150	3.8555	1.50	5.00
	Total	358	3.2828	.94109	.04974	3.1850	3.3806	1.00	5.00
InterTeam relations									
	Public	204	2.8686	.94956	.06648	2.7375	2.9997	1.00	5.00
	NPO	151	3.4411	.85395	.06949	3.3037	3.5784	1.00	5.00
	Total	355	3.1121	.95204	.05053	3.0127	3.2115	1.00	5.00
Member statisfaction									
	Public	206	3.1448	.95732	.06670	3.0133	3.2763	1.00	5.00
	NPO	149	4.0604	.70317	.05761	3.9466	4.1742	1.33	5.00
	Total	355	3.5291	.97066	.05152	3.4278	3.6304	1.00	5.00

Table 7. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Team effectiveness	Between Groups	96.990	1	96.990	105.795	.000
	Within Groups	328.207	358	.917		
	Total	425.197	359			
Member attachment	Between Groups	15.079	1	15.079	17.227	.000
	Within Groups	313.346	358	.875		
	Total	328.425	359			
Team innovation	Between Groups	54.702	1	54.702	74.478	.000
	Within Groups	261.475	356	.734		
	Total	316.177	357			
InterTeam relations	Between Groups	28.433	1	28.433	34.323	.000
	Within Groups	292.425	353	.828		
	Total	320.858	354			
Member Statisfaction	Between Groups	72.480	1	72.480	98.009	.000
	Within Groups	261.053	353	.740		
	Total	333.533	354			

Again, in comparison to the public sector, NPOs present higher levels o f teamwork outcomes, both in terms of individual and organizational outcomes. Therefore H2 is not confirmed.

5. DISCUSSION

Data Anlisys confirmed most of the hypothesys. More in details, NPOs emerged as having stronger coaching and managerial leadership than Public Sector organizations. This last result is quite interesting, since Italian NPOs' leaders are mainly trained on-the-job, enjoy scarce opportunities of faormal training and are quite often choosen in reason of their seniority in the organization (Benevene and Cortini, 2010). On the other hand, these results can be explaine with the proiority usually assigned to teamwork by organizational culture NPOs, as well as their long-lasting pratice in this field.

H2a and H2b are confirmed, too, since NPOs show higher level of both member attachment to team work and member satisfaction for team work. This results may be explained with the strong attention paid by NPOs in keeping up the motivation of their members, which is one of the biggest challenges faced by NPOs, since literature review shows that is a crucial element to compensate lower wages of their employees and therefore to retain them (Benz, 2005; 2006).

H2c, H2d and H2e are not confirmed, since NPOs show higher level not only of team effectiveness, but also of management of inter-team relationships as well as team innovation.

These results might be read in connection with the NPOs' strong tendency to learn from their environment in order to better serve their targets/customers with their services, as well as to understand new requests and needs coming from the situation in which they operate. For what concerns the Italian scenario, for example, NPOs were the first organizations working with rehabilitation and social integration of disabled people, immigrants, HIV patients and, drug addicts, just to mention a few.

Our study's biggest limit is that the group reached is a convenience sample, not a statistical representative sample. Further development of this research might compare groups of Non profit, Profit and Public Sector employees and from different countries, in order to test cross-cultural hypothesis, standing that, for example, individualistic and collectivist cultures may express quite different values related to teamwork.

Finally, results emerging from our research suggest to further investigate the Non Profit sector, which might well offer some examples of best practices in terms of teamwork, which could be tested and eventually mutuated in the Public sector and For-profit Sector organization. Up to now managerial literature have approached the management of NPOs in the opposite way: that is verifying which of the methods and practices already applied among For-profit and Public organization might have eventually be endorsed also among the Third Sector ones.

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