

# Enhancing Group Cohesiveness In Organisations- An Exploratory Review

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**Abstract:** Organisations of any kind function because of human interactions which define the degree of productivity which these organisations can achieve at any time of their existence, these interactions occur in groups bound together by group cohesiveness, and many scholars have posited that the effectiveness of any group of individuals whether they are members in a given family, communities or employees in a given organisation is anchored upon the degree of strength of its group cohesiveness. In other words, typical organisations achieve immense results because of the nature of its team of employees. This article provides any explorative review of key literature which highlights the importance of and ways that Managers in organisations can use to enhance Group Cohesiveness to act as a catalyst that will promote Organisations growth.

**Keywords:** Enhancing, Group, Cohesiveness, Organisations.

## 1.0 Introduction

### Definition of Group Cohesiveness

Studies on group dynamics have given many varying definitions of the term “group cohesiveness” (Greer, 2012). According to Daft.L.R. and Marcic. D, group cohesiveness refers to the extent to which members are attracted to the group and motivated to remain to be part of the group. (Daft & Marcic, 2001). The Management Study HQ, further defines group cohesion as “the degree of closeness that the individual members feel with the group that they belong to.” (Management Study Guide, H.Q, 2017) , it further identifies the strength of the members’ desires to remain as part of the group and the degree of commitment to the group, the stronger the members’ desires to be part of the group, the higher the chances of the group registering longtime (lifetime) members, this will not only be to the benefit of the individual group members but has greater beneficial effects to the organisation, in other words, strong and cohesive work groups have beneficial effects to the organisation. Mullins L.J identifies some of the advantages of Cohesive groups as being that; cohesive groups increase interaction among members hence leading to greater interaction between members which results in mutual help, social satisfaction, lowers employee turnover, lowers absenteeism, and often higher production. (Mullins, 2005). Mullins L.J, further observes that membership of a cohesive group can be a rewarding experience for the individual, because it can contribute to the promotion of morale, and aid the release of creativity and energy among the members who are the employees of the organisation. (Mullins, 2005). Studies have established that there exists a relationship between a strong group performance and a high level of group cohesion among the members. Adeleke et al established that groups that have higher group cohesion, and also had higher organisation tenure outperformed those groups that with lower cohesion and also have lower organizational tenure. (Adeleke, Jianguo, & Uchechi, 2015).

## 2.0 Factors influencing group cohesion in Organisations

Group cohesion is influenced by many factors. According to Mullins L.J, these factors can be categorized into four main categories, namely; membership, work environment,

organisation, and group development and maturity. (Mullins, 2005) In relation to group membership, some of the factors that can influence group cohesion include size of the group, compatibility of the members and permanence. **The size of the group** influences the level of interaction among the members of a given group. A small group size with a few group members encourages interaction among the members while a large group size limits interaction among group members. A large group restricts the extent of communication and interaction with each other. (Management Study Guide, H.Q, 2017), Large groups may lead to the creation of smaller groups leading to the dilution of the common group goals and objectives which results into rebellion, creation of many power centers, role fighting among other issues, which all will reduce group cohesion. Considering the **compatibility of the members**, when a group is homogeneous in terms of its characteristics like; shared backgrounds, interests, attitudes and values of its members, it is usually easier to promote cohesiveness. Variations in other individual differences, such as the personality or skills of members, may serve to complement each other and help to create a cohesive group. Lastly, on the **permanence of the group**, where members take a long time in a given group, they are likely to be closer and friendly to one another and will understand one another more easily as compared to a group where membership is relatively temporary. Influences on the **work environment** like shared goals and values, nature of task, physical setting, communication and technology can influence group cohesiveness. The nature of the task that the group is to perform enhances group cohesiveness. The **shared goals and values** that bind the group members together can enhance group cohesion. When group goals are clearly formulated involving all the group members and all the members agree on the goals, it will make the group more cohesive. (Daft & Marcic, 2001). Sharing goals can occur only in a group where members are like minded (i.e. have similar interests) and once this has occurred then it will build more trust among the members thus bringing them closer than ever before. The nature of tasks that the group is to perform will bring its members close together. Members facing similar tasks face similar problems and challenges and are more likely to be closer together. (Mullins, 2005). The physical setting of the organisation is very critical in

promoting group cohesion especially if the members stay, or work in the same setting. Communication and technology is very key in promoting effective group cohesion. Communication promotes constant interaction among members and if they are always in constant contact and spend more time together, there is a likelihood of the team developing very strong cohesion. (Daft & Marcic, 2001). In fact, the more time members spend with one another, the more they share experiences, problems and get emotional support over the challenges that they are facing and this brings them closer together. The level of interaction is determined by the amount time the members spend together. It is a fact that as people spend time with one another they get to know one another better, thus drawing one another together and hence strong cohesion forces. (Management Study Guide, H.Q, 2017). Furthermore, **organisational factors** like management and leadership, personnel policies and procedures, success, and external threat. Management and leadership of a group play a key role in fostering group cohesion. A group leader led by a democratic and consultative will have trusted and committed members who will work more closely together than a group where members are led by an autocratic leader. Personnel policies and procedures used to administer the group will also will promote group cohesion if they are fair and promote equity in the group as opposed to a group where the policies and procedures are repressive to the members of the group. Previous Successes and achievements of the group can enhance group cohesion, when a group achieves a meaningful goal, the cohesiveness of the group increases because the success is shared by all the members and each one feels responsible for the achievement. For example, when a sports team wins an important game, everyone in the team congratulates every other member of the team for this success, in other words, if a group has a series of successes, it builds a united team spirit, for this reason, successful organisations find it easier to hire new talented employees. The other organisational factor is **the presence of threats and competition** (Daft & Marcic, 2001) and (Management Study Guide, H.Q, 2017). It is important to note that, whenever a common group goal is threatened, cohesiveness increases. Also, such cohesiveness increases the awareness on importance of the goals. Whenever the group fights for a goal then the goal gets the highest priority, for example, when an organisation is threatened by a takeover by an aggressive competitor, the members of management suddenly form a united front, peaking group cohesiveness, which fights off the threats posed, thus management threats frequently bring together an otherwise disarrayed group of shareholders which makes it hard to threaten group to take over the organisation. Group cohesiveness can also be affected by factors related to **group growth and development** like mutual acceptance and membership; communication and decision-making, motivation and productivity; and control and organisation. Mutual acceptance and membership is important in promoting group cohesion for example where there is voluntary acceptance of the members to join the group, group cohesiveness is less stronger, on the other hand, where members' group membership is strict and is not easy to join and the members are very carefully selected, the selected members feels a sense of pride and accomplishment, because they managed break through the tight terms and conditions of joining the group, this makes the members to be more cohesive in the

group, this is common with elite groups where the members are selected on the basis of some characteristics common to all members such as; social status, hobbies, etc., which make them to like and be attracted towards each other. The more exclusive the group, the more is the closeness among members. This is common with some exclusive clubs and societies which some individuals join like sports talented persons like to join like; tennis and golf clubs among others.

### 3.0 Conclusion

Group cohesiveness is an anchor in ensuring effective and efficient operations of a given group (team) of employees. It is also a very important consideration for the survival of any group without which a group will collapse, hence which affect the parent organisation.

### 4.0 References

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### Author Profile



Ilukor Geresom is a Versatile Public Health and Management specialist with over 15 years of experience in the Public and Private health and education sectors. He is currently a Principal Health Tutor and Deputy Principal at

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