Team effectiveness - the impact of gender differences on satisfaction in teamwork

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Abstract: With every day teamwork becomes the inspiration of many articles and scientific research since it is becoming increasingly popular in today's modernized companies. Teams may have different characteristics and sizes, but there are several characteristics of successful teams that need to be followed. The success of teams is an essential asset to any company. Creating team, implementation of tasks and monitoring of teams success are an integral part of many companies. There are no specific rules to make one team successful but there are guidelines which could help. The aim of this paper is to show differences between gender in business world and how it affects teamwork.

Key words: team, teamwork, employee characteristics, employee gender, employee performance, team performance.

1 Introduction
In recent years teams have become the cornerstone of organizational success. Their popularity is increasing every day, so there no longer exists a modern organization that operates without various forms of teams. Many companies today use teams as a means of gaining competitive advantage on the market because outdated traditional methods have become ineffective in the concept of modern management.

To achieve a competitive advantage on the market it is necessary to have successful business and for a successful organization it is important to have experts and effective human resources. In order to know how many employees are effective, organization must regularly test and manage their behavior and results. Performance management is defined as the process by which managers ensure that the activities and results of the employee are in accordance with the objectives of the organization [1].

2 Features of teams
An example of the simplest definitions of the team: "The team is a small group of people to whom common goals have priority and which operate in work to achieve them" [2].

There are several types of teams that are different in basic properties: composition, function, task, duration (permanent and temporary), the degree of formality (formal and informal) and the degree of influence [3]. Formally teams can be divided into functional, cross-functional, self-governing, virtual and global teams [3]. Functional teams are traditional, typical form of a team in the organization. Members of such teams usually perform routine tasks that are to some degree specialized. Functional teams often involve different departments and units. These teams tend to operate for longer period of time, and their membership is relatively stable. Cross-functional teams cross the boundaries of one department. In many organizations, inter-functionality plays a very important role in linking organizational units, providing income and increasing productivity [4]. Cross-functional teams are composed of a small number of individuals from a variety of functional specialization within the organization. Usually they operate for a certain limited period of time as the members of that team because they are also members of other functional teams [5].

Self-management teams govern themselves. They have three main purposes: 1) to improve the quality of the work environment, 2) to increase the overall efficiency of the organization, and 3) provide an environment that ensures employee well-being [6]. In self-managing teams the greatest responsibility is on members of the team, not on...
the team leader. Members of these teams are usually in the same field of work. Virtual teams are a group of people who work closely in spite of spatial, temporal and organizational barriers. Virtual teams are composed of geographically or organizationally dispersed co-workers who interact using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies in order to achieve organization's mission [7]. It is a virtual workplace where productivity, flexibility and collaboration are reaching new heights [8]. While the usual teams meet face-to-face, virtual teams used explicitly technological mediation as a way of communicating [9]. Global teams are a combination of all of the aforementioned teams. What makes them special is the diversity of the members according to their geographical and cultural characteristics. Such specificity of these teams can make them very successful, and at the same time very unsuccessful. The success lies in a large number of ideas and it represents an inexhaustible source of information, different opinions and perspectives on the problems. Each member brings different views and assumptions about the nature of people and their relations since they are geographically dispersed [7]. These assumptions can be a source of dramatic conflict if a common language is not found or if team members fail to accept cultural differences. Global teams are typical for multinational companies.

2.1 Factors of teams success
Croatian government adopted in 1992 a decision which obliges public and state enterprises to promptly determine which employees failed to meet workplace performance [10]. This decision has caused much controversy because most of these companies never implemented performance management, nor have devised appropriate strategy, and they lack quality evaluators. Most companies decided to inform that there is no unsatisfactory workers, but without performing evaluation process. After this superficial job certain companies have decided to accept the challenge and to cope with this difficult task. In Croatia, the concept of evaluating performance is still relatively new, and in the world dates back to the third century when the Chinese, as part of the royal family, evaluated candidates for inheritance. They have developed a very good system of advancement by merits, which is still mentioned as a positive example [10]. Assessment plays an important role in the continuing development of the team because it provides insight into the successes and failures of individual team members as well as the overall performance of the team. Actually there are two types of evaluation of teamwork performance: team assessment and evaluation of individuals [11]. The evaluation of teams should be carried out every six months, or more frequently if teams are short-lived. Assessment of the teams is performed in the areas of innovation, interpersonal relationships, team sustainability and the realization of the vision, mission and goals.

