Teamwork and its contribution to High Performance Workplace Organization

This is the French contribution to the topic report on Teamwork and its contribution to High Performance Workplace Organization for the European Working Conditions Observatory.

Q.0  Firstly, the correspondents are asked to describe shortly the surveys (dates, coverage, size and response rates, in case of qualitative surveys the leading methodology) used in answering the questions. Correspondents are asked to report on all relevant available surveys such as:

Q.0.1 working conditions national representative surveys (quantitative methodology)

To keep this category, the national representativeness is the most important criterion. The population surveyed might be employees, employers, HR specialists, social representatives etc.

We could find only one national representative survey, conducted in 1997 on “Organisational Changes and Computerization” by DARES

This study is labelizied "COI"

Details of the "Organisational Change and Computerisation" (COI) survey conducted in 1997

The COI matches surveys conducted across firms, mainly in the manufacturing and food industries, with questionnaires put to employees. The two sections of the survey comprise various questions dealing with themes such as working in groups and collective work practices. The labour force section of the COI survey was conducted by the Ministry of Labour (Dares). It followed on from previous surveys on "Work Organisation and Technique" (TOTTO) conducted in 1987 and 1993. 4,804 "stable" employees (with at least one years' seniority) were drawn at random from firms with fifty or more employees in the manufacturing and food industries (with the exception of the energy sector) and answered questions on their daily work. The sample comprised 621 managerial staff, 1,162 technicians and supervisors, 392 employees, 1,742 skilled workers and 870 unskilled workers. In addition to these 4,787 employees came six company directors and eleven persons for whom information on their profession was lacking. The business section of the survey focused on organisational practices. The questionnaire was sent to a representative of the firm in question, the usual contact person for statistical surveys conducted by the Ministry of Industry.
Q.0.2 case studies at company level (quantitative methodology - e.g. larger sample of employees; structured questionnaire used)

This category of surveys differs from the previous one by national representativeness. The survey sample is often constituted by employees of one company only.

We have no information about company level studies. We looked for, but we could not find quantitative methodology surveys. In addition, we cannot get access to private companies surveys, which are realized for their own needs and not for further publication.

Q.0.3 qualitative studies (at different levels)

Studies where qualitative methods have been used to understand teamwork and its consequences.

The main qualitative study we could find is the "post-enquête" of COI survey.

This study is labelized "[PE-COI]"

The qualitative "post survey" phase, further to study of the COI

*The post-survey phase consisted of semi-directive interviews conducted with individuals selected from those employees who stated that they "worked collectively", so as to build a diverse sample of cases according to company size (more or less than 500 employees), region (half of the interviews had to be conducted in the provinces), as well as social-professional group (Gheorghiu, 2001). The age of the respondents ranged from 30 to 55 years old. The sample comprised eight blue collar workers (including one unemployed worker), nine technicians and supervisors, six sales representatives, six managers (including three project leaders), as well as one accountant and a company nurse. The sample included eight women and two-thirds of the interviews were conducted in the Paris region. The interviews were biographical and focused on changes to both work organisation and the content of work itself. They allowed for an analysis of different perceptions of change, its effect and the "personal experience" of individuals with regard to collective work. The interview guide aimed first and foremost to define different forms of cooperation in the workplace.*

Please see more details on Q9, at the end of this document.

*Note*: ANACT, the French correspondent of European Working Conditions Observatory, is neither a national statistic institution, nor directly and formally related to the French national statistic institutions. As a result, ANACT has not
direct access to the raw data of the surveys. On specific request from the ANACT, these institutions may provide further information (like the questionnaires used in the surveys), but not necessarily on all the points (especially on raw data not processed and/or published).

Secondly, the structure of most of the questions will be very similar. Each question is divided into three sections (each section has its own box). Your answers are supposed to be jot down into particular boxes.

- BOX 1 Question wordings
- BOX 2 Content and main findings - national representative surveys
- BOX 3 Content and main findings - case studies both quantitative and qualitative

It is very difficult to capture some of the following issues by national representative quantitative data both because of the nature of the issue and also because of scarce occurrence of these questions in national representative surveys. As we are well aware that there is a lack of quantitative data we would like to stress importance of the third box “Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative” where expert opinion and synthesis of existing case studies are required.

Q.1 National correspondents are asked to give question wordings and figures which deal with the extent of teamwork.

