Teamwork and its contribution to High Performance Workplace Organization

This is the Romanian 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.

Q.0.1 Working conditions national representative survey (quantitative methodology)

There is no nationally representative survey dealing with teamwork issue.

As a matter of fact, there is an important lack of information regarding work organization surveys in Romania, including the ones investigating the teamwork area. Only in the recent period, as the economy became stable and grow, the interest of the specialists and also of the developed companies for these issues started to increase. However, the existing case studies are carried out and kept in a private space by the developed companies for their own use only. That’s why we don’t have the best information for a proper assessment of the teamwork extent and specific particularities.

Q.0.2 Case studies at company level (Quantitative methodology – e.g. larger sample of employees; structured questionnaire used)

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner published in 2004 the second (revised) edition of their cross-country (including Romania) survey: Riding the waves of culture; Understanding cultural diversity in business (RWC). The paper is underpinned by a large research database and analyses cultural differences and how they affect the process of doing business and managing. The survey aims to dispel the idea that there is “one best way” of managing and organizing and to offer a better understanding of the cultural differences by learning how to cope with these in a business context.

This survey differs from every classical market research in which the sample is targeted with the minimum number of cases to cover each relevant attribute (country, gender, age etc.). The authors adopted the approach of collecting a larger dataset with extensive internal variety that enables deductive analysis. In seeking to enhance the estimates of the subjects’ average characteristics in a given national culture, significant efforts have been made to extend the size of the samples, reduce measurement errors and maintain homogeneity. The atypical process of data gathering started several years ago and still continues.
The raw data set counts almost 50,000 cases from over 100 countries. By restricting the analysis to multinational and international corporations, 30,000 comparative valid cases, drawn from 55 countries, were selected. In order to gather comparable samples, minimum 100 subjects with similar backgrounds and occupations were selected in each of the country in which the companies operate. Around 75% of the subjects belong to the management tier (managers in operations, marketing, sales etc.), while the remaining 25% represent general administrative staff (typist, stenographers, secretaries).

The survey uses a structured questionnaire and analysis the impact of local cultural differences on management practices along 7 dimensions: universality or particularity, individualistic or collective behaviour, sentimentality or neutrality, degree of overlap between private and professional life, attributed status or acquired status, attitude towards time and desire to control nature. The authors combined the responses from different questions of the questionnaire to give a scale along each dimension and the data were analysed from these 7 scale perspective.

This database is one of the largest and richest sources of social constructs. The research is continuing to refine its instruments, to extend the number and variety of the investigated subjects and to apply further method of analysis.

Q.0.3 Qualitative studies (at different levels)

The investigation of organizational structures’ effects on some qualitative index of human resources (OSQI) was carried out in 2005 by Romeo Cretu, lecturer at the Psychology and Educational Sciences Faculty from the University of Bucharest (http://www.apsi.ro/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=110&Itemid=32). The research had an investigative purpose focusing on determining the distinct effects of the organizational structures on several human resources related issues: satisfaction, stress, locus of control, informal relations.

7 samples were investigated summing 116 subjects from 7 different socio-economic organizations. The sampling method was a multi-stadium random one which means indirect selection of the subjects through the selection of the groups they belong to. On the ground of the information gathered from interviewing the organisations’ managers and also from the official organization charts, the author identified the type of the organizational structure for each of the 7 investigated organizations: S1=hierarchic-lineal structure (14 subjects), S2=mixed structure (14 subjects), S3=project team (15 subjects), S4=functional structure (17 subjects), S5=structure with partially superposed groups (16 subjects), S6=mixed structure (19 subjects), S7=hierarchic-lineal structure (21 subjects). The specific elements that define these types of organizational structure are:

- The hierarchic-lineal structure – the accent is on individuals, rigid norms and hierarchy principle. As a result, the leader/manager has a great deal of power, while the executive staff very limited responsibilities;

