

COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL TEAMWORK

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Abstract

Teamwork and knowledge sharing are prime motivators of the economic development of companies. Our last research called „Teamwork in Education” is being continued now, based on Hungarian economical companies which were asked about teamwork. Herewith our target was to find features of organizational teamwork in the economical life among small-, medium and big companies. We compare these results with features of educational teamwork, because there is a big responsibility of higher education to communicate it at a high level to the students or create the right conditions to develop their skills for teamwork.

Results of questionnaires are analyzed with SPSS program (statistics of factor analyses). The results of this research can be used not only in organizational life to give tips and advice to management how to manage their employees' work and knowledge sharing. These results can be used in the development of education and teaching methods. We are going to write about this research and its results in this paper.

Key words: *companies, education, team, teamwork.*

Introduction

Practical and theoretical experts have studied team and teamwork for decades. Nowadays, teamwork got a more important factor in organizational life, because the join forces with colleagues and cooperation are fundamental requirements for participating in competition. Creating and using new knowledge by teamwork is a part in everyday life of enterprises and teamwork is a mean of their success. But what they think about team and teamwork? What we would like to know whether there are some differences in mind of companies and higher education about this theme.

Timeliness and justification of this theme is based on the fact that companies demand and expect practical skills and knowledge from third-cycle structure, particularly from bachelors. In our accelerated life market receives those experts who have skills for further study, intercultural cooperation, teamwork or who are able to change their profession if it is needed. But for meeting the requirements and to give appropriate skills to students, higher education should know practice of companies and features of organizational practice and in compliance with it to meet demands.

We focused on attitudes and opinions to team and teamwork with the hypothesis, that there are some characteristics in organizational teamwork which are different from characteristics of educational teamwork and these results can be adapted into education. We have already experienced that double research is the first in this theme. Firstly we examine the question from theoretical aspect, after that we analyze results of our primary research according to our approach.

Approaching from the view of organizational theory

According to Blake and Mouton, workgroup is a collection of members and their superior, who have common organizational responsibility and they are in interaction with each other. Team is a more developed version of workgroup, because commonly taken responsibility in addition to personal responsibility also appears.

A team does not establish and give results immediately. In periods of team development we can identify those events, actions which characterize the working method of team. For handling problems and situations and going on the next phase of development, selection of appropriate members is needed. You can see relationship of efficiency and development of team in the following chart:

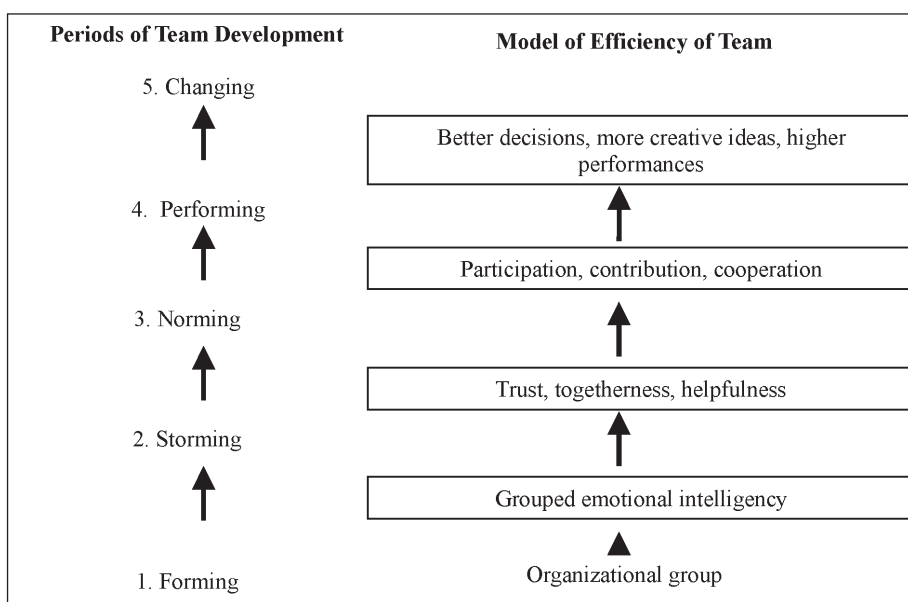


Figure 1. Relationship of Efficiency and Development of Team.

