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Relationships Between Personality and Individual Perceptions of Social Cohesion

James Garrett
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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND
INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL COHESION

A Thesis
Presented to
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
James Garrett
Western Kentucky University
March 2004
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF GROUP COHESION

Date Recommended 3/22/2004

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL COHESION

James S. Garrett

March 2004

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Abstract

This research explored personality correlates of social cohesion. Groups of two were given a task to perform that required cooperation between the two team members. This task exposed each team member to the other’s personality. Upon completion of the task, the individual perceptions of social cohesion were assessed by each individual. We hypothesized that extraversion, emotional stability, and agreeableness of one team member will correlate positively with the other team member’s perception of social cohesion. These hypotheses were not supported. However an exploratory analysis showed that an individual’s level of extraversion and conscientiousness were positively correlated to that same individual’s cohesion rating. Additionally, an individual’s level of neuroticism was negatively correlated with that same individual’s cohesion rating.
Introduction

Interpersonal interaction is a required part of everyday life. Whether it occurs in a social atmosphere or in the context of a work environment, most people interact on some level with others. Some interactions may be pleasant and enjoyable while others may be filled with tension and conflict. The circumstances surrounding the situation dictate the importance of the type of interaction. For example, if the interaction is brief and superficial in nature, the pleasantness of the encounter is of little importance. On the other hand, if one is required to work with a group for an extended period of time, tension and conflict could be detrimental to the effectiveness or cohesiveness of the group. This review examines normal personality as defined by the Big Five personality taxonomy, followed by an explanation of group cohesion. The few studies that have explored the effects of personality on group cohesion will then be reviewed.

Normal Personality Measurement

Since 1932, researchers have attempted to systematically organize the taxonomy of personality (John, 1990). Unfortunately, there was little agreement about how personality should be defined and measured (Driskell, Hogan, & Salas, 1988). In one of the earliest reviews of the literature on personality, Mann (as cited in Neuman, Wagner, & Christiansen, 1999) reported that there were more than 500 measures of personality that had been used in group studies in the first half of the century. Some theories were relatively complex, such as Cattell’s taxonomy that consisted of a total of 24 factors of personality. However, a more simple taxonomy has gained recognition and general acceptance among researchers. This taxonomy is known as the Five Factor Model of personality, or the “Big Five.”
Before discussing the Big Five taxonomy of personality, it should be noted that some researchers completely disagree with this model (e.g., Block, 1995). Some researchers still suggest that more than five dimensions are required to be able to fully explain personality. For example, Hogan (1986) promoted a six factor taxonomy of personality which consists of Sociability, Ambition, Adjustment, Likability, Prudence, and Intellectance. For the most part, however, there is a general agreement among Industrial and Organizational Psychology researchers as to the number and nature of personality factors. Most studies have concluded that there are five factors of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1995; John, 1990). These factors are Extraversion (being assertive, sociable, outgoing, talkative, and active), Emotional Stability (being calm, secure, unworried, and not depressed or emotional), Agreeableness (being courteous, flexible, trusting, good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, and tolerant), Conscientiousness (being dependable, thorough, responsible, organized, and hard-working), and Openness to Experience (being imaginative, cultured, curious, and broad-minded).

**Group Cohesion**

A cohesive group is one whose members are bonded to one another and to the group as a whole. A cohesive group is also characterized by connectedness, a sense of “we-ness,” strong ties within the group, and attractiveness of the group to both group members and outsiders (Mudrack, 1989). Researchers have found that group cohesion has a positive effect on variables such as job satisfaction (Bass & Barrett, 1981; Dailey, 1978), productivity (Evans & Dion, 1991; Gammage, Carron, & Estabrooks, 2001; Greene, 1989; Mullen & Copper, 1994; Peteroy, 1980), and maintenance of membership (Evans & Jarvis, 1980). Researchers have also found that group cohesion has positive
effects on sports teams (Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1987; Carron & Chelladurai, 1981; Carron, Colman, & Wheeler, 2002). Although the concept of group cohesion is easy to describe, it has proven somewhat more difficult to define.