3 Gender differences at performing various tasks
There is a huge impact of gender differences on team effectiveness. Men and women act differently and react to different situations, therefore, the outcome of the task can greatly depend on who is assigned to that type of work and whether this kind of work suits more men or women [12]. Heavy physical labor and jobs in strenuous conditions have always been a synonym for men's work because of the very practical reason; men are really physically stronger. Almost every man would say that manufacturing industries in their production teams should exclusively have male workforce. In contrast, accounting teams abound with female workforce. Women are more adaptable, flexible, mentally strong and they offer a carefully thought out proposals [12]. Despite that, there are very few female team leaders. Men are dominant in senior positions because they act more strongly and are thereby considered to be more suitable for managing a team of people. Women's biggest disadvantage is use of their own emotions and empathy which is needless in the business world, especially when making important business decisions. Since the teamwork requires a lot of joint activities, unity becomes an important factor to strive for, thus avoiding conflict situations. Considering that they sometimes cannot be avoided, the question is who is more adept at overcoming a conflict. Traditionally, women have been taught to define their sense of self in the context of relations as well as to reframe from their personal goals for the sake of others. Men are taught that they must evolve in terms of domination, control, aggressiveness and independence. Results of psychological research, especially before the 1980s show that women during conflict use restrained and conciliatory strategy, while men prefer confrontation and competition [13]. On this basis, one could say that women are better at
overcoming conflict in teams, but of course it all depends on the personal characteristics that are different for each individual. Author Pološki Vokić in her work "Feminine leadership style" states that an important characteristic of the female management style is precisely teamwork. Managers who used "women's style" leadership felt better when they are part of a community and when they are interacting with others engaged in some kind of work. In teamwork their interpersonal skills become evident - they managed teams very well and all the processes within teams [14].

3.1 Review of research on gender differences

Croatian employment agency in 2005 conducted a research on gender differences in the business world. A total of 1,107 respondents participated, 73% of whom were women and 27% men. The average age of participants was 30 years. The results show that women are more interested in the subject of this research. The first item relates to changes in business, 42% of respondents believed that men are more prone to change, 36% believed that men and women are equally prone to change, only 9% believed that women are more daring. The next item refers to a career. Assuming that only 6% of women in Croatia are on leadership positions, on the head of a bigger team, sets up question of who has a better chance for professional advancement. As much as 71% of respondents believed that men had better chances. The next item is the difference in wages. The data show that women have on average 15% lower wages than men for the same position within the team and with the same requirements for the job. The next item talks about co-workers within the team, who is more desirable associate, a man or a woman. According to the majority of respondents, 73% considered that it is irrelevant [15]. Six years later similar research was repeated on a sample of 500 respondents. Women, on average, are waiting longer for a job and more of them are unemployed. They have been less paid for equal work and they are above average concentrated in certain sectors and teams who have been described as 'typically female'.

Regarding working in a team, for men respondents (47%) it is not important in what kind of team they work, while 48% of women would like to work in a team in which there are equally number of men and women. Both men and women support the introduction of specific measures that would contribute to equality between men and women in teamwork. As much as 70% of women and nearly half of men supported such measures. But there is still a large number of men which do not support the introduction of specific measures which would contribute to gender equality [15].

3.2 Gender differences with team competition

Economic theory predicts that an individual's own performance and the performance of his or her opponents in a tournament affect the optimal effort choice. Thus, for example, teams consisting of women only who think that they solve on average less memory games than men might decrease their contribution when competing against a male team. A similar effect could be due to the stereotype that women perform poorly in a competitive environment. On the other hand, solidarity among women might increase the women's performance when competing against men as opposed to women. Research from Berlin (2009) by Ivanova-Stenzel and Kubler shows certain results. With competition of male versus male and female versus female teams, men perform significantly better than women. While this difference is still marginally significant when male teams compete with female teams, the performance of men and women does not significantly differ in the case of competition between mixed teams [16].