- The functional structure – the accent is on clear functions for employees. This organization is based on the principle of limiting the vertical links in favour of the horizontal ones. There is an increasing responsibilities level for the executive staff;
• The mixed structure – the accent is, equally, on the individuals and their functions in the organization. There is a rigorous delimitation between departments, both from hierarchical and horizontal perspectives;

• The project team – is a flexible group which include employees from different departments and different hierarchical levels working together for solving a certain problem. At the project end, the team is dissolving;

• The structure with partially superposed groups – this organizational structure is formed by different workgroups that represent different hierarchical levels interconnected by an employee who is member in both groups he/she connects.

The main hypothesis was that different organizational structures, due to their specific functioning principles, generate differences at the level of the investigated issues – job satisfaction, stress, locus of control and informal relations.

The investigation used the following well-known research instruments/techniques: Job Description Index (authors: P.C. Smith, L.M. Kendal and C.L. Hulin), the Stress Adaptability Questionnaire (author: Alan McLean), the Locus of Control at Work Scale (author: Paul E. Spector), the Locus of Control Scale (author: J. Rotter), the Socio-Metrical Technique (author: J.L. Moreno). For comparability, all the indexes were measured on a 0-100% scale. All the instruments together with the specific instructions were included in a book that was presented each subject apart.

**Q.1 National correspondents are asked to give question wordings and figures which deal with the incidence of teamwork in their countries.**

*Question wordings (Q.1a)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National representative surveys and quantitative case studies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to assess the teamwork extent the RWC survey used the following question:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which kind of job is found more frequently in your organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Everybody works together and you do not get individual credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Everybody is allowed to work individually and individual credit can be received.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

There is no nationally representative survey on this issue.

*Content and main findings – company surveys, case studies or other qualitative research (Q.1.c)*
The only available data on teamwork prevalence were the ones provided by RWC survey. 

![Teamwork extent in Romania, (%)](chart.png)

More than 40% of the Romanian respondents work in organizations which use teamwork as their main type of work organization. These figures place Romania between the countries with relative high scores of teamwork extent. Thus, although the share of Romanians opting for individual work is higher than the one of those with teamwork, after comparing these results with figures specific to other countries, we conclude that Romania has a high prevalence of teamwork, at least in those areas the respondents belong to. The highest share of respondents choosing teamwork was 60% in Egypt, while, on the last place of the distribution, we find Czech Republic with only 12% of subjects working in teams.

As we mentioned in the survey description, the authors calculated the score of each country on 7 cultural dimensions, including the one of individualism vs. collectivism. Thus, on this particular scale, the Romanian respondents score very high in the area of individualistic values. It is understandable after a long communist period and also crossing a transition to market economy, period characterized by financial difficulties for most of the individuals. That’s why, the Romanians value highly self-fulfilment and individual freedom.

However, the multinational and international corporations (the survey is focused exclusively on these companies) developed especially in high value-added sectors which are characterized by high prevalence of teamwork. This is how we explain the disparity between the high score at the teamwork item and overall orientation of Romanian society towards individualism.

**Q.2 Do in the national representative surveys or other surveys exist questions dealing with form and organisation of the team?**

**Question wordings (Q.2.a)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National representative surveys and quantitative case studies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The RWC survey used the following question to identify the prevalence of two different types of the team or team practices regarding the place of the responsibility in case of errors or work related mistakes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A defect is discovered in one of the installations. It was caused by negligence of one of the members of a team. Responsibility for this mistake can be carried in various ways.

A. The person causing the defect by negligence is the one responsible.

B. Because he or she happens to work in a team the responsibility should be carried by the group.

Which one of these two ways of taking responsibility do you think is usually the case in your society, A or B?

