

A Model for Filipino Work Team Effectiveness

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This study utilized a sequential mixed method approach in developing a model for team effectiveness in Philippine organizations. In the first phase, qualitative data were gathered to elicit the factors that were deemed important to creating effective teams. In the second phase, a survey composed of three factors identified in the first phase: team member competencies, quality of relations, and leadership, was administered to 418 employees from 85 Filipino work teams from various sectors and industries. Results revealed that the three significant predictors accounted for 60% of the variance in perceived team effectiveness. The proposed model of input-process-output was partially supported. Results showed that quality of relations partially mediated the relationship of leadership and team member competence on perceived team effectiveness. The study highlights the importance of social relations especially in the Philippine context and underscores the value of understanding team effectiveness from a cultural perspective.

Keywords: leadership, relationships, Philippines, team effectiveness, work team

Over the last half a century, there have been remarkable transformations of organizational structures worldwide. Although there are economic, strategic, and technological imperatives driving these transformations, one of the more compelling aspects has been an ongoing shift from work organized around individual jobs to

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team-based work structures (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1992). Teams have become the strategy of choice when organizations are confronted with complex and difficult tasks; when errors lead to severe consequences; when the task complexity exceeds the capacity of an individual; when the task environment is ill-defined, ambiguous, and stressful; when multiple and quick decisions are needed; and when the lives of others depend on the collective insight of individual members (Salas, Cooke, & Rosen, 2008). As the complexity of the workplace continues to grow, organizations increasingly depend on teams (Salas et al., 2008).

It has been observed, though, that the bulk of team performance research involves Western populations (Salas et al., 2008). Despite the recognition that national culture plays an important role in shaping organization culture and management practices (Hofstede 1983a, 1983b, 2007; Joiner, 2001; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996; Trompenaars, 1996), there has been little known research that looked at the dynamics of work teams in non-Western cultures such as the Philippines, especially on how the local culture influences team effectiveness. This study would like to contribute to this body of knowledge by understanding how national culture reflects on dynamics and outcomes of work teams. The study will specifically focus on the concept of team effectiveness and its antecedents in a non-Western society such as the Philippines.

Team Effectiveness

Cohen and Bailey (1997) defined a team as a collection of individuals who are interdependent on their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more social systems and who manage their relationships across organizational boundaries. Hackman (1987) presented three criteria to assess team effectiveness. First, the productive output of the work group should meet or exceed the performance standards of the people who receive and/or review the output. Second, the social processes used in carrying out the work should maintain or enhance the capability of members to work together on subsequent team tasks. Third, the group experience should satisfy

rather than frustrate the personal needs of group members. This includes the degree to which the team experience contributes to the growth and personal well being of its members (Hackman, 1990), or the members' sense that the team did its work well (Kohn & O'Connell, 2007).

Antecedents of Team Effectiveness

More than 130 models and frameworks of team performance or some components thereof were revealed in a review of literature conducted by Salas et al. (2008). The dominant approach underlying these various models is the Input-Process-Output (I-P-O) framework. Inputs include any antecedent factors that may influence, directly or indirectly, the team members and the team itself (Forsyth, 2010). Inputs represent various resources available to the team both internally (i.e., composition of KSAs, personalities, demographics, group structure, team design) and externally (i.e., rewards, training, organizational climate) at multiple levels (i.e., individual, group, organization) (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). In a comparison of several team effectiveness models, Goodman, Ravlin, and Argote (1986) noted that some antecedent variables such as task characteristics, group composition and organizational factors appeared in all the models.

Processes are members' interdependent acts that convert inputs to outcomes through cognitive, verbal, and behavioral activities directed toward organizing task work to achieve collective goals (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). Further, Marks et al. (2001) reiterated that team processes are the means by which members work interdependently to utilize various resources to yield meaningful outcomes.

Finally, output represents criteria to assess the effectiveness of team actions (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). A clear example is the three criteria for team effectiveness of Hackman (1987) presented earlier – the task output is acceptable to those who received or viewed it, capability of members to work together in the future is maintained or strengthened, and members' needs are more satisfied than frustrated by the group experience.

Beyond differences in inputs, some I-P-O models also indicated

the presence of moderators or mediators. For instance, in Hackman's (1987) normative model of group effectiveness, group synergy "tunes" the impact of the inputs, and material resources is considered a moderator of process and outcomes. However, in the I-P-O framework of McGrath (as cited in Hackman, 1987), group interaction process mediates input variables and output variables.

