

# Developments In Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 21, 1994

## HOW DIFFERENT WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES AFFECT DIFFERENT WORKER VALUES

Nancy S. Sampson and Carroll C. Halterman, University of Denver

### ABSTRACT

Members of Competitive (N = 79), Creative (N = 295) and Productive (N = 185) team members differ in their perceptions of the importance of a team's workplace characteristics. Each team category views "a challenging goal" as its **most** important requirement, and "outside support and recognition" as its **least** important one. Each of the three team categories differs in the importance given to members' "knowing their jobs, and to "designing the team for results." Creative team members attach **less** importance to performance expectations" than do members of either Productive or Competitive teams. Competitive **team members** attach more importance to members' "knowing their jobs" and "doing whatever is necessary" than do members of the other two groups. **Female and male team** members in the combined sample **differ**. Females see both members' "liking and trusting" each other and a "competent, respected, and fair leader" as **more** important than do males. Males of Competitive, Creative, and Productive teams differ on six of the eight scales used for assessment.

### TODAY'S TRAINING FOCUSES ON TEAMS

Today, understanding the context of team performance and development is of primary importance (See Sims, D. 1979; Manz & Sims Jr., 1987; Bottger & Yetton, 1987; Pearce and Ravlin (1987), Sundstrom, De Meuse, & Futrell, 1990; Hoerr & Zellner, 1989; Larson & LaFasto, 1989; and Coleman, 1991). Such groups are the *basic building blocks of organizations*. say Woodman and Sherwood (1980). Robert Keidel (1989) extends the range of such groups to include sports teams.

**We Already Know a Lot About Teams.**--Researchers have patiently explored the effects on teams of (a) different *training* methods (Sampson, Spagnola, and Halterman, 1991; Becker, 1992; Specht and Sandlin, 1991); (b) the *gender* of team-members (Halterman, Dutkiewicz, and Halterman, 1991); (c) their *nationality* (Sims & Dennehey, 1992); and (d) their *personality* (Patz, (1992). All of these investigators find significantly prominent relationships.

Differences exist between teams in different types of *operations*--depending on their tasks, their backgrounds, and the kinds of problems they solve (cf. Sundstrom, De Meuse, and Futrell; Coleman; Halterman & Sampson. 1992; and Patz. Why is this so? Katz and Kahn (1 978) explain that people achieve self-identity with their work, and that work activities play a **critical role** in shaping their norms, beliefs and values. Since teams differ in the types of tasks they perform, a key determinant of their characteristics and organizational norms is the *type of (sustained) activity* in which they are involved (pp.389, 394). Day-to-day occupational activity is a robust learning experience.

This research focuses on the different workplace values of teams, which regularly solve three kinds of problems: *productive, creative, or competitive*.

### THE THREE DIFFERENT ACTIVITY TYPES EXAMINED

**Type I: The Productive Teamwork Sample: N= 185.**--Respondents from successful production and assembly businesses comprise the "Productive" team sample. The largest of these activities has experienced a long period of formal team-building and is very

successful in meeting rigorous production specifications and deadlines. The company performs research, design, testing and production functions. The sample segment from this operation is from their Production division.

The next largest of these activities is an a business skilled in meeting the demands of commercial customers. Its reputation for performance is well above average, and it is seen as a "growing" concern. Respondents are mostly mid-career and upward mobile. The third activity is a high tech design and production operation, nationally prominent in signage and allied products. The employees are craftspeople and skilled professionals.

**Type II: The Creative Teamwork Sample: N = 295.**--Respondents from successful Odyssey of the Mind (OM) teams comprise the "Creative" team sample.

OM is an excellent example of effective team building technology (Cf. Klimoski & Karol; Bigoness & Perrault Jr.; Basadur, Graen & Green; Bottger & Yetton; and Micklus & Micklus, 1989). Using an experientially based approach to developing creative and innovative teams, it prepares members to solve complex problems. All solutions must come from team members. Respondents are sampled while attending state, regional, and national meets.

**Type III: The Competitive Teamwork Sample: N=79.**--Respondents from top-tier WCHA/NCAA teams comprise the "Competitive" team sample.

Hockey players develop skill on the ice in their sixteen years. Teamwork begins early under coaches who mold youngsters into articulated competitive units. Hockey players work very closely together. There are endless new team experiences--many competitions--many teammates--and continuous striving. By 17 or 18 years of age, the best are experts in their sport. Teams compete hard--and their battle cry is "Win!" Researcher Keidel claims different athletic units run the gamut of organizational behavior patterns.