As we said before, OSQI investigates the existence of correlations between several human resources issues and different organizational structure types: hierarchic-lineal structure, mixed structure, functional structure, project team and structure with partially superposed groups. Only the last two of them underpin their activity on different forms of teamwork. In this survey, the author isn’t concerned by the prevalence of different organizational structure types, but only by the correlation between those and the investigated variables. At the beginning of the research, Romeo Cretu carried out interviews with the organizations managers for establishing their specific organizational structure, but the available paper doesn’t include the questions contained by the interview guide.

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

There is no nationally representative survey on this issue.

Content and main findings – company surveys, case studies or other qualitative research (Q.2.c)

Again, the only available data on this issue are the ones provided by RWC survey.

![Work teams by responsibility place, (%)](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The person causing the error</th>
<th>The team is responsible for every error of their members</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In case of employees’ errors/mistakes, only 36% of the respondents consider that, usually, in Romanian organizations the team which member is the respective employee is considered responsible. With a share of 64% of respondents opting for individual responsibility, Romanian is on the forth place in the countries distribution by this item. Cuba has the highest score with 69%, while at the other extreme, Indonesia scores only 16%.
We consider that the orientation of Romanians towards individualism represent the main explanation for this high rating at the responsibility place item. First, this cultural model of the managers modulates their practices and actions. Second, this kind of attitude in case of errors of team members seems to be targeted on increasing the responsibility and implicitly work productivity of the employee. It represents a useful strategy in the context following the communist period which was characterised by low professional implication and responsibility.

Thus, although the prevalence of teamwork is relative high in Romanian organizations, the individual responsibility (at least in case of mistakes) remains also high.

**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)*

**National representative surveys and quantitative case studies:**

One of the hypotheses of the OSQI survey was that different organizational structures determine disparities among employees’ orientations in terms of locus of control. The author used as research instrument *The Scale of Locus of Control at Work* (Paul E. Spector) in order to measure the influence of a certain organizational structure on the capacities of the respondents to control professional related issues. The published form of the survey includes only a few examples from the items forming the Scale:

- Work is what you make of it
- If the employees are dissatisfied of the boss’s decisions, they must intervene for regulate this aspect
- To get the job you want is a matter of luck
- The people who get the job well done are, generally, well recompensed.

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

There is not nationally representative survey on this issue.

*Content and main findings – case studies or other qualitative research (Q.3.c)*

After data gathering for OSQI survey, the subjects were classified in 5 categories by their responses to the Scale of Locus of Control at Work. The amplitude of each category is of 20 percentage points which means a total of 100% (0 represents fully external control and 100 fully internal control). The idea was to obtain a more refined differentiation between the subjects. Thus, the results reveal not only the type of control (extern vs. intern) specific to each organizational structure, but also the intensity associated to those types.
In fact, the results obtained at the place of control (extern vs. intern) scale represent different levels of autonomy on job related issue (work methods, procedures, schedule, etc.) varying along the following axis: fully autonomy (control intern) – absence of autonomy (control extern).

Thus, the mixed structure and project team score highly at the categories close to the maximum level of autonomy. They are followed by the structure based on partially superposed groups. Close to the other pole, the one of lack of autonomy, we find hierarchical and functional structures. So, the organisational structures using teamwork (project team and structure based on superposed groups) score higher in terms of autonomy than the ones based on individual working (hierarchical and functional structures).

The findings of this study allow us to highlight the connection between autonomy within teamwork and job satisfaction.
So, we analysed only the organizational structures using teamwork as their main type of work organization. Clearly, the higher the professional autonomy within the teams is, the higher the job satisfaction is. There is a significant correlation between these two variables, at least for the studied samples. The flexibility that mainly characterise the teams working on projects confer a high internal control, meaning a high level of autonomy, which seems to play a significant role in employees’ satisfaction about their work. Concluding, the project team type of work organization generates more positive effects at the level of job satisfaction than the structure based on partially superposed groups.

Q.4. To what extent are workers satisfied with team based way of working? Can you also report on association between overall job satisfaction and teamwork presence? Does teamwork increase overall job satisfaction?