Question wordings (Q.1a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National representative surveys and quantitative case studies: We are interested how national representative surveys and quantitative case studies cover teamwork extent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[COI] 40 Do you ever do your work in a group or collectively?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - yes 2 - no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 b If the survey states group work (‘yes’ to Q.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a – who do you do this group work with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1 – colleagues from the same work unit as you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - yes 2 - no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a2 – other people from your company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - yes 2 - no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a3 – people from outside your company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - yes 2 - no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b – would you say that this group work is more...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – design, research or study work 2 – manufacturing or production work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c – how much of your working time is spent working in a group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – all of the time or almost all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – one quarter of my time or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – less than one quarter or my time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d – have you received any specific training for group work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - yes 2 - no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 For your work, do you take part in any meetings ... ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of times per week/per month/per year

These are wordings of qualitative case studies: [PE-COI]

Do you ever have the opportunity to discuss collectively, with other people in your service, any moral and emotional difficulties that you encounter with patients, their families or other people?
*If yes (more than one answer possible)*
- do these discussions take place within the framework of organised meetings?
  - yes, regularly
  - yes, irregularly (on an occasional basis)
  - no
- would you be given any counselling/support if you expressed the need?

Questions on working rhythm, cooperation and collective work

Q. 39 Are you able to contact or to call for the intervention of medical staff easily?

Q. 44.3 on the reaction to any dysfunction (When something abnormal happens in the course of your work, do you generally call upon other people - a superior, a colleague, a specialist department)?

Q. 49 If you have difficulty in performing a delicate task, are you assisted by...?
  (medical staff, superiors...);
  Do you have to agree with your colleagues on how to organise your working hours?
  In the event of any unforeseen event, can you change your working hours by asking your colleagues to cover for you?

C. Additional questions on cooperation and collective work

- What changes have been made to the organisation of work in your company over recent years?
- How has your professional activity changed over the same period?
- Would you envisage changing to work in a different sector of activity (or profession)?
- What do you think of your colleagues with the same profession (activity) as you in another company or another sector: they are more autonomous? they have better cooperation relations in their collective work situations?

Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.1.b)

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue of extent of teamwork from national representative quantitative surveys. Please give figures broken down by gender, occupation, sector, company size (0-49; 50-249,250 and more employees), educational attainment, type of ownership. If trend is available please give the trend data with commentary.

As new forms of work organization, cooperation and collective work are main stakes for managers to improve productivity and help stimulating employees’ involvement. But these key notions in the modern literature of management are polysemous and based on divergent representations between managers and employees. The study analyses ‘industry employees’ replies to a survey conducted in 1997 on “Organisational Changes and Computerization” and post-investigation interviews about collective work. The meanings and stakes of collective work strongly depend on the place in the organization. Statistics comparing individual and collective work show that the last one is especially developed in large companies with complex organization. [COI]

Above all, collective work tends to concern the most highly qualified employees. In
1997, 59% of employees in the COI survey stated that "they did part of their work in a group or collectively".

In nine out of ten cases, this group work was "done with colleagues belonging to the same work unit". But it was no longer done in a vacuum: in almost one in two cases, group work was done "with other people from the company" and in one in every four cases "with people from outside the company". Collective work was particularly common for the most highly skilled employees, particularly when they had hierarchical or technical responsibilities (see table 1). Collective work was the general practice for managerial or design posts, while it was less frequent in execution functions and rare for industrial employees, for whom the work organisation is less collective than for blue collar workers. Given the fact that in these structures, the qualifications are formalised and the tasks interdependent, cooperation relations are more frequently organised and acknowledged than in craftsmen-type structures where they may be perceived simply as mutual assistance. [CTS]

Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.1.c)

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of the extent of teamwork

First of all, we must underline that "teamwork" or "collective work" have different signification for workers and for the management.