### THE ASSESSMENT METHOD

Management characteristics critical to the performance of successful teams are expressed as behavioral aphorisms. This approach to capturing work-group members' values and beliefs has been streng

### EXHIBIT 1. EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS.

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| A. | Team members know the project's goals, and are challenged by them.                         |
| B. | The team is designed to get results.   |
| C. | Team members know their jobs, and how to get them done.                                    |
| D. | Members will do whatever is needed for the project's success.                              |
| E. | Members like, trust, and help each other.  |
| F. | Team members have high performance standards, and expect high performance from each other. |
| G. | The project gets outside support, resources, and recognition.                              |
| H. | The team leader is seen as competent, respected, and fair.                                 |

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TABLE 1. STATISTICS FOR THE THREE GROUPS

	Hock 79 Mn	(odsy) 295 Mn	(prod) 185 Mn	(Hock) 79 Mn	F	
GOAL	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	.31	.74
JOBS	*1.4	*1.8	*1.6	1.4	7.6	#.001
TRUST	1.6	*1.6	*1.9	1.6	7.1	#.001
LEAD	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	.44	.64
EXPCT	*1.6	*1.9	1.7	1.6	4.6	#.011
DO	*1.4	2.0	*2.0	1.4	12.1	#.000
DESGN	*1.9	*2.3	*1.6	1.9	19.0	#.000
SUPPT	2.5	*2.5	*2.1	2.5	8.1	#.000

•Sign @ .05 with adjacent column.

MANOVA F for 3 grps—6.97. p = .000.

thened by other investigators (Larson & LaFasto; Menzel, 1991; Neslund, 1991; and Sampson, Spagnola & Halterman) Importantly, it has been found that different kinds of work-groups differ in how they place importance on different workplace characteristics (Hal

TABLE 2. ALL MALES AND FEMALES COMPARED.

ITEM	TOTAL Mean	MALES Mean	FEMS Mean	F F	SIG p
GOAL	1.48	1.52	1.44	1.36	.24
JOBS	1.68	1.70	1.65	.40	.53
TRUST	1.70	1.79	1.57	8.16	.004 *
LEAD	1.73	1.86	1.56	11.27	.001 *
EXPECT	1.81	1.86	1.74	1.77	.184
DO	1.89	1.96	1.78	3.64	.06
DESIGN	2.01	1.97	2.07	.98	.32
SUPPOR	2.36	2.36	2.32	.18	.674
*=Significant ANOVA at .05				MANOVA F=2.68; p=.008 (for 3 groups)	

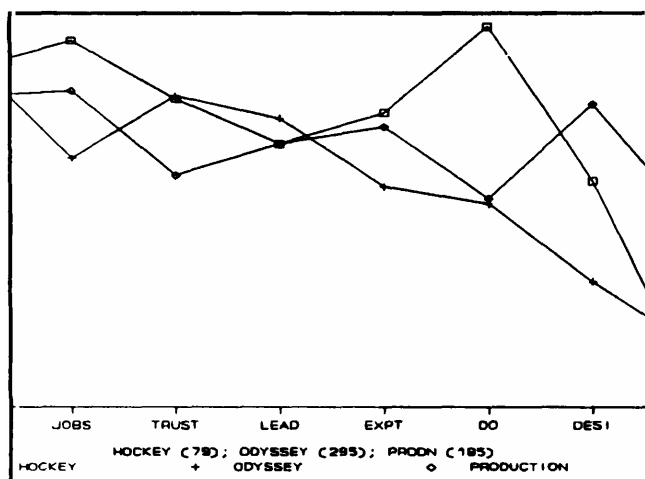
terman, 1992). The instrument itself proposes eight specific statements to be evaluated (see Exhibit 1).

Respondents are asked to indicate "the extent to which you believe (the particular statements is necessary for an effective team " They reply on a 5-point Likert scale, where "1" represents "very important" and "5" represents "not very important." Cochran's alpha equals .72.

From the three categories of team members sampled, 546 usable responses are obtained. Two null hypotheses order the analysis.

**Hypothesis<sub>1</sub>** There are no differences in the way team members assess the importance of workplace characteristics, when responses from Creative, Competitive, and Productive teams are compared.

**Hypothesis<sub>2</sub>** There are no differences in the way team members assess the importance of workplace characteristics, when responses from males and females are compared.



THE STATISTICAL APPROACH AND RESULTS.

Data are processed by SPSSX. Mean scores, variation, and F scores are reported. Tables 1 and 2 display results.

**Hypothesis<sub>1</sub>** is rejected (see Table 1). The multivariate F of 6.97 indicates that the three samples are each from a different population. Specifically they differ (ANOVA) on six of the scales!