Question wordings (Q.4.a)

National representative surveys and quantitative case studies:

OSQI survey uses a well known research instrument for measuring job satisfaction: Job Description Index (JDI). The subjects use lists of adjectives for assessing different aspects of their job: the work itself, the salary, the accession opportunities, relations with their bosses and relations with their colleagues. For each of these dimensions, they must enlist if the respective adjectives characterize their job: “Y” for yes, “N” for no and “?” for indecision.

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

There is no nationally representative survey on this issue.

Content and main findings – case studies or other qualitative research (Q.4.c)

The findings of the OSQI survey highlight the connection between different organizational structures and job satisfaction.
The mixed structure and project team detach themselves from the other organizational structures by job satisfaction dimension. Also, the structure based on superposed groups generates a relative high level of job satisfaction, while on the last places we find hierarchic-lineal and functional structures.

The presence of team work seems to correlate with job satisfaction. Thus, those companies using work in teams are characterised by higher levels of satisfaction of their employees than the ones that don’t. As we said before, the job satisfaction assessment was made on 5 dimensions: the work itself, the salary, the accession opportunities, relations with bosses and relations with colleagues. Obviously, the structures using teamwork score higher than the others, at least at the last dimension. Often, friendship relations are developed by working together and interacting frequently with the team colleagues. A more pleasant work environment increases overall job satisfaction. Beside that, the feeling that you belong to a group is very important for the state of happiness/unhappiness.

The variation of job satisfaction is determined by other characteristics of the studied organizational structures too, like the rigidity of hierarchy and rules.

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

Question wordings (Q.5.a)

National representative surveys and quantitative case studies:

We have no data on the issue of connection between teamwork and work overload. Still, the OSQI survey investigates the influence of different organizational structure on job related stress.

As research instrument, Romeo Cretu used the Stress Adaptability Questionnaire. The available form of the survey included only a few items from the 20 that form the questionnaire:

- I spend my entire time thinking about my work
- I work because I have to live and not because I like my work
- I became upset when things don’t work like I want
Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.5.b)

There is no nationally representative survey on this issue.

Content and main findings – case studies or other qualitative research (Q.5.c)

The OSQI survey investigated the stress issue on employees from 7 different companies.

As the graph highlights, the mixed structure and project team have, again, the best scores. They are followed at almost 10% by the organizational structure based on partially superposed groups, while the worst (high) scores represent about 50% on the stress scale and characterize the functional and hierarchical-lineal structures.

The place of functional structure in this distribution is explained by the fact that in the companies using this type of work organization exist double or multiple authority paths. Frequently, the employees must satisfy requests (sometimes contradictory) from different bosses. Thus, the stress is higher due to the work overload. For hierarchic-lineal structure, the high scores of stress are explained by the hierarchy rigidity and the limitation of the horizontal communication. Ones again, the organizational structures which use teams as their mainly form of work organization have the best effects on human resources.

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:

There are no nationally representative surveys or quantitative case studies on this issue.
Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.6.b)
There are no nationally representative surveys on this issue.

Content and main findings – case studies or other qualitative research (Q.6.c)
There are no case studies on this issue.

(Q.6.d)
There are no surveys investigating the association between teamwork, job enrichment and job enlargement.

Q.7 Team effectiveness subjectively perceived

Question wordings (Q.7.a)
National representative surveys and quantitative case studies:
There are no nationally representative surveys or quantitative case studies on this issue.

Content and main findings – national representative surveys (Q.7.b)
There are no nationally representative surveys on this issue.

Content and main findings – case studies or other qualitative research (Q.7.c)
There are no case studies on this issue.

Q.8 Company good practices
We have no information about particular companies where teamwork has been introduced.

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.
In the present, there is no document of the public authorities or social partners with regulations or recommendations on the teamwork issue.
Catalin Ghinararu, Institutul National de Cercetere Stiintifica in domeniul Muncii si Protectiei sociale