The intensification of cooperation relations appears related to organizational changes. The relational roles linked to mediation or management activities are increasing. Exchanges inside and outside teams are intensifying, what goes together with an increase and a diversification of information and communication technologies’ use. Worker interviews indicate that words like “co-operation” and “team” often mean “constrained cooperation” and “autonomy under control” However, cooperation relations are not reduced to the members of organized teams or instituted collectives. The working group is distinct from the organization inasmuch as it constitutes for its members a reality sui generis, developing a specific form of sociability (“the team spirit”) and shared ethical values. The respect of others and the in-house settlement of conflicts are the main conditions required “to team up”. Cooperation relations at work are based on durable dispositions, linked to the mode of socialization, and their analysis supposes to take into account the trajectories of the group members and to estimate the individual chances of career associated with teamwork. [TCSI]
Q.2 Do in the national representative surveys or other surveys (case studies) exist questions dealing with the form and teamwork typology?

Question wordings (Q.2.a)

National representative surveys and quantitative case studies: We are interested how national representative surveys and quantitative case studies cover teamwork typology. Correspondents are asked to give relevant question wordings to this issue. We did not find national representative survey or quantitative case studies about teamwork relevant on that specific question. Main findings below are deducted from other questions.

Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.2.b)

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue of teamwork typology from national representative quantitative surveys. What is the incidence of different types of teamwork? Which types of teamwork are characteristic for different occupations, sectors, company size or type of ownership? Please give figures broken down by occupation, sector, company size (0-49; 50-249,250 and more employees).

Nothing found about that topic.

Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.2.c)

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of teamwork typology. What is the incidence of different types of teamwork? Which types of teamwork are characteristic for different occupations, sectors, company size or type of ownership? (the summary and expert reflexion of existing case studies on that issue is required).

The diversity of cooperation situations and relations depends on the individual's position in a group, and the level of recognition afforded to such individuals by their peers (group members) and/or hierarchy.

The meaning of cooperation at work (teamwork, collective work...) reflects both the organisation of professionals in a team and spontaneous interaction between partners engaged in interrelated activities. The dividing line between "formalised" organisational structures and "informal" mutual assistance is ever-moving and is established according to varying criteria in collective work situations. Teamwork is not necessarily synonymous with cooperation when relations are antagonistic or limited to purely functional considerations. [PE-COI]
Q.3 Does teamwork increase autonomy of employees in decision making about their work? Which degrees of self-regulation can be distinguished?

Question wordings (Q.3.a)

36 In general, when your immediate superiors tell you what to do... ?
1 – do they also tell you how to go about doing it
2 – do they tend to give you an objective and then leave it up to you to choose how to achieve that objective

37 Are you able to change the nature and the quantity of the work that you have to do, or the way of going about it
1 - yes 2 - no

37 b In what way?
   a – by discussing it alone with your superiors
      1 - yes 2 - no
   b – by discussing it with your superiors in the presence of your colleagues
      1 - yes 2 - no
   c – by discussing it with your colleagues, in the absence of your superiors
      1 - yes 2 - no
   d – by discussing it with colleagues from other departments
      1 - yes 2 - no

46 Are you able to vary the deadlines for you to do your job?
1 - yes 2 - no 9 – not applicable, no deadlines

We did not find any other national representative survey or quantitative case studies about teamwork. Below are wordings of qualitative case studies

Questions on hierarchical relations (forms of cooperation):
Do you have one or more employees who report to you or who are under your authority?
If yes, (more than one answer possible)
   o are the salary increases, bonuses or promotion of these employees intrinsically linked to you?
   o are you responsible for the regular assessment of the activity of these employees?
   o do their working hours depend on you?
   o are you responsible for the distribution of their work or coordination?

Q. 49 If you have difficulty in performing a delicate task, are you assisted by.?
   (medical staff, superiors...);
Do you have to agree with your colleagues on how to organise your working hours?
In the event of any unforeseen event, can you change your working hours by asking your colleagues to cover for you?

13° Questions on working rhythm, cooperation and collective work
Q. 39 Are you able to contact or to call for the intervention of medical staff easily?
Q. 44.3 on the reaction to any dysfunction (When something abnormal happens in the course of your work, do you generally call upon other people - a superior, a colleague, a specialist department)? [PE-COI]

Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.3.b)

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue of autonomy in a team eventually autonomy at work from national representative quantitative surveys (crosstabs are preferred, correlations, other reported associations). If trend is available please give the trend data with commentary.

