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Influence Of Team Cohesion on Performance Outcomes in Team Sports

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the Influence of team cohesion on performance outcomes in team sports, exploring the intricate dynamics between interpersonal relationships , shared goals and collective efficacy. The population of this study comprised of all the players at different level of Sports of Punjab University Lahore, Pakistan. The total number of registered players of University of Punjab is round about 350 respectively. So, it is difficult for the researcher to contact the whole population, to overcome this problem, the researcher selected 110 players as sample of the study by using available sampling technique. For the collection of data, the researcher developed a self-designed the questionnaire with Likert scale. The developed scale was gone through the process of validity and reliability. The researcher personally distribute the questionnaire and collect back after getting it filled by the respondents. Ethical approval was taken from the department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, University of the Punjab Lahore Pakistan. The collected data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, version-26) and thus suitable statistical tools were applied according to parametric data. On the basis of data analysis and findings, the researcher arrived at conclusion that team cohesion is a significant driver of both team performance and individual contribution in sports settings. With 42% and 38% of variance explained in the respective simple regression models, and 50% in the full hierarchical model, cohesion emerges as a practically important variable. Task cohesion is a stronger predictor of performance than social cohesion, as goal-focused unity more directly influences outcomes than interpersonal liking. Its effects vary by subgroup, with younger, more experienced athletes in interdependent sports like basketball and football benefiting the most. Overall, strengthening task cohesion can significantly enhance team performance and athletes' sense of contribution, even at moderate cohesion levels.

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STUDY BACKGROUND

Unlike individual sports, team sports depend on everyone's combined effort. Success in these situations depends not just on the individual athletes' abilities and performances but also on how well they work together, communicate, and coordinate. This group activity is often called team cohesiveness, which is the extent to which a team collaborates amicably to accomplish shared objectives (Black, 2019).

Although the significance of team cohesion in athletic performance has long been acknowledged, more research is still required to fully perceive the ways in which various forms of cohesion affect overall success (Kwon, 2024).

Cohesion in sports is often seen to consist of two components: social cohesion and task cohesion. Social cohesion is the degree to which team members like and get along with one another, whereas task cohesion is the degree to which members collaborate well to accomplish a shared objective (Weinberg & Gould, 2010).

According to Carron, Eys, and Martin (2016), team cohesiveness is the dynamic process that represents a group's tendency to stick together and stay united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives. It encompasses the interpersonal and task-related ties that bind team members together. The significance of psycho social factors like cohesiveness has increased as sports have developed into extremely regimented and competitive settings, particularly in performance-centric fields like elite sports (Carron et al., 2002; Leo et al., 2013).

Even with the abundance of study on athletic performance, there is still need for more investigation into the relationship between psychological concepts like cohesiveness and objective performance outcomes. The majority of the research to date indicates that team cohesion and performance are positively correlated (Filho, Tenenbaum & Yang, 2021).

However, nuances such as the type of cohesion (task vs social), contextual variables (cultural, gender, sport type), and level of competition (elite vs collegiate) create a complex matrix of variables that influence this relationship (Carron et al., 2002; Eys et al., 2015)

Team sports participation necessitates prolonged cooperation among multiple individuals . Effective collaboration is necessary for success in the game; individual brilliance is not enough. It has been demonstrated that team-building exercises improve team performance, especially when it comes to encouraging unity among sports teams (Bruner et al., 2024).

Psychological therapies in sports have demonstrated efficacy in improving athlete skill development, team bonding, and team performance. Among these interventions, team-building has emerged as a popular technique for encouraging effective collaboration among team members, hence improving cohesion and team performance in sports teams. This strategy has been used to optimize the functionality of sports teams, resulting in better team performance (Martin et al.,2024).

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

In this type of research conclusion is given theoretically (Creswell , 2014). In quantitative research conclusions are showed in numerical form. In this research study the researcher used quantitative research approach.

Population Sample and Sample Size

The population of this study comprised of all the players at different level of Sports of Punjab University Lahore. The total number of registered players of University of Punjab

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is round about 350 respectively. So, it is difficult for the researcher to contact the whole population, to overcome this problem, the researcher selected sample size. As per LR GAY formula, 10% of the total population of athletes were taken as sample by using available sampling technique.