Source: Bencsik, 2007. 22. p

Team development in education

The role of education, research and other intellectual work are getting more and more significant by knowledge creation, generation and use. We can not teach skills to students and teamwork in theoretical way. Due to Bologna-process, students' mass open up dimensions to build teams in education. If a lecturer knows his course, whether there are skills an intention to cooperation and students can count on each other, in such case lecturer can plan the appropriate teaching method and the lecture and the group can be arranged. There are other factors that influence on choosing of teaching method of course, for example demands of cost efficiency, students' learning style, requirement of course bulletin, technical means of education, etc.

So we can not learn skills for teamwork in theoretical way as well, because it is developed by practice. We might ask if there are any organizational possibilities for team building in higher education. Law of higher education in 2005 regulated numbers of leaders in Hungarian institutes. According to these demands nowadays these organizational structures got lower by merging departments but in real, ex-leaders still deal with leader's functions.

These days educational institutions still have a mostly stiff structure where lecturer's roles, status or department are important to which the person belongs. However market-oriented courses demand more flexible organizational structure which is built on a study (and appropriate

team) with human resources and financial management, authority and result-orientation, not role-orientation. „Good cleric is learning to death”. This is true especially in such way, that lecturers should keep in view to knowledge create (Bencsik, 2007).

Methodology of Research

Our last research called „Teamwork in Education” is being continued at the end of 2008, based on Hungarian economical companies which were asked about teamwork. Herewith our target was to find features of organizational teamwork in the economical life among small-, medium and big companies. We compare these results with features of educational teamwork, because there is a big responsibility of higher education to communicate at a high level to the students or create the right conditions to develop their skills for teamwork.

The hypothesis was: **there are some characteristics in organizational teamwork which are different from characteristics of educational teamwork and these results can be adapted into education.** *Research Method*

- Quantitative method by questionnaires,
- Closed, opened and scaled questions,
- We used varied statistical methods. In the first step we used a simple descriptive statistical method (values means and frequencies) with MS excel, but later we analyzed the answers by Factor Analysis: Principal components analyses with SPSS 15.0 program.

Characteristics of Samples

Most of the asked companies work in West-Dunántúl region, in Budapest, in Middle-Dunántúl and Middle-Hungarian region.

Nearly half of these companies (45%) are small enterprises, there is a small percentage (20.5%) of companies which are medium-sized, where number of employees is among 50-250. 30.5% of the asked companies are large enterprises, because they employ more than 250 workers.

If we can see financial positions (in the slump) there are astonishing results, because only 19,9% of them feel his position worse than last year, most of them think their position is better or the same like last period.

Sampling was a simple random sample.

Chapters of Questionnaire

- Requirements of employers for employees and opinions about education
- Features of organizational teamwork
- Opinion about teamwork
- General Questions
- Worker Contributions
- Work Outcomes
- Work Relationship
- Own reflection about teamwork
- Background

We respected the time limits and reduced the filling time to the minimum. We used a very simple structure in questionnaires. In order to answer subjective questions (elements) we used the Likert scale with 7 grades in order to have an easy lucidity. There were some nominal scales and

five opened essay-style questions as well. We used varied statistical methods. In the first step we used a simple descriptive statistical methods with MS Excel, but later we analyzed the answers in complex way with SPSS 15.0 program. Samples were collected on the base of a simple random sample method.

In this paper we focus only on the second and the third parts of the questionnaire (on the organizational team and teamwork). In the following table we listed some factors that are typical of education (column 1.) and that are typical of enterprises (column 2.) The differences between these two lists are signed with bold characters. In the following parts of this paper we compare the results of attitude of teamwork on the basis of simple descriptive statistics.