Cultural Influences on Work Teams

The literature around the characteristics and models of team effectiveness and its antecedents described so far were generally based on Western thinking. However, critics of ethnocentrism have long asserted that there are limits to the applicability of Western concepts, values, and methods to other societies. Hofstede (1983a) explained that one of the reasons for this is psychological – thinking is partly conditioned by national culture. He explained that this is an effect of early life experiences in the family as well as educational experiences in schools and organizations which are not the same across borders. Further, he said that through these experiences, people become "mentally programmed" to interpret experiences in a certain way.

There are a number of ways culture can differ. Hofstede's seminal work identified four dimensions of national culture: individualism versus collectivism, large or small power distance, strong or weak uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede, 1983b). A fifth dimension – long-term vs. short-term orientation – was later added, further highlighting differences between Western and non-Western cultures (Hofstede, 2007).

Of the five dimensions, the first two (individualism versus collectivism and large or small power distance) appear to be the most relevant to teams. As a way of understanding the difference between Western and non-Western cultures, the results pertaining to the Philippines, where this study gathered its pieces of evidence, will be compared with that of the U.S., where majority of the team effectiveness models originated from.

There are stark differences between the US and the Philippines in terms of individualism versus collectivism. Individualistic cultures are loosely integrated and everyone looks after his or her own self-interest,

whereas collectivist cultures are tightly integrated and everyone looks after the interest of his or her in-group. In collectivist societies, individuals are relationship oriented and primarily aim to fulfill their obligations toward their in-group (Hofstede, 1983a). Amongst the 50 countries, U.S. ranked 50th as the highest individualistic society, whereas the Philippines ranked 21st leaning towards collectivism (Hofstede, 1983b) which bodes well because Filipinos are known to be highly relational (Jocano, 1988) and used to working and being in groups.

Also, the Philippines is described as a large power distance culture especially compared to the US where power distance is small. According to Hofstede (1983a), power distance involves how society deals with the fact that people are unequal. Societies with low power distance like the U.S. allow for participative management, two-way communication, and more direct and frank communication (Erez, 2000; Hofstede, 1983a). In societies with high power distance, individual subordinates as a rule do not want to participate, top down communications work frequently, and communication is more indirect and euphemistic (Erez, 2000; Hofstede, 1983a). There may be a greater reliance on team leaders for direction and decision-making and less likelihood of shared leadership.

To further understand if and how national culture plays a role in the development of effective work teams in a non-Western society such as the Philippines, this study examined team effectiveness using an inductive, sequential exploratory (qualitative then quantitative) approach.

STUDY ONE – EXPLORATORY STUDY

In order to make sure that the concept of team effectiveness and its antecedents are developed within the local (Filipino) perspective, we undertook an exploratory study to answer the questions: What are the characteristics and dynamics of effective work teams in the country? In what ways do Filipinos behave, communicate, and interact in a way that contributes to the development and maintenance of effective work teams in the Philippine cultural setting?

Method

Research was conducted through focus group discussions amongst six Filipino work teams from various sectors and individual interviews with one of the leaders of each organization. The teams were chosen for being high performing (i.e., achieving or exceeding targets and maintained healthy work relationships as endorsed by an organization leader), for being formed and still operating in a Filipino organization, and for members remaining to be current employees of the same Filipino organization. The data gathered were subjected to thematic analysis using the methodological procedures of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Results

In all six work teams, both leaders and members shared the same view that the characteristics of team effectiveness are performance, team member attitudes and quality of work relationships. Performance refers to the team having achieved or surpassed the goals and tasks assigned to it. Effective work teams need to have a demonstrable positive impact on the organization via measurable contributions (i.e., sales volume) or even through less tangible improvements (i.e., higher levels of accountability, better organizational functioning). In addition, most team members claimed that teams that met or surpassed their goals and tasks did so because the members understood the internal connectivity and inter-relationships of their tasks and how these tasks were to be accomplished in a synchronized way. As mentioned by the participants during the focus group discussions “*tulong-tulong sa pagpapalano at paggawa, binibigyan ng pagkakataon ang bawat isa*” and “*automatic na mag-a-assist lahat*” (we help each other in the planning and implementation, we give each other a chance to participate and everyone automatically gives assistance to each other). Thus there was a great need for effective coordination and communication throughout the work team’s life. Team leaders saw themselves less as leading a flying geese formation but more as a captain of a basketball team whose members may exchange roles and functioned in an interdependent way.