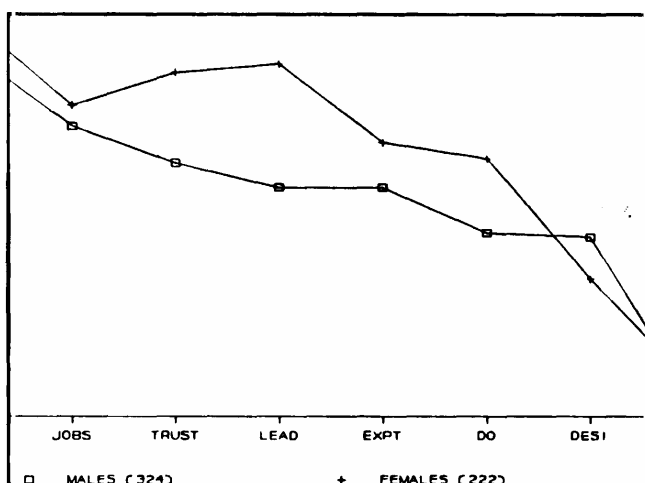
**Hypothesis<sub>2</sub>** is rejected (see Table 2). The multivariate F of 2.58 indicates that females and males differ. Females see both liking and TRUSTING each other, and a competent and fair LEADER as more important than do males.

Table 3 shows how males of the three types of teams compare. A MANOVA F of 5.71 indicates that males of the three-team types differ. ANOVA results show them differing on 6 of the eight scales! (see Figure 3).

## DISCUSSION

[See Table 1] The univariate F's of 7.6 (JOBS); 7.1 (TRUST); 4.6 (EXPECT); 12.1(DO); 19.0 (DESIGN); and 8.1 (SUPPORT); indicate that real differences exist between respondents for each of the three teams. (See Figure 1.) Data have been transformed in the figures, so

FIGURE 2. ALL MALES & FEMALES COMPARED



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that the highest values are conventionally furthest from the X-origin.

Table 1 and figure 1 reveal the following: (a) all of the teams differ in their perceptions of the importance of "knowing their jobs..." and

**FIGURE 3. HOW THE THREE MALE GROUPS DIFFER.**

WORK	COMPETI	PRODUC	CREA		
	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	sig.
GOAL	1.51	1.56	1.47	.39	.677
JOBS	1.41	1.68	1.90	7.13	.001
TRUST	1.63	1.95	1.73	3.42	.034
LEAD	1.78	1.85	1.89	.24	.790
EXPECT	1.58	1.86	2.02	4.97	.008
DO	1.36	2.16	2.14	17.62	.000
DESIGN	1.92	1.76	2.21	6.15	.002
SUPPOR	2.56	1.98	2.61	10.18	.000

PILLAIS F (MANOVA) - 5.71; p - .000  
INDICATES ANOVA RESULTS

"Work group Design": (b) Creative teams attach less importance to "Performance expectations..." than do Production teams (Table 11; Cc) the Competitive group sees knowing JOBS; performance EXPECTATIONS; and DOING whatever is necessary as having more importance than do the other two. (d) the Production group places the most importance on workgroup DESIGN, and on outside SUPPORT. (5) Competitive teams attach more importance to team members' "Knowing their jobs..."; and "Doing whatever is necessary..." than do *either of the other two teams!*

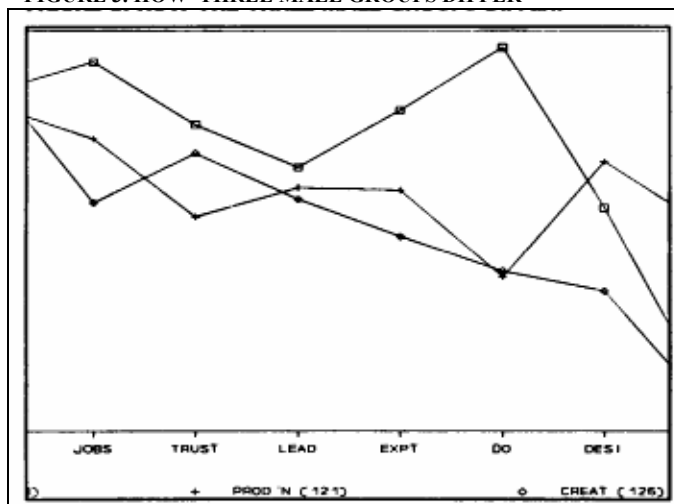
Finally, (6) all teams closely agree on the specific level of importance to attach to "Goals" and to the "Leader."

### CONCLUSIONS

This research finds differences in the workplace values of Competitive, Creative and Productive teams.

It also finds that female team members differ from males.

**FIGURE 3. HOW THREE MALE GROUPS DIFFER**



All three categories differ on "knowing their jobs..." and "work team design."

Competitive and Creative team members differ on members' "doing whatever is necessary," and on "high performance standards...."

Creative and Productive teams differ on members' "liking and trusting..." each other, and on "high performance standards...."

Productive and Competitive teams differ on members' "doing whatever is necessary...", and on "liking and trusting..." each other.

Male and female respondents differ in "liking and trusting..." each other, and on a "competent, respected and fair leader."

While male team members don't disagree on "...a challenging goal" and a "competent, respected and fair leader," they differ on all other characteristics.

Our findings suggest to us that a student brings with her or him specific job-related values.

A careful understanding of these experience-related preferences [and their relationships with the new workplace or training culture] is probably critical if each trainee's schooling and development is to be pragmatic, cost efficient and effective.

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