Characteristic factors of attitudes about educational teamwork	Characteristic factors of attitudes about organizational teamwork
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<p><u>General Questions about Teams and Teamwork</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I prefer to work in teams even if I am capable of doing the whole job alone • People generally prefer to work in teams even if they are capable of doing the whole job alone • Highly skilled people will accomplish more as a team than they would if each worked independently. • Team members will not help each other unless they trust each other. • Even if team members are alike in appearance they will differ in many ways that are not outwardly observable. <p><u>Worker Contributions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For good teamwork, the most important factor is to have competent individuals on the team. • For good teamwork, the most important factor is to have good relationships among team members. • For good teamwork, the team itself is more important than individual members and the relationships among them. <p><u>Work outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With teamwork, team morale (spirit) is more important than team performance. • With teamwork, team performance is more important than team morale (spirit). • With teamwork, good performance is necessary for good morale (spirit). <p><u>Work Relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For effective teamwork, everyone on the team must get along well with everyone else on the team. • For effective teamwork, interpersonal relationships will have little effect on the performance of the team. 	<p><u>General Questions about Teams and Teamwork</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I prefer to work in teams even if I am capable of doing the whole job alone • People generally prefer to work in teams even if they are capable of doing the whole job alone • Highly skilled people will accomplish more as a team than they would if each worked independently. • Good teamwork results from the interaction of good individual performances. • Putting people with diverse skills together on a team will compensate for any individual weaknesses. <p><u>Worker Contributions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For good teamwork, the most important factor is to have competent individuals on the team. • For good teamwork, the most important factor is to have good relationships among team members. • For good teamwork, the team itself is more important than individual members and the relationships among them. <p><u>Work outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With teamwork, team morale (spirit) is more important than team performance. • With teamwork, team performance is more important than team morale (spirit). <p><u>Work Relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For effective teamwork, everyone on the team must get along well with everyone else on the team. • For effective teamwork, it is enough that most of the members get along well with each other. • For effective teamwork, interpersonal relationships will have little effect on the performance of the team.
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Organizational teamwork

About every fourth (27%) company answered that they use teamwork only to complete a task, but the majority (64.9%) have teamwork regularly. Teamwork principally is at sales (40.4%), production (33.7%), including supply and conditioning, too. Teamwork is characteristic in fields of logistics and finance, financial services, financial administration (31-31%). It is less typical for marketing (23.2%), R+D (20.5%) and human resource management (19.8%). Some enterprises define other fields of teamwork which are in connection with management functions, planning, project management, investments, quality management and training of colleagues.

At quarter of companies, teamwork is established on 3-25% of the amount of employees. Every third company applies teamwork among 27-70% of its employees. 40% of answered enterprises 75-100% of employees work in team.

75% of these companies do not regulate practice of teamwork neither policies nor documentations. 25% of enterprises regulate teamwork in their Organizational and Working Regulation, project regulation, in definition processes of production, moreover in quality assurance manuals or in job description.

Slightly half of answering companies specify demands skills to teamwork or in performance assessment systems in requirements of application. Teamwork appears less in motivating systems in enterprises (39.7%).

Team and teamwork

We can see, that these organizations are thinking somehow about team and teamwork like professors. Economical actors experience as well, that highly skilled people will accomplish more as a team than they would if each worked independently. But there is a significant difference in field of confidence. Professors seem to be more sensible than companies, because for them the more important is being trusty in order to help each other. This is an indifferent factor or partly important thing in companies.

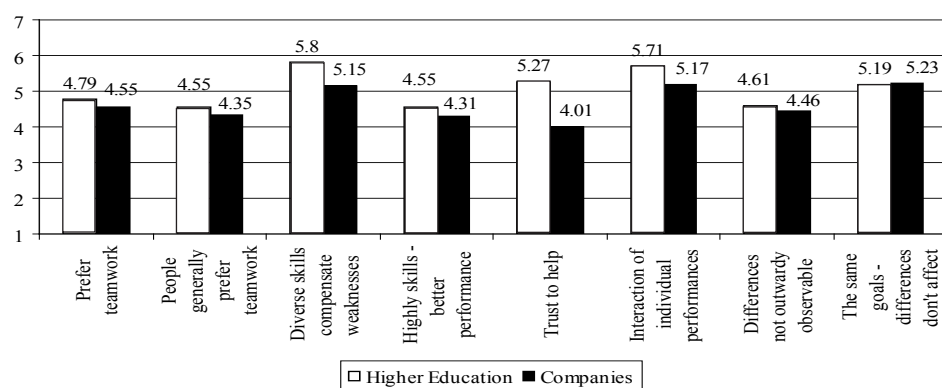


Figure 2. Teamwork (values means).