An effective work team was also one whose members upheld a positive attitude towards work. One of the attitudes rated highly was flexibility in terms of taking on someone's responsibilities when the person is unable to come to work, finding ways to make things work (even without proper training) in order to satisfy a customer, and willingness to engage in collective response to a problem of an individual member. One of the participants shared that their team members were willing to "*I-adjust ang workload ng team members kapag may isang di nag-pe-perform*" (adjust or re-distribute the workload if there was a member who lacked the ability to perform/deliver expected output). In all these instances, flexibility was closely linked to heightened sensitivity and a "feeling for the other", and was seen as highly relational behavior.

Finally, a team is considered effective if a dignified work relationship was maintained within the group. Filipino workers highly value their personhood and expect an effective work team to maintain dignified work relations where sensitivity and reciprocity enhance their individual self-worth. A desirable characteristic is the ability to sustain an environment of trust, respect, and open communication despite work-related differences and challenges. Some manifestations of dignified work relationships include coming to meetings prepared, delivering on expectations, communicating in a transparent manner to avoid suspicions of hidden agendas, and acknowledging the merits of team members ideas or contributions no matter how limited or weak. It was interesting how the respondents were able to develop creative ways of prefacing their criticism of an idea to avoid loss of face and uphold the dignity of the other person. An example was using the phrase, "*Maganda and exciting ang idea mo pero baka magka-problem tayo dyan ...*" (Your idea is good and exciting but we might encounter a problem with it ...).

From the surface, these findings are very similar to the criteria of effective work teams as cited by Hackman (1987) and Kohn and O'Connell (2007) presented earlier. However, there were some distinct idiosyncrasies in the three criteria. These idiosyncrasies revolved around the constant emphasis on the collectivist culture and relational aspect of Filipinos in their criteria for what makes effective teams. For instance, the respondents suggested that the first criterion

for a team to be effective is that it must have achieved or surpassed the goals and tasks assigned to it. When saying this, many qualified that such teams did so because of the internal connectivity and inter-relationships of their tasks and that members' accomplished them in a synchronized way. This is aligned to the findings of Jocano (2000) that successful Filipinos in teams display pananagutan (responsibility or accountability) which is strongly linked to interdependence and maintaining reciprocal relations with each other.

Likewise, with the second criterion that team members need to have positive attitude towards their work rather than viewing attitude as individual, the most important positive attitude cited was flexibility. From the team members' perspective, flexibility is not so much in terms of tasks but more in terms of finding ways to help co-workers, doing whatever it takes to satisfy a customer, and engaging in a collective response to a problem of a co-worker. This is clearly a reflection of the value of the Filipino's value for personalism and familialism. According to Filipino anthropologist Jocano (1988), personalism or providing personal service or assistance to others, placing a high concern for the welfare of another, and familialism or imbuing a work group or a corporation with the spirit of collective concern and sentiment as though the organization is one big family are reflections of the importance of interpersonal relations in Philippine culture.

The exploratory study likewise revealed that although the Filipino worker's criteria for team effectiveness were very similar to that of their Western counterparts, there were differences in the antecedents of team effectiveness. In the classic Western models following the I-P-O framework, the most common inputs were task characteristics, group composition, and organizational factors (Goodman et al., 1986) and process included cognitive, verbal, and behavioral activities directed toward organizing task work to achieve collective goals (Marks et al., 2001). In contrast, findings from Study One suggest three critical factors that contribute to effective Filipino work teams: team member competence, effective leadership, and quality of relationship.

Team member competence. This means having a group of people with technically diverse skills that allow the team to consider various aspects of the problem and respond to it effectively. As one interviewee shared, "*makikita ang iba't-ibang aspeto ng problema*

at iba't-ibang konsiderasyon na dapat isa-alang alang" (we can see different aspects of the problem and various considerations that we have to give attention to).