Collective workers have more autonomy with regard to orders, instructions or guidelines: it was most often the collective workers who stated that they did not tend to comply with instructions strictly. However, although this increased autonomy with regard to instructions was particularly marked in managerial staff, this was not the case for technicians, probably due to the rigid nature of technical and safety requirements. Individual autonomy in the face of incidents did not vary according to whether the work was collective or not: in both cases "when something abnormal happened during the course of their work", 56 % of employees stated that they solved the problem themselves. Collective workers had much greater autonomy when it came to changing the nature and quantity of work that they had to do, the deadlines, or the way they went about their work. Although changing deadlines was only possible for foremen, who were bound to comply with production lead times. Collective workers were also more involved in making proposals to improve work stations, processes and machines, particularly since they were the best qualified to do so. [TCSI]

Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.3.c)

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of teamwork and autonomy. We are interested in to what extent the growth in autonomy within the team results in higher work productivity and higher job satisfaction. Good company practices in this respect are required. (the summary and expert reflexion of existing case studies on that issue is required)

Worker interviews indicate that words like “co-operation” and “team” often mean “constrained cooperation” and “autonomy under control”. [PE-COI]

For the employees, collective work was considered to be ambivalent, which bears witness to their varying attitudes towards collective work. On the one hand it was thought to go hand in hand with increased operational autonomy on the shop floor and was characterised by the worker-subject driven by cooperative individualism. On the other, it was associated with more developed normative work supervision, which often led to what could be described as "controlled autonomy". However, it is too simplistic to oppose orders with autonomy ((Moatty, 2001). Although orders or instructions tell people
"what to do", they are applied less strictly by employees who work in groups, which results in the concept of "supervised autonomy": production rules and standards are interpreted as guidelines for action, learning media or means of coordination. [COI]-[CTS]

**Q.4. Can you report on association between overall job satisfaction and teamwork presence? Does teamwork increase job satisfaction?**

**Question wordings (Q.4.a)**

| National representative surveys and quantitative case studies: We are interested how national representative surveys and quantitative case studies cover satisfaction with teamwork and overall satisfaction with job. Correspondents are asked to give relevant question wordings to this issue. We did not find national representative survey or quantitative case studies about teamwork relevant on that question. |

**Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.4.b)**

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue of teamwork (YES/NO) and job satisfaction (SATISFIED/NOT SATISFIED) from national representative quantitative surveys (crosstabs are preferred, correlations, other reported associations). If direct question on satisfaction with teamwork is available please give the figures.

Nothing found about that topic.

**Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.4.c)**

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of teamwork and job satisfaction (the summary and expert reflexion of existing case studies on that issue is required)

Identification with team spirit: conversely belonging to a team was important since it was seen to be gratifying, even if working conditions in a team were perceived to be difficult. The atmosphere and presence of a team spirit are demonstrative of cohesion and set the team apart from other workers as a whole. A team, here a reference group providing a sense of identity, is in a position to affirm its relative autonomy both before the hierarchy and any newcomers. [COI]-[CTS]

**Q.5 Does in your country exist any evidence about interconnection between teamwork presence and higher work intensity and probable work overload?**

Please report on the results from any available sources (both of qualitative and quantitative nature)
**Question wordings (Q.5.a)**

National representative surveys and quantitative case studies: We are interested how national representative surveys and quantitative case studies cover the problems of interconnection between teamwork introduction and higher work intensity and higher stress exposure. Correspondents are asked to give relevant question wordings to this issue.

We did not find national representative survey or quantitative case studies about teamwork relevant on that specific question. Main findings below are deducted from other questions.

**Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.5.b)**

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue of interconnection between teamwork introduction and higher work intensity and higher stress exposure from national representative quantitative surveys. Please use both figures from direct questions and also figures form higher level analysis e.g. teamwork (YES/NO), higher risk of stress occurrence (YES/NO) (crosstabs are preferred, correlations, other reported associations).

The statistical outcomes show that collective workers report the existence of slightly more sustained working rhythms. This tends to concern mainly unskilled workers, in a context where the pace of work is becoming increasingly intense. However, collective work, marked by flexibility constraints, now more rarely consists in repeating the same series of movements or operations over and over again. The perception of accelerated production cycles and resulting time pressure comes hand in hand with increased interdependence with colleagues' work, and the possibility of receiving assistance in the event of heavy workloads or delicate or complicated operations. [COI]-[CTS]

**Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.5.c)**

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of teamwork and higher exposure to overload and stress. Is the work intensity or pace of work higher within organisations which have introduced the work in teams? (the summary and expert reflexion of existing case studies on that issue is required)

**Q.6 What is the impact of teamwork on learning environment in organization?**

**Question wordings (Q.6.a)**

National representative surveys and quantitative case studies: We are interested how national representative surveys and quantitative case studies cover the problems mentioned above. Correspondents are asked to give relevant question wordings to this issue.