Defining Group Cohesion

Since the 1950s, researchers have attempted to define group cohesion. In 1950, Festinger defined group cohesion as “the resultant of all the forces acting on members to remain in the group” (p. 274). Two years later, Gross and Martin (1952, p. 553) defined group cohesion as “the resistance of a group to disruptive forces.” In 1959, Van Bergen and Koekebakker defined it as “the degree of unification of the group field” (p. 85). That definition was followed by a definition provided by Lott and Lott (1965, p. 259) who termed group cohesion as “that group property which is inferred from the number and strength of mutual positive attitudes among the members of a group.” Although these definitions may sound impressive, none are totally adequate or useful because they either focus only on the individuals and therefore may not entirely portray the concept of group cohesiveness (as with the definition provided by Lott & Lott), or they are impossible to operationalize and measure (as with the definitions provided by Festinger, Gross & Martin, and Van Bergen & Koekebakker).

Although there exists a general idea of what cohesiveness is, its definition remains elusive. Mudrack (1989) advised researchers to attempt to link their definitions of cohesion with whatever measurement they are using to avoid definitions that are either too vague or too simplistic. Ultimately, he cited Carron (1982) as the provider of an excellent definition of cohesiveness, which is stated as “a dynamic process that is
reflected in the tendency of a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives” (Mudrack, p. 45).

Widmeyer, Brawley, and Carron (1985) developed a measure of cohesion in sports teams named the Group Environment Questionnaire. Based on past research, they formed a conceptual model of group cohesion that included distinguishing between the individual and group as well as distinguishing between task oriented and socially oriented matters.

Thus, four constructs provide a framework for the concept of group cohesion. These constructs are labeled Group Integration-Task, Group Integration-Social, Individual Attractions to the Group-Task, and Individual Attractions to the Group-Social. Group Integration-Task is defined as an individual group member’s feelings about the similarity, closeness, and bonding within the group as a whole around the group’s task. Group Integration-Social, on the other hand, is defined as an individual group member’s feelings about the similarity, closeness, and bonding within the group as a whole around the group as a social unit. Individual Attractions to the Group-Task is defined as an individual group member’s feelings about his or her personal involvement with the group task, productivity, and goals and objectives. Finally, Individual Attractions to the Group-Social is defined as an individual group member’s feelings about his or her personal involvement, acceptance, and social interaction with the group (Widmeyer et al., 1985).

In short, there are two types of group cohesion. There is task cohesion and social cohesion. Task cohesion refers to an individual’s attraction to the group because of a shared commitment to the group task. Social cohesion is related to an individual’s attraction to the group because of positive relationships with other members of the group
Therefore, social cohesion can be defined as the individual group member’s feelings about the similarity, closeness, bonding, personal involvement, acceptance, and social interaction with the group.

Effects of Personality on Social Cohesion

Very few studies have directly examined the relationship between the Big Five taxonomy of personality and social cohesion. One such study was conducted by Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, and Mount (1998). Of the five factors of the Big Five, they hypothesized relationships for agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability. Their results indicated that the more variance of agreeableness present within a group, the lower the social cohesion. They also found positive bivariate relations between social cohesion (i.e., the average rating of cohesion from all team members) and the minimum level (i.e., lowest level of any member in the group) of both extraversion and emotional stability.

Van Vianen and De Dreu (2001) conducted a similar study but found different results. Their study consisted of two different samples (drilling teams and college students) that were analyzed separately. For the drilling teams sample, there were no bivariate relations between social cohesion and agreeableness, extraversion, or emotional stability. For the student sample, the only relationship found was a positive one between the minimum level of extraversion and social cohesion.

The Present Study

The research investigating relations between normal personality constructs and social cohesion has been very limited with inconsistent results. The size of the groups sampled from the previous studies ranged from 3 to 16. These groups, even the student
samples, were preexisting in nature and were involved in factory work, drilling, or research. In addition, the previous studies operationalized social cohesion as the mean of each group member’s individual perception of the cohesion of the group. The cohesion of the group as a whole was not measured; only the individual perceptions of social cohesion were measured. As a result, if one person in the group feels as though the group has low cohesion while the others think it is high, the strength of that person’s cohesion score will be weakened when the cohesion scores are averaged. Thus, that individual’s feelings will be somewhat ignored. The present research is focused on the individual perceptions of social cohesion as opposed to the cohesion of the group as a whole. In this way, everyone’s view will be taken into account even if the people in the group disagree as to the level of cohesion.