Effective leadership. Effective team leaders extend felt support towards team members and act as conduit between the team and top management. Leaders support team members by giving help to those that are unable to reach targets, providing continuous performance feedback and assessments and making sure that the organization gives team-based recognition and rewards. This is a reflection of the Filipino value of paternalism, where leaders are expected to act in a morally upright, responsible, and compassionate manner towards their subordinates (Jocano, 1999).

Quality of relationship. Participants reported that relating to each other as friends led to a happier office atmosphere and enhanced the capacity of individuals and groups to overcome weaknesses. Further, having a family atmosphere helped motivate workers. A characteristic of good interpersonal relationships is when work team members communicate openly and meaningfully with each other. This includes communications and interactions that go beyond work and interface with personal lives such as asking how one's family is, sharing problems and secrets, being invited to significant personal events, and even becoming *ninong* or *ninang* (sponsor) to baptisms. All of these are reflections of the Filipino value of familialism where work groups are imbued with the spirit of collective concern and sentiment, as though the organization is one big family (Jocano, 1999).

Proposed Model for Team Effectiveness

The results of the exploratory study were consistent with findings of previous researches on teams: first, values influence team effectiveness (Woehr, Arciniega, & Poling, 2013) and second, team member relations are important in work engagement and team performance (Liao, Yang, Wang, Drown, & Shi, 2013). However, the results also point to deviations from the Western models of the Filipino work teams' understanding of team effectiveness and its antecedents.

Given the results of the first study, we propose a model of team effectiveness that highlights the collectivist and highly relational

nature of Filipino work teams. Following the I-P-O framework, we define team effectiveness as the ability of the group to meet/surpass goals and tasks, members' positive attitudes, and dignified work relationships. However, we use the label *perceived team effectiveness*, rather than team effectiveness, because the study will rely on self-reporting by respondents.

As suggested by our qualitative data, two important inputs are team member competence and effective leadership. We define team member competence as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are collectively shared and utilized by the team. Effective leadership is defined as the ability of the leader to guide the performance of the team by monitoring directions, plans and performance; showing support, coaching and consulting team members; exercising good judgment; and ensuring the team has adequate resources.

Results of the first study highlighted the importance of quality of social relations. Social relations play such a central role in Filipino work teams, a clear manifestation of the national culture where Filipinos give high importance to interpersonal relations and to face-to-face encounters (Jocano, 1988). In the work setting, this is seen through behaviors around collectivism, personalism, and familialism where team members provide personal support to each other, place a high concern for each other's welfare, and imbue a work group with the spirit of collective concern and sentiment, as though the organization is one big family. We adapt the framework of McGrath (as cited in Hackman, 1987) and suggest that quality of social relations mediate the relationship between effective leadership and team member competence and perceived team effectiveness. Aside from McGrath's claim (as cited in Hackman, 1987) that group interaction processes mediate the relationship between team input and output variables, the conceptualization of quality of relations as a mediator is supported by findings of previous researches on work teams. Variables related to quality of relations such as cohesion (Gonzales, Burke, Santuzzi, & Bradley, 2003), high levels of communication (Marks, 1999), and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) were found to be significant mediators of various team inputs and outputs within the I-P-O framework. As applied to this research, it is assumed, for example, that individual team members will only be able to effectively contribute to

the team if there is positive relationship among members. This is due to the emphasis given by Filipino work team members on relationships as seen in literature (Jocano, 1988) and this study's qualitative results.

STUDY TWO – MODEL TESTING

The second study tests the proposed model for Filipino work team effectiveness. Specifically, we hypothesize that:

1. Effective leadership, team member competence, and quality relations would predict perceived team effectiveness;
2. Quality relations would mediate the relationship between effective leadership and perceived team effectiveness; and
3. Quality relations would mediate the relationship between team member competence and perceived team effectiveness.

Participants

An online survey was conducted with 418 employees from 85 Filipino work teams operating in the Philippines. Participants were gathered through purposive sampling. All participating teams work with Filipino-owned organizations or foreign multinational corporations operating in the Philippines, and the teams' composition is entirely Filipino.

A team, by definition, is composed of three members or more. For this study, the range was 3 to 38 participating members per team. Any isolated responses not accompanied by responses of at least two other team members were discarded and not used for further analysis. Mean number of participants was 5, and mode was 3.

Work teams came from various sectors and industries, and were of different types of ownerships. They represented the five types of teams as described by Forsyth (2010): management teams, project teams, advisory teams, work teams, and action teams.