We did not find any other national representative survey about teamwork. Below are wordings of qualitative case studies
B. COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

7° Questions on training (forms of cooperation)

17 Do you ever have to train trainees or students in the framework of your usual activity in the workplace for your company (excluding theory lessons)

If yes, would you say that for you this represents (more than one answer possible)

- an extra workload
- a positive element
- no effect on you

[PE-COI]

Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.6.b)

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue of interconnection of teamwork and learning opportunities from national representative quantitative surveys. Do team members use the opportunity to enhance their professional skills in workplace training more than other employees working in different organizational structures?

Collective workers have denser interaction with their usual colleagues and also employees from outside their team. They make intensive use of telephones, the written word or IT tools. These results can be broken down according to profession and the type of technology used. Accordingly, on-line information sharing through terminals is part of group work, while PCs are often for more personal use. [COI]

Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.6.c)

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of teamwork and learning. We are interested in what is the extent of sharing the knowledge within the team. Do employees working in teams have better opportunities to learn new things in the job than other workers?” “Is learning environment within team more stimulating?” (the summary and expert reflexion of existing case studies on that issue is required)

Nothing found about that topic.

(Q.6.d)

It is assumed that teamwork contributes positively to job enrichment and job enlargement (for definition and concept see page n.). As these two job characteristics consists of different attributes of work and cannot be measured directly, they must be operationalised. Can you find in your national studies (both quantitative and qualitative) any reported association between teamwork, job enrichment and job enlargement?

Nothing found about that topic.

Q.7 Work and productivity

It is probable that when answering this question you will be very limited and there will be no question wordings in representative surveys. For all that we can find at least some evidence how workers assess productivity of company or particular department after being involved in the teamwork (See an example).
**Question wordings (Q.7.a)**

National representative surveys and quantitative case studies: We are interested how national representative surveys and quantitative case studies cover the problems what is the impact of teamwork introduction on work effectiveness and productivity. Correspondents are asked to give relevant question wordings to this issue.

We did not find questions about teamwork and productivity in national representative surveys.

Main findings below are deducted from questions on other subjects.

---

**Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.7.b)**

Correspondents are asked to give figures on the issue what is the impact of teamwork introduction on work effectiveness and productivity.

Nothing found in national representative surveys about teamwork and productivity.

---

**Content and main findings – case studies both quantitative and qualitative (Q.7.c)**

Correspondents are asked to give the main findings emerging from the most recent case studies on the issue of teamwork and productivity. (the summary and expert reflexion of existing case studies on that issue is required)

The increased productivity of collective work organisations often results from time pressure, flexibility or compliance with standards. [COI]-[CTS]

---

**Q.8 Company good practices**

Please give particular company examples where teamwork has been introduced and what were the consequences of such organizational change?

We did not find accessible documents relevant on that question.

---

**Q.9 Please reflect briefly on the existing governmental documents, policies, programs or social partners agreements discussing implementation of new work organization forms with emphasis on teamwork at national level.**

We did not find national level documents relevant on that question (implementation of new work organization forms).

---

**Sources**

The COI study, that we used for this “topic report” is the only national representative survey we could find. It was conducted in 1997 on the topic “Organisational Changes and Computerization” by CEE and DARES.

The dispositif COI, coordonnated by CEE, was realized in partnership with:

- **DARES**, Ministère du travail
- **SESSI**, Ministère de l’industrie
- **SCEES**, Ministère de l’agriculture
- **INSEE**, Département des activités tertiaires, Division des DADS
Other works issued from the COI study:

[CTS] "La coopération au travail selon les salariés". Connaissance de l'emploi N°16, mai 2005
Mihaï Dinu Gheorghiu et Frédéric Moatty (Centre d'études de l'emploi).

Post-enquête « Conditions et organisation du travail dans les établissements de santé »
MIHAÏ DINU GHEORGHIU (Centre de sociologie européenne/Conseil général de Seine-Saint-Denis)
FREDERIC MOATTY (CNRS/Centre d'études de l'emploi)
