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GROUP COHESIVENESS. The concept of cohesion has been around as long as people have been interested in collective processes and effectiveness. *Cohesion* refers to the concept of bonding or adhesion among members of a collective entity. Over 2,400 years ago Sun Tzu made multiple references to the concepts of collective harmony and morale in his treatise entitled *The Art of War* (Griffith, 1963). The earliest empirical work of the twentieth century was conducted by French (1941), who found that cohesion was related to a variety of internal group processes; however, consistent empirical work did not begin until the early 1950s, when researchers became increasingly aware of the effects of group processes on human behavior, cognition, affect, and performance.

The most widely cited definition of cohesion is the "total field of forces which act on members to remain in the group" (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950, p. 164). In their original formulation, cohesiveness was thought to arise from interpersonal attraction, liking, or commitment to the group task, and group prestige or pride. Despite the implied multidimensionality, early theorists tended to focus on cohesion as a unitary construct, with a primary emphasis on the interpersonal and social aspects of member bonds to the group. Additionally, the original definition proved difficult to operationalize and created confusion in the interpretation of the construct.

More recently, cohesion has been treated as a multidimensional construct. Three potential components have been identified; social-task, individual-group, and vertical-horizontal dimensions. The most consistent theoretical and empirical support exists for the differentiation between task and social components of cohesion (Tziner, 1982; Zaccaro, 1991). Task cohesion is the degree to which members are attracted to the collective because of its task and its accomplishments. Social cohesion is the degree of interpersonal attraction among members. The distinction between individual and group attraction has also received some empirical support, but individual attraction is conceptually distinct from a shared bond among group members, and it is more strongly related to the concept of individual commitment. The final distinction differentiates between horizontal and vertical components of cohesion (Bliese & Halverson, 1996), although the empirical

work in this area is limited. Members can be attracted and bonded to leaders or followers (vertical), or they can be attracted and bonded to peers (horizontal).

Numerous operationalizations of cohesion have been employed, including sociometric nominations, hours spent together during leisure time, and personality compatibility. A variety of rating scales have been used to measure cohesion, including the degree to which members of the collective are attracted to one another, and the degree to which they are attracted to a collective task and its accomplishment. Some of the more common scales that measure group cohesion are the Group Attitude Scale, Group Environment Questionnaire, Group Environment Scale, Gross Cohesiveness Scale, and the Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire. The concept of cohesion has also been applied to family units: the Family Environment Scale and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales are two such measures. A problematic approach to the measurement of cohesion has been to use group process measures (e.g., communication, coordination, cooperation) as indices of cohesion. Group processes are conceptually distinct from cohesion.

Cohesion has been related to a number of different variables, but the primary focus has been on determining the relationship between cohesion and performance. Seashore (1954) conducted one of the earliest comprehensive studies to investigate this relationship, and found that cohesion and performance were related, but the direction of the relationship depended upon group norms for performance. Numerous empirical tests of the cohesion-performance relationship were conducted through the 1970s, but reviews suggested that the relationship between cohesion and performance was ambiguous at best (Lott & Lott, 1965; Stogdill, 1972). Stogdill was most critical and stated that, "the findings do not support the view that group productivity and cohesiveness tend to be positively related" (p. 33). Research on the cohesion-performance relationship continued to accumulate, particularly in the field of sport psychology. This new research yielded a variety of instruments for measuring cohesion and provided additional findings (e.g., Widmeyer, Brawley, & Carron, 1985). However, the debate on the cohesion-performance relationship was unresolved until meta-analytic techniques provided a means for quantitatively integrating previous findings. Four such meta-analyses were conducted, all supporting the notion that cohesion and performance are moderately and positively related (Evans & Dion, 1991; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995; Mullen & Copper, 1994; Oliver, Harman, Hoover, Hayes, & Pandhi, 1999). However, the direction of causality is still undetermined. It is likely that cohesion and performance are related to each other in a reciprocal loop, creating performance and affective spirals. Additionally, the strength of the relationship between

cohesion and performance may be dependent on the levels of other variables, such as task interdependence, cohesion type, timing of the relationship, norms, group goals, and group drive. Unfortunately, specific empirical tests of these potential moderators have been sparse.

Cohesion has also been related to a large number of other variables and phenomena, including resistance to disruption, withdrawal, motivation, social loafing, group process, learning, satisfaction, in-group/out-group bias, cultism, and collective efficacy. Cohesion also has been associated with positive adjustment of people and positive psychotherapeutic findings. For example, higher family cohesion has been associated with reduced likelihood of bulimia, anorexia, alcohol abuse, and adolescent deviance. Increased cohesion in group psychotherapy has been positively associated with reduced symptomatic distress, increased self-esteem and personal growth, and improved marital adjustment. Cohesion is considered to play a particularly important role in the phenomenon of groupthink (Janis, 1972). Groupthink occurs when people strive for unanimity over the realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action. Few empirical tests of the entire groupthink phenomenon have been conducted, but a meta-analysis of the relationship between cohesion and quality of group decisions suggested that cohesion has a negative effect on decision quality when the antecedent conditions of groupthink are present, although it has a positive effect on decision quality when conditions designed to thwart groupthink are present (Mullen, Anthony, Salas, & Driskell, 1994).

There are numerous proposed predictors and causes of cohesion including previous performance, collective efficacy, leadership style, perceived threat, group size, strategy/planning, group structure, conflict, trust, humor, member similarities (values and demographics), and stage of group development. In particular, cohesion is believed to develop most strongly during the development of group norms. There is some limited evidence that the sources and development of cohesion may vary across different cultures. Overall, cohesion plays a central part in our understanding of group processes and development, and it has been associated with a wide variety of phenomena, including productivity, decision making, motivation, and psychosocial adjustment.

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GROUP HOMES. See Residential Treatment Programs.

GROUPING AND TRACKING. Since the early twentieth century, schools in the United States and most developed nations have separated students into groups, classrooms, programs of study, or schools according to judgments about their intellectual ability or promise. This educational differentiation has seemed logical because it corresponds to a century-old conviction that