4 Data analysis of microresearch

Subject of this analysis were employees of the company established in 1992 in the Republic of Croatia and is in foreign ownership. The aim of the study was to collect the results in order to investigate the impact of gender differences on overall result or existence of differences in a vision of successful teamwork. A total of 32 remembers of various teams participated in the questionnaire, with a slight domination of woman, 17 total, and 15 men. For the purposes of this microresearch, questionnaires have been administered anonymously with voluntary participation of participants to whom the main author offered to participate in the research which had been conducted solely for scientific purposes. Questionnaire titled “Team effectiveness – development of an audit questionnaire” drafted by Bateman, Wilson and Bingham [17] was used for the analysis of team effectiveness. This questionnaire is divided into six different categories: team synergy, common goal, skills, work material utilization, innovations and quality.
Questions for collecting information on gender characteristics of employees that work in teams have been added to the questionnaire, which is the subject matter of this paper.

We have determined basic descriptive statistical indicators: arithmetic mean (AM) and standard deviation (SD) for all six aforementioned categories.

Analysis of the gender difference within the six categories of team performance. The results are shown in the table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Synergy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Goal</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Material Utilization</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovations</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Team Effectiveness</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for gender differences within teamwork

Regarding team synergy, we have concluded that men are on average more satisfied (AM = 3.55), i.e. they have a higher regard for team synergy than women (AM = 3.37). Deviations are insignificantly higher among men than women. Regarding team common goal, we have concluded that men are on average more satisfied (AM = 3.64), i.e. they have a higher regard for common goal than women (AM = 3.43). Deviations are almost identical. Regarding team skills, we have concluded that men are on average more satisfied (AM = 3.44), i.e. they have a higher regard for team skills than women (AM = 3.27). Deviations are insignificantly higher among men than women. Regarding work material utilization within the team, we have concluded that women are on average more satisfied (AM = 3.42), i.e. they have a higher regard for work material utilization than men (AM = 3.40). Deviations are almost identical. Regarding team innovations, we have concluded that men are on average more satisfied (AM = 3.39), i.e. they have a higher regard for team innovations than women (AM = 3.28). Deviations are almost identical. Regarding team quality, we have concluded that women are on average more satisfied (AM = 3.65), i.e. they have a higher regard for team quality than men (AM = 3.61). Deviations are insignificantly higher among men than women. Regarding overall team effectiveness we have determined that men and women have almost the same opinion on overall effectiveness of their teams, although men (AM = 3.51) perceive their teams as more effective than women (AM = 3.40). Deviations are slightly higher among men.

It can be concluded that men have given a higher average grade for overall effectiveness of their teams, grading them above average in terms of effectiveness. According to questionnaire categories, men have given higher grades for team synergy, common goal, skills and innovations, while women have given higher grades for work material utilization and quality. Limitations are surely convenient and relative small sample of participants, i.e. the omnipresent possibility of providing desirable answers. Since this research was conducted in only one company, i.e. only one organizational culture is represented; there had been no setting interferences. A sample of only 32 participants cannot provide valid representation of team effectiveness, but it can provide approximate picture, i.e. basic indications.

5 Conclusion

This paper indicates on the importance of teamwork, certain performance indicators, and gender differences in business and in the end gives an example of personal insight on the team effectiveness on the basis of opinion of men and women. In Croatia, the situation for women remains unfavorable. More researches show that differences between men and women in business world are more than obvious. Women are yet to achieve the same status as men in regard to advancement, payment and hierarchical position within organizations. The question is whether this gender inequality impact on work performance. A study conducted in Berlin in 2009 shows that women teams were less successful at mastering tasks in comparison to male teams. In mixed teams there was no difference in performance. Microresearch conducted in Croatia showed that men consider their team more successful than women do. This kind of study was quite different from those in Berlin, given that the respondents evaluated themselves. Croatian teams were mixed, and the results are different from the Berlin research because men rate their team as more successful. We concluded that when men evaluate
themselves they give a better grade to their team than women. On the example of this company we see that women have graded the success of their team lower than men, thus confirming the aforementioned gender inequality theory. The differences between men and women are inevitable, as are the differences between their perceptions and team work proficiencies.

References:
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