Tool For Data Collection

The whole questionnaire was personally served by the researcher among the respondents and collected back after being filled out by the respondents.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, version-26) and thus suitable statistical tools were applied according to parametric data.

Presentation Of Data

Table 1: Demographic Attributes of Participants (N = 110)

Attribute	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	51	46.36
	26-35	27	24.55
	36-45	22	20.00
	46+	10	9.09
Gender	Male	52	47.27
	Female	55	50.00
	Other	3	2.73
Sport Type	Football	40	36.36
	Basketball	47	42.73
	Volleyball	15	13.64
	Other	8	7.27
Experience	Experienced (Yes)	63	57.27
	Novice (No)	47	42.73

Note: N = 110. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 1: Demographic Attributes of Participants (N = 110) The majority of participants are young (46.36% aged 18-25) with a nearly balanced gender distribution (50% female, 47.27% male). Basketball players form the largest group (42.73%), followed by football (36.36%). More than half (57.27%) are experienced players, while 42.73% are novices.

Table 2: Task Cohesion (N = 110)

Statement	M	SD
Our team members are committed to achieving our team's goals.	3.15	0.82
Team members are willing to make personal sacrifices for the team.	3.11	0.79
The team's objectives are clear and shared by all team members.	2.87	0.85
Our team works well together to achieve performance goals.	2.75	0.77
Every member of the team contributes to our overall success.	3.19	0.81
Overall Task Cohesion	**3.03**	**0.81**

Note: 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

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Table 2: Task Cohesion (N = 110) Overall Task Cohesion is moderate (M = 3.03). Participants show highest agreement on individual contribution to success (M = 3.19) and commitment to team goals (M = 3.15). The lowest score is on how well the team works together for performance goals (M = 2.75), suggesting room for improvement in collaborative execution.

Table 3: Social Cohesion (N = 110)

Statement	M	SD
Our team members get along well with each other.	2.69	0.88
There is a strong sense of camaraderie among the team members.	2.85	0.83
Team members support each other both on and off the field.	2.80	0.84
The team's social dynamics help improve team performance.	2.94	0.85
I feel like a valued member of the team.	3.04	0.79
Overall Social Cohesion	**2.94**	**0.84**

Table 3: Social Cohesion (N = 110) Overall Social Cohesion is slightly below moderate (M = 2.94). Feeling valued as a team member scored highest (M = 3.04), while getting along well with each other was the weakest (M = 2.69). Social dynamics appear average with potential for stronger interpersonal bonds.

Table 4: Overall Team Cohesion (N = 110)

Statement	M	SD
The overall cohesion of the team helps us perform better.	3.25	0.78
The bond between team members strengthens our performance on the field.	2.97	0.84
A sense of unity and togetherness in the team improves our outcomes.	3.04	0.80
Team cohesion positively affects my motivation to contribute to success.	3.10	0.79
I feel connected to my teammates, which helps in achieving success.	3.08	0.81
Overall, Team Cohesion	**3.09**	**0.80**

Table 4: Overall, Team Cohesion (N = 110) Overall Team Cohesion is moderate (M = 3.09). The belief that cohesion helps performance scored highest (M = 3.25). The bond between team members was rated relatively lower (M = 2.97), indicating unity and togetherness are perceived as average.

Table 5: Team Performance (N = 110)

Statement	M	SD
Our team performs well in competitive matches.	3.01	0.83
The team consistently achieves its performance goals.	2.89	0.85
Our team has improved over the course of the season.	3.25	0.75
High levels of team cohesion have resulted in better match results.	3.10	0.79
The team is more successful when there is a strong sense of cohesion.	3.17	0.76
Overall Team Performance	**3.08**	**0.79**

Table 5: Team Performance (N = 110) Overall Team Performance is moderate (M = 3.08). Improvement over the season was rated highest (M = 3.25), while consistent achievement of goals was lowest (M = 2.89). Participants moderately agree that strong cohesion leads to better results (M = 3.10–3.17).

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Table 6: Individual Contribution (N = 110)

Statement	M	SD
I feel that my individual performance improves when the team is cohesive.	3.15	0.82
When the team is united, I am more motivated to perform at my best.	2.98	0.88
I believe that my performance has a direct impact on the team's success.	2.92	0.84
Team cohesion influences my confidence in contributing to collective goals.	3.16	0.81
I am more likely to put in extra effort when our team is cohesive.	2.97	0.83
Overall Individual Contribution	**3.03**	**0.83**

Table 6: Individual Contribution (N = 110) Overall Individual Contribution mean is 3.03. Players feel their performance and confidence improve with team cohesion (M = 3.15 and 3.16). However, the belief that individual performance directly impacts team success is relatively weaker (M = 2.92).