The purpose of this study is to add to the current body of research related to personality and group cohesion by examining the relations between individual perceptions of social cohesion and the personality factors of extraversion, emotional stability, and agreeableness in newly formed groups consisting of two people. Groups of two, as opposed to more than two, will be used for the purpose of limiting the exposure of each subject to just one other personality. By using groups of two, there will be only one personality that will effect an individual’s perception of cohesion. In groups of three or more, it is more difficult to identify the link between an individual’s personality and another individual’s perception of cohesion because the personalities of every other group member would be involved at the same time.

An extraverted individual is one who is assertive, optimistic, sociable, outgoing, and talkative (Littlepage, Schmidt, Whisler, & Frost, 1995). In addition, extraverted
individuals prefer to work with others. Consequently, they should act in a way that would increase the chances that the team will want to remain together (Barrick et al., 1998). Therefore, it is hypothesized that an individual’s perceived level of social cohesion for the group will be associated with the other member’s level of extraversion.

Hypothesis 1: Higher levels of extraversion for one team member will be associated with higher levels of perceived social cohesion for the other team member.

Those individuals with low levels of emotional stability are anxious, depressed, angry, emotional, worried, and insecure (Barrick & Mount, 1991). They will often second-guess decisions and feel unsure about their own and others’ ideas (Van Vianen & De Dreu, 2001). Thus, it is hypothesized that an individual’s perceived level of social cohesion for the group will be associated with the other member’s level of emotional stability.

Hypothesis 2: Higher levels of emotional stability for one team member will be associated with higher levels of perceived social cohesion for the other team member.

Individuals with a high level of agreeableness are courteous, flexible, trusting, cooperative, forgiving, and tolerant (Barrick & Mount, 1991). They are more likely to comply with others’ decisions even if those decisions conflict with their own self-interests (Van Vianen & De Dreu, 2001). As a result, it can be expected that an individual’s perceived level of social cohesion for the group will be associated with the other member’s level of agreeableness.
Hypothesis 3: Higher levels of agreeableness for one team member will be associated with higher levels of perceived social cohesion for the other team member.

Method

Participants

Participants were 108 volunteers who were either undergraduate or graduate students from a mid-sized southeastern university. Demographic information collected included gender, age, and ethnic background. There were 36 males (33.3%) and 72 females (66.7%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 59 with a mean age of 22.3 and standard deviation of 6; six respondents did not report their age. Eighty-six participants (79.6%) were White, 19 (17.6%) were African American, 1 (.9%) was Hispanic. 0 (0%) were Asian American, and 2 (1.9%) were American Indian.

Materials

Informed Consent. The informed consent document identifies the nature and purpose of the project, explains the procedures, addresses potential discomfort and risks as well as benefits of participation, and addresses the issues of confidentiality and the participant’s right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent document. A copy of the informed consent can be found in Appendix A.

Group Cohesiveness Scale. The group cohesion scale created by Widmeyer et al. (1985) was preferred for this study due to its separation of task and social cohesion. However, the items could not be reworded to fit the current research. Therefore, the Group Cohesiveness Scale, created by Dobbins and Zaccaro (1986), was used to measure
social cohesion. This scale was used because of its appropriateness for the study as well as its apparent measurement of social cohesion. This eight-item scale assesses the individuals' perceptions of cohesiveness within their group. One item from the scale was dropped due to its lack of appropriateness for the current study. For the remaining items, the word “squadron” was replaced with the word “team.”

Participants were asked to respond to each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The summation of the seven items was used as each participant’s perception of cohesiveness. Past research (Dobbins & Zacarro, 1986) on the 8-item version of the scale has shown internal consistency reliability estimated as high as .91, whereas a .83 has been estimated for the 7-item version (Buchanan, 1998). The 7-item social cohesion scale can be found in Appendix B.

**Personality Inventory.** Personality was measured using the NEO-FFI developed by Costa and McCrae (1991). Participants were asked to respond to 60 items (e.g., “I try to be courteous to everyone I meet.”; “I rarely feel fearful or anxious.”) on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Internal consistency reliability estimates for the individual domains for the NEO-FFI ranged from .68 for agreeableness to .86 for neuroticism (Costa & McCrae).