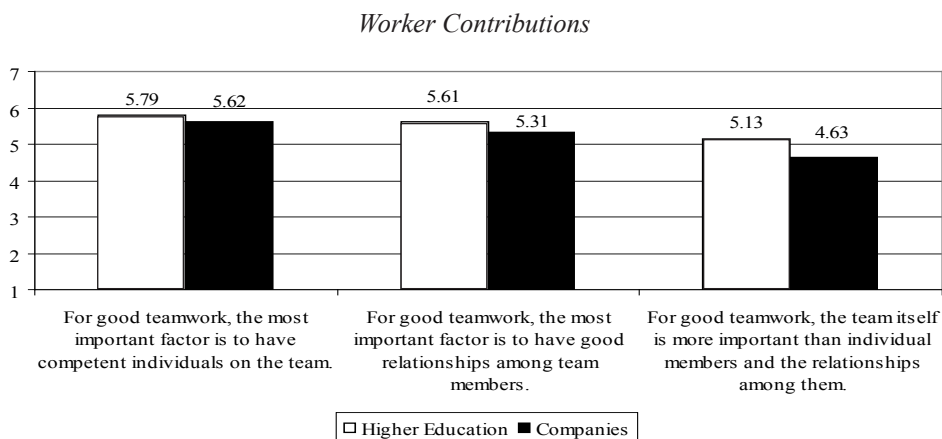


Figure 3. Worker Contributions (values means).

Both in companies and in education for good teamwork, the most important factors are to have competent individuals in the team and to have good relationships among team members. But according to the questioned Hungarian enterprises about good teamwork, the team itself is less important than individual members and the relationships among them.

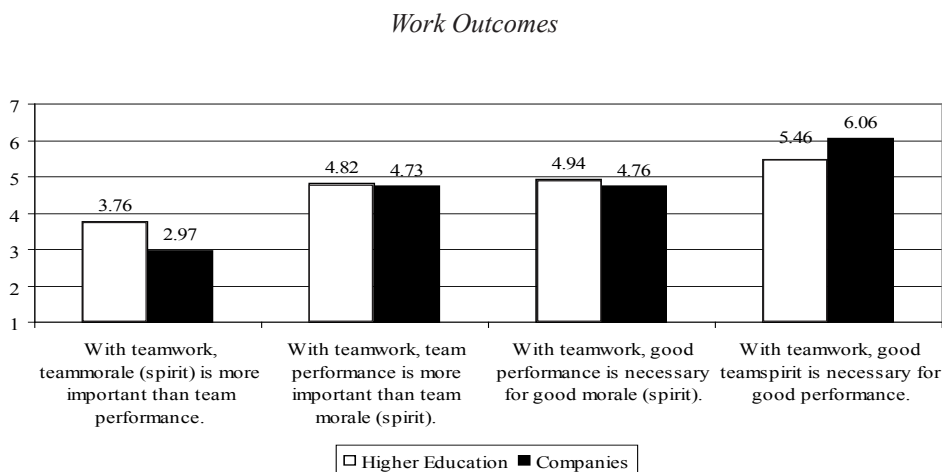


Figure 4. Work Outcomes (values means).

In the field of work outcomes we can find interesting results. One hand these companies and schools think the same about teamwork, team performance is more important than team morale (spirit) and good performance is necessary for good morale. In the other hand enterprises don't mind such important factors like education. Teamwork, team morale are more important than team performance.

Work Relationships

We can see a difference among lecturers and enterprisers as well. For companies less important is for effective teamwork, everyone in the team must get along well with everyone else in the team. It correlates with other results. These are effective teamwork, interpersonal relationships that will have little effect on the performance of the team.

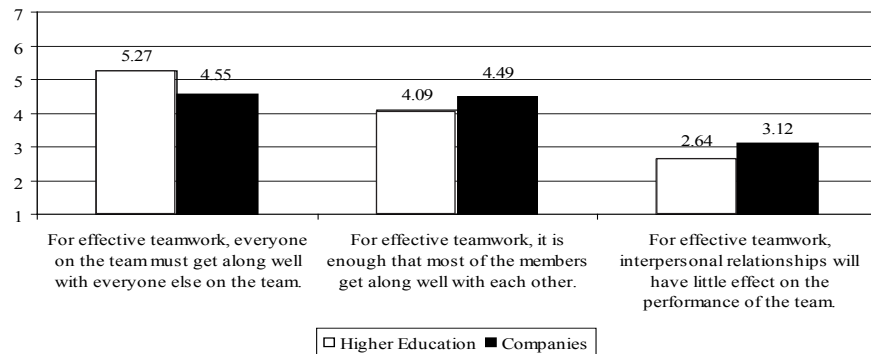


Figure 5. Work Relationship (values means).