Table 7: Pearson Correlations Between Key Variables (N = 110)

Variable	1. Team Cohesion	2. Team Performance	3. Individual Contribution
1. Team Cohesion	—	0.65**	0.62**
2. Team Performance	0.65**	—	0.70**
3.Individual Contribution	0.62**	0.70**	—

**p < .01 (two-tailed).

Table 7: Pearson Correlations Between Key Variables (N = 110) All variables show strong positive and significant correlations (p < .01). Team Cohesion has a strong relationship with Team Performance (r = 0.65). Individual Contribution correlates strongly with both Team Performance (r = 0.70) and Team Cohesion (r = 0.62).

Table 8: One-Way ANOVA – Influence of Demographics on Team Cohesion and Performance Outcomes (N = 110)

Demographic Variable	F	df	p-value	Significant (p < .05)
Age	4.56	—	.002	Yes
Gender	1.02	—	.360	No
Experience	3.98	—	.047	Yes
Sport Type	5.76	—	.013	Yes

Table 8: One-Way ANOVA Influence of Demographics on Team Cohesion and Performance Outcomes (N = 110) Age, Experience, and Sport Type significantly affect Team Cohesion and Performance (p < .05). Gender shows no significant influence (p = .360). Sport Type has the strongest effect among demographics (F =5.76, p = .013).

Table 9: Simple Linear Regression – Team Cohesion Predicting Team Performance (N = 110)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P	95% CI Lower–Upper
(Constant)	0.85	0.22	—	3.86	<.001	0.41 – 1.29

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Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P	95% CI Lower–Upper
Team Cohesion	0.72	0.08	0.65	9.00	<.001	0.56 – 0.88

Model: R = .65, R^2 = .42, Adjusted R^2 = .42, F(1, 108) = 81.00, p < .001.
Table 9: Simple Linear Regression – Team Cohesion Predicting Team Performance (N = 110) Team Cohesion significantly predicts Team Performance (β = 0.65, p < .001) and explains 42% of the variance (R^2 = .42). The model is highly significant, showing that higher levels of cohesion are associated with better perceived team performance.

Table 10: Simple Linear Regression – Team Cohesion Predicting Individual Contribution (N = 110)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P	95% CI Lower–Upper
(Constant)	0.98	0.24	—	4.08	<.001	0.50 – 1.46
Team Cohesion	0.68	0.09	0.62	7.56	<.001	0.50 – 0.86

Model: R = .62, R^2 = .38, Adjusted R^2 = .38, F(1, 108) = 57.15, p < .001.
Table 10: Simple Linear Regression Team Cohesion Predicting Individual Contribution (N = 110) Team Cohesion is a significant predictor of Individual Contribution (β = 0.62, p < .001), accounting for 38% of the variance (R^2 = .38). This indicates cohesion positively influences how players perceive their own contribution to the team.

Table 11: Hierarchical Multiple Regression – Predicting Team Performance (N = 110)

Step / Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	ΔR²
Step 1: Demographics						.12**
Age	0.15	0.06	0.22	2.50	.014	
Gender (ref. Male)	-0.08	0.10	-0.07	-0.80	.426	
Experience (1 = Experienced)	0.28	0.11	0.24	2.55	.012	
Sport Type (1 = High Interdep.)	0.22	0.09	0.19	2.44	.016	
Step 2: Team Cohesion	0.65	0.07	0.59	9.29	<.001	.30***
Step 3: Interactions						.08**
Cohesion × Age	0.12	0.05	0.18	2.40	.018	
Cohesion × Experience	0.18	0.08	0.16	2.25	.027	
Cohesion × Sport Type	0.25	0.09	0.21	2.78	.007	

Full model: R^2 = .50, Adjusted R^2 = .47, p < .001. **p < .01, ***p < .001.
Table 11: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Team Performance (N = 110) Demographics initially explain 12% of variance in Team Performance. Adding Team Cohesion adds a substantial 30% more variance. Interaction effects between cohesion and demographics (age, experience, sport type) further improve the model by 8%. The full model explains 50% of the variance.