**Procedure**

Upon entering the testing area, participants filled out an informed consent form followed by the NEO-FFI. Along with the NEO-FFI, they completed a short demographic survey. This demographic survey can be found in Appendix C. The participants were then randomly placed into groups of two. In most cases, groups of eight to twelve participated at any one time. However, sometimes only two participants would attend to
the experiment during a particular session. Each group member was given instructions concerning the rules that needed to be followed during performance of the task and were then separated into different cubicles. A copy of the instructions given to each group member can be found in Appendix D. In addition, each group was given a set of plastic shapes (e.g., squares, triangles) for the task.

The group had 20 minutes to construct one of six shapes by using the pieces provided. They chose which shape they wished to construct. In addition, they were allowed to attempt to construct one of the other shapes if they were having trouble with their original choice. The smaller shapes were blue, red, yellow, orange, green, and brown and each team member had two colors assigned to them; that is, they were the only ones allowed to touch the shapes of that color. The two unassigned colors could be touched by either team member. However, they were not able to complete the task because there was no way to create any of the requested shapes using the pieces provided. An unsolvable task was used to force the individuals in each group to be exposed to each other’s personality for the full 20 minutes as well as to prevent an artificially high level of cohesion that may have been created by successful completion of a task.

After time expired, the Group Cohesiveness Scale was given to each team member. Upon completion of this scale, the experiment ended and all participants were debriefed on the study. After the debriefing, the participants were asked to complete the Group Cohesiveness Scale (with the items reordered) for a second time.

Analyses

Within each group, cohesion was measured separately for each of the two group members. For each case, the predictor variable is that participant’s personality score on a
given scale and the criterion is the other group member’s cohesion rating; that is, we are examining the correlation between a participant’s cohesion rating and the other participant’s personality. Thus, each group of two participants yielded two cases of data.

Results

To estimate the association between the personality factors and social cohesion, zero-order correlations were computed between each of the personality factors and social cohesion. These results are provided in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, none of the personality factors for a given team member were significantly correlated with their teammate’s perception of social cohesion. A significant correlation was found between the cohesion ratings of each group member, \( r = .46, p < .01 \).

Table 1

Correlations between the Personality of a Given Group Member and Cohesion Rating of the Other Group Member

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Neuroticism</td>
<td>32.48</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>(.82)</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extraversion</td>
<td>41.87</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>(.82)</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Openness</td>
<td>40.72</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>(.78)</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agreeableness</td>
<td>44.04</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>(.77)</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Conscientiousness</td>
<td>45.35</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>(.81)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cohesion</td>
<td>27.78</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All personality-cohesion correlation tests were one-tailed, none were significant. Reliabilities of each factor of personality can be found in parenthesis on the corresponding row.

**p < .01, two-tailed. *p < .05, two-tailed.

1 In addition to the cohesion data gathered before the debriefing, cohesion data was also gathered after the debriefing. However, no differences were found between these two cohesion ratings.
**Exploratory Analyses**

In addition to computing a correlation between the personality of a given group member and the perception of cohesion of the other member of the group, a similar analysis was performed using the personality and perception of cohesion of the same individual; that is, a correlation was computed between the personality of a given group member and the perception of cohesion of that same individual. The results are provided in Table 2. Significant correlations were found between extraversion and cohesion, $r = .29$, $p < .01$, conscientiousness and cohesion, $r = .31$, $p < .01$, and neuroticism and cohesion, $r = -.38$, $p < .01$.

**Table 2**

*Correlations between Cohesion Rating and Personality Within a Group Member*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cohesion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01, two-tailed. *p < .05, two-tailed.**

To further explore the data, we computed zero-order correlations between the minimum, maximum, and mean of social cohesion and the minimum, maximum, and mean of neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness. The results for the minimum, maximum, and mean of neuroticism and cohesion are shown in Table 3.
As seen in Table 3, significant negative cohesion-neuroticism correlations were found between group minimum values, \( r = -.33, p < .05 \), and group mean values, \( r = -.41, p < .01 \). The results for the minimum, maximum, and mean of extraversion and cohesion are shown in Table 4. Significant cohesion-extraversion correlations were found between group maximum values, \( r = .41, p < .01 \), and group mean values, \( r = .40, p < .01 \).
Table 5 shows the results for the minimum, maximum, and mean of agreeableness and cohesion. None of the group minimum, group maximum, or group mean correlations were significant.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Minimum Agreeableness</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Maximum Agreeableness</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mean Agreeableness</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minimum Cohesion</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.87**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Maximum Cohesion</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.84**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mean Cohesion</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01, two-tailed. *p < .05, two-tailed.