Conclusions

Comparing attitudes of economical actors and higher education give important and useful results to us.

In most of the questions opinions live up to our expectations both sides, after all the answerers are alike Hungarian, they work alike Hungarian environment. But they work different fields, they have to sell their output, products or services in different markets. So they cannot and mustn't equally think in every case, equally work and develop, they have to pore over different targets or organization of work.

Surprisingly, the trust among team members mean less importance to these companies than lecturers. In our opinion it can steam from different sources. On the one hand it is from leader's style. We know that essence of leading is to reach a solution with help of other people (Klein, 2004). Leader's style is important to us, because it has an effect on teamwork, namely establishment of trustful spirit and helpfulness in team. Totality of antagonistic and mistrustful people in a tense atmosphere never would work by team. It is relevant aspect is next to the trustful atmosphere whether the leader concentrates on tasks or their colleagues. If a leader pays attention rather on a job organization than on people, it is natural that relationship within the team will be less important to him.

We cannot forget that teamwork comes more natural and trivial to companies; on the other hand in higher education we still learn it. Because of teamwork is more accustomed in companies that's why they care less for trust, they regularly help each other in solving a task or in reaching a target in order to succeed or keep their job.

It doesn't mean that professors pay attention to success of their workplace, but regardless to their individual participation in the academic life and professional advance were pronounced for a long time. Only changes of past years (decreasing state support, establishment of market relations, escalating competition and decreasing students number, etc.) force lecturers to work in a teamwork. We shall not be amused if during the first steps the confidence is a more significant factor while trying to help each other.

We can find the same attitude in judgment of team itself as well. Companies pay less attention to team than lecturers. In their opinion enterprises are not more important things than members or their relationships and don't play a significant factor in order to reach good performance. We can see here that target is more relevant than assets. On the other hand we can find well-practiced, and cooperation which demand less care and attention. It seems among lecturers too frame a team means a serious challenge, responsible decision and diplomatic sensibility. It is not only a discipline but in an institution as well, because it can strategically define research fields and professional (not less financial) results and efficiency for a long time or it can attract colleagues or students from abroad.

This research result can arise from the fact as well that lecturers feel good team spirit more important than team performance, while companies think the other way. In organizational life performance is much more important factor. It reflects this too in the case that at most companies 30% rate of employees occasionally or regularly work in team and there aren't regulation for teamwork in documents. It justifies Klen's definition which has built Belbin, according to „a team is a volunteer cooperation of different professional experts in order to solution a complex task/problem. It mostly doesn't a top-down regulated group.” (Klein, 2004. 271. p)

While among lecturers it is more important that after competition every member gets on well with every member of the team, companies feel less that it's important. Here in order to present good performance, it needs knowledge and skills and complementation of each-other in teamwork. According to companies, this way relationships of teams have little effect on performance of team.

Summing-up

Results of our research demonstrate existence of differentiation between educational and organizational teamwork. Compare these results of the two researching bases with the team development and team efficiency model. We have to see that lecturers rather come on from „storming” period to „norming” period that's why the trust, togetherness, helpfulness are significant and in these phases relationships-orientated roles are needed. Since teamwork as work method is evolving, this is a little bit new, strange and unconventional in higher educational. Teamwork is a little bit different than used methods but simultaneously have to scuffle through the task, have to know its tricks and have to fall into a habit.

Evaluation of companies shows they are not in „norming” period, because there are natural phenomenon teams and teamwork in organizational life. Here characteristic is the „performing” period after members shaking together, and it is the most important thing to leaders. Result of this period is much significant to organizational success, because in these phases we can find higher performance, loyalty, strong relationships are evolved, creative solutions and making better decisions.

We can utilize results in many ways in higher education. One hand, during the work of departments for example in projects or in organizations of trainings and in setting up courses. Here we can practice periods of team development and we can learn skills in “adapting” periods. On the other hand we can practice our team player skills in education as well.

Students can form groups and perfect experiences in setting up teams, assigning tasks and targets, controlling, evaluating, or in changing teams. By practice we can form and develop skills for a better cooperation, conformation, strengthening, adaptation of others, communication. Moreover lecturers can have an insight into life of economical actors with making contact with companies and can get empirical experiences or get to know practical examples in team building, team development and relationships on team which can be utilized in education.

We suggest putting emphasis on cooperation instead of competition among lecturers, by paying attention to common results.

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