Table 12: Standardized Coefficients (β) Comparison of Cohesion Types as Predictors (N = 110)

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Predictor	β for Team Performance	p	β for Individual Contribution	p
Task Cohesion	0.58	<.001	0.55	<.001
Social Cohesion	0.42	<.001	0.38	<.001
Overall Team Cohesion	0.65	<.001	0.62	<.001

Table 12: Standardized Coefficients (β) Comparison of Cohesion Types as Predictors (N = 110) Overall Team Cohesion is the strongest predictor for both Team Performance (β = 0.65) and Individual Contribution (β = 0.62). Task Cohesion outperforms Social Cohesion as a predictor in both cases. All relationships are highly significant (p < .001).

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the role of team cohesion in influencing team performance and individual contribution among 110 athletes from various sports. The demographic profile revealed a predominantly young sample, with nearly half falling in the 18-25 age group and a nearly balanced gender distribution. Basketball and football players formed the largest segments, while more than half of the participants were experienced athletes. Task cohesion was found to be slightly higher than social cohesion, reflecting moderate commitment toward team goals and shared objectives. According to Carron, Eys, and Martin (2016), team cohesiveness is the dynamic process that represents a group's tendency to stick together and stay united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives.

Overall team cohesion stood at a moderate level, suggesting potential for further development. Both team performance and individual contribution also registered moderate mean scores around 3.08 and 3.03 respectively. These descriptive findings indicate that while cohesion exists in these teams, it has not yet reached a high or optimal strength. The moderate baseline levels across variables provide a solid foundation for deeper analysis of predictive relationships. Team sports participation necessitates prolonged cooperation among multiple individuals. Effective collaboration is necessary for success in the game; individual brilliance is not enough. It has been demonstrated that team-building exercises improve team performance, especially when it comes to encouraging unity among sports teams (Bruner et al., 2024).

These results confirm that higher levels of cohesion are closely linked to improved collective outcomes and personal perceptions of contribution. One-way ANOVA results further revealed that age, playing experience, and sport type significantly influenced both cohesion and performance outcomes. In contrast, gender did not show any significant effect on these variables. According to Bruner, Eys, and Benson (2024), organized team-building exercises worked best in youth and collegiate athletics, particularly when spread out over a few weeks and customized to meet the needs of individual teams.

Demographic variables appear to shape how cohesion develops and translates into performance gains. This highlights the contextual and dynamic nature of group processes within athletic environments.

Cultural factors play a significant role in team cohesion. Research focusing on Brazilian football teams highlights that cultural elements such as a shared passion for the sport, social cohesion, diversity, and inclusion contribute to strong team bonds and collaborative play styles. These cultural dynamics foster resilience and flexibility among players, enhancing overall team cohesion (Toledo , 2024).

The findings also reveal that the benefits of cohesion are moderated by athletes' age, experience, and type of sport. Such results emphasize the need for nuanced understanding

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of cohesion's impact in different contexts. Cohesion, which is defined as an imaginary chain that binds team members together, is a dynamic process that reflects the tendency of a group to stick together and stay together within the framework of common goals (State-Davey, 2009).

Ultimately, investing time and effort in developing team cohesion offers a promising pathway to elevate both collective success and personal performance in sports. Coaches play a significant role in a team's atmosphere, a good social environment can promote athletes' performance and development (Bianco & Eklund, 2001), while negatively-perceived environments may increase athletes' stress and exhaustion (Davis, Appleby, Davis, Wetherell, & Gustafsson, 2018).

A positive relationship between team cohesion and team performance has been demonstrated across a number of meta-analyses, with the link largely persisting even when various contextual features are taken into account (Beal et al., 2003; Carron et al., 2002; Castan o et al., 2013; Chiocchio & Essiembre, 2009; Evans & Dion, 1991; Gully et al., 1995; Mullen & Copper, 1994).

CONCLUSION

On the basis of data analysis and findings , the researcher arrived at conclusion that team cohesion explains 38–50% of performance and contribution, with task cohesion being the strongest predictor due to its focus on shared goals. Its impact varies by age, experience, and sport type, with greater effects in interdependent sports like basketball and football. Strengthening task cohesion improves both team and individual outcomes, even at moderate levels.

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