Discussion

The hypotheses tested in this study concerned how one particular individual’s perception of social cohesion would be related to another individual’s personality. The results, however, failed to offer any support for these hypotheses. The first hypothesis predicted that higher levels of extraversion for one team member would be associated with higher levels of perceived social cohesion for the other team member. The correlation was a nonsignificant .15. The second hypothesis predicted that higher levels of emotional stability for one team member would be associated with higher levels of perceived social cohesion for the other team member. This correlation was a nonsignificant correlation -.06. Finally, the third hypothesis predicted that higher levels of agreeableness for one team member would be associated with higher levels of perceived
social cohesion for the other team member. Again, the results did not support this hypothesis, a nonsignificant correlation of .11. These results suggest that the other group member’s personality may not be related to one’s perception of the cohesion of the group.

*Exploratory Analyses.*

The failure to support any of our hypotheses does not mean, however, that personality and social cohesion are completely unrelated. Exploratory analyses were conducted on the data to investigate other possible relations between the two variables. Instead of looking at how an individual’s personality was related to his teammate’s perception of cohesion, an analysis was conducted to discover how an individual’s personality was related to his own perception of social cohesion.

As seen in Table 2, neuroticism, $r = -.38, p < .01$, extraversion, $r = .29, p < .01$, and conscientiousness, $r = .31, p < .01$, were all significantly related to their own perception of social cohesion. The results suggest that individuals who are highly neurotic (i.e., moody, insecure, anxious) would be more likely to view their group as having low cohesion than someone who is low in the same trait. Additionally, someone who is more extraverted (i.e., tendency to experience positive emotions) or conscientious (i.e., dependable, responsible) would be more likely to consider her group cohesive than would someone who is low on those traits. The results from Table 1 and Table 2 suggest that one’s own personality is more related to one’s own perception of cohesion than another group member’s perception of cohesion.

Additional exploratory analyses were conducted on the minimum, maximum, and mean values of personality and cohesion. As seen in Table 3, significant negative
cohesion-neuroticism correlations were found between group minimum, $r = -.33, p < .05$, and mean values, $r = -.41, p < .01$. The group minimum result indicates that the lowest neuroticism score of the group is inversely related to the lowest cohesion score of the group. The group mean result indicates that the average neuroticism score of the group was inversely related to the average cohesion score of the group.

Table 4 shows that although there was not a significant cohesion-extraversion relationship between group minimum values, there were significant positive correlations between group maximum, $r = .41, p < .01$, and group mean values, $r = .40, p < .01$. The group maximum result shows that the group’s highest extraversion score was positively related to the group’s highest cohesion score. Additionally, the group mean result shows that the group’s average extraversion score was positively related to the group’s average cohesion score. Table 5 shows no significant agreeableness-cohesion relations for group minimum, maximum, or mean values. It should be noted that the correlations between the two group member’s personality ratings of neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness were all strongly positively correlated, which is contrary to what would be expected.

These group minimum, maximum, and mean results suggest the possibility that this personality-cohesion interaction may have the same effect on groups containing more than two people. However, these results should be replicated before any interpretations are made due to the exploratory nature of these findings in this particular study.

**Limitations**

One limitation of this study has to do with the definition of social cohesion. In this study, task cohesion was not taken into account because of the unavailability of a proper cohesion survey for the type of group situation utilized in this study. Another limitation
of this study concerns the definition of “group.” In this study, a group consists of two people. Therefore, one can only generalize these findings to other groups of two. Additionally, this study was conducted in a controlled environment with an all student sample. Thus, it may be unwise to generalize these results to a dynamic work environment.

Another limitation concerned the bias involved in ratings one’s own personality. Although the NEO-FFI is generally accepted in the area of personality research, it is still a self report of personality. This fact should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Finally, when two measures come from the same source, the issue of common method variance cannot be ignored because any test taker rating biases will affect scores on both the dependent and independent variables. In this study, when comparing an individual’s personality to that same individual’s perception of social cohesion, common method variance could be the sole cause of the significant relations. This limitation should also be taken into account when interpreting the results.

**Future Research**

There are many different possibilities for future research in this area. First of all, an observational measure of personality or cohesion (but not both) could be used to negate the effects of common method variance. Future research could include different personality variables, such as Type A vs. Type B or leadership characteristics. If the situation permits, a measure of social cohesion and task cohesion could be used to discern the relationship between personality and each type of cohesion.

In this study, groups of two were used to avoid having to aggregate scores into one group personality or cohesion score. Future research could look at groups of more
than two while still looking at the individual scores to determine whether the results found in this study would replicate in larger groups. Future research could also focus on real world tasks, such as for the workplace, instead of using a controlled task in a lab setting.

The cohesion of a group can make or break a team. Whether it’s a long term work group, a group put together for a short assignment, or a sports team, the cohesion of a group can have a profound effect on the outcome of that group’s goals. This topic should be researched further to identify what makes for a cohesive group. The results could be applied to almost every job imaginable, and possibly even to family units or couples.

However, a major problem with the idea of group cohesion, its definition, needs to be addressed. Different researchers have defined cohesion in different ways. As a result, their studies cannot be directly compared. Thus, the version of cohesion that is being used in future studies should be adequately defined so that others may accurately replicate it or compare their findings to it. It may be useful in the long run for a global definition of group cohesion to be developed with an accompanying measure that can fit or be easily altered to fit most any situation.
References


Appendix A
Informed Consent Document

Project Title: Group Dynamics
Investigator: James Garrett, Psychology Department –746-9111
Dr. Reagan Brown, Psychology Department –745-6939

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. This research is for J. Garrett’s MA thesis. The University requires that you must be 18 years or older and that you must give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him/her any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. A copy of this form is available upon request.

1. **Nature and Purpose of Project:** The study is designed to assess the dynamics of groups.

2. **Explanation of Procedures:** You will first receive a questionnaire in which you can agree or disagree with various statements. You will then solve a puzzle with one other person. Finally, you will be given another shorter questionnaire. The entire study will take about one hour.

3. **Discomfort and Risks:** No anticipated risks or discomfort are expected from participating in this study.

4. **Benefits:** You will receive the satisfaction that comes from contributing to research.

5. **Confidentiality:** Absolute anonymity is guaranteed. No identifying information (name, social security number, etc.) will be asked of you.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** You are free to withdraw from this study at any time with no penalty to you at all.

Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

*You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.*

_________________________________________  Date

Signature of Participant

_________________________________________  Date

Witness

_________________________________________

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD
Dr. Phillip E. Myers, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-4652
The following questions concern your feelings toward your team. Please circle the response that best indicates your feelings.

(1) If given the chance, I would choose to leave my team and join another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>neither disagree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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(2) My team gets along well together.

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<td>disagree</td>
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<td>agree</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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(3) I feel that I am really a part of my team.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>disagree</td>
<td>neither disagree</td>
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(4) I would look forward to being with the other member of my team for another assignment.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>Neither disagree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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(5) I find that I generally do not get along with the other member of my team.

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<td></td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>disagree</td>
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<td>strongly agree</td>
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(6) The team to which I belong is a close one.

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<td>disagree</td>
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(7) I enjoyed belonging to this team because I think I could be friends with the other member.

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Appendix C
## Demographic Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity (choose one):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Asian American</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Other</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Female</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
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Appendix D
Puzzle Instructions
Please follow carefully

In this puzzle task, you will be required to construct a particular shape using the pieces provided to you. You will notice that the pieces are 5 different colors. Each of you will be “responsible” for two colors. This means that only you are allowed to touch your pieces. Your teammate is not allowed to touch your pieces and you are not allowed to touch your teammate’s pieces. The last unassigned color, however, can be touched by either team member.

Your team must work together to form one of the shapes below. Only one of the shapes can be constructed using the pieces provided to you. Your task is to figure out which shape it is. All pieces must be used. This task is very difficult.

You have 20 minutes.

***You are responsible for the yellow and blue pieces
***You are not allowed to touch the red and tan pieces
***You both may touch the orange pieces.