Of the 85 teams, 83 teams (97.65%) were permanent and two teams (2.35%) were non-permanent teams – both non-permanent teams were project teams from consulting companies that disbanded after their tasks were done. There were 16 virtual teams (18.82%) and 69 non-virtual teams (81.18%) – the 16 virtual teams were composed

of members scattered geographically around the country or whose members coordinate with team members overseas. In the interest of maintaining a more homogenous sample, t-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences between both classifications (permanent vs. non-permanent and virtual vs. non-virtual) for all factors. No significant differences were observed and so all samples were kept.

Participants for each work team involved a combination of various positions in the organization. Five percent (5%) of the respondents are executives, 27% are managers, 14% are supervisors and 54% belong to staff positions. More than half of the respondents are female (67%). Forty-eight percent (48%) are below 30 years old, 40 % are between 31-45 and the rest are 46 years old and above.

Measures

Researchers developed a team effectiveness survey instrument using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The initial survey consisted of 62 items that measured the outcome perceived team effectiveness, as well as the predictors directly drawn from the exploratory study. This initial survey instrument was pilot tested with 102 employees that were members of Filipino work teams. Principal component analysis was conducted initially to select items to include in the analysis and to explore if the hypothesized factors fit the data. Items that double or triple loaded on a factor that were not initially classified were removed. Confirmatory factor analysis on the full sample ($N = 418$) was then used to extract the latent variables. Preliminary analyses indicated some multivariate non-normality in the data, thus, the corrected normal theory method was employed (Kline, 2010). Model fit was assessed using the Satorra-Bentler Scaled chi-square ($SBS-\chi^2$) (Satorra & Bentler, 1994), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). These robust statistics have been shown to be appropriate when assumption of normality is violated (Chou, Bentler, & Satorra, 1991; Hu, Bentler, & Kano, 1992). Model fit would be adequate if $SBS-\chi^2$ is small, preferably non-significant, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is less than .06, and Comparative Fit Index

(CFI) exceeds .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFA model provided an adequate fit with $df = 242$, $SBS-\chi^2 = 537.64$, $RMSEA = .05$ (90% confidence interval lower bound = .05, higher bound = .06), $CFI = .95$, indicating that the four-factor model fit the data adequately. Factor loadings were all statistically significant at $p < .001$ ranging from .62 to .93. Twenty-four survey items that measured four latent constructs were retained for the final analysis. These variables are described below.

Perceived team effectiveness was defined as the team's ability to produce quality results and be recognized for its performance by the organization, clients and external partners. This also measured the extent to which members were proud of and would choose to be part of this team. This was measured using six items such as "Our team is known to produce quality results" and "Given other options, I will still choose to be part of this team (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

Team member competence means having the right combination of people with technically diverse skills and personal characteristics required to effectively contribute to the team's goals. It was measured using two items such as "Each member of our team is technically/functionally capable" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$).

Effective leadership was defined as the extent to which team leaders show support to team members, exercise good judgment, consult members on matters concerning them, coach employees, and ensures the team has adequate resources. The scale also measured whether the team leader helps the team monitor and review its directions, performance and work systems. This was measured using eight items such as "Our team leader coaches us" and "Our team leader ensures we have adequate resources" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$).

Quality of relationships describes the quality of interactions such as the extent to which members enjoy working together, listen to each other, work collaboratively, help and support one another, and treat each other with respect. There were also three items describing whether team members show deep concern (*"malasakit"*) for the team, share personal stories and experiences, and feels like the team is a family. This was measured using eight items. Examples of which are "We are like family" and "Members of our team treat each other with respect" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$).

Results

Because data were collected from different teams, independence of observations cannot be assumed. To account for the nesting of participants within different teams, robust maximum likelihood parameter estimates were computed in Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2006) using the sandwich estimator (Kauermann & Carroll, 2001) for all the analyses following the recommendation of MacKinnon (2008).

We first obtained zero-order correlations between the latent variables to determine if there were sizeable relationships among them. Table 1 shows that all of the variables were positively and significantly related. We then proceeded with mediation analysis using structural equation modeling following the recommendations of Holmbeck (1997). Three path models were estimated: (a) a direct effects model with team member competencies and effective leadership as predictors of perceived team effectiveness (Model A); (b) a full mediation model in which the relationship between the predictors team member competencies and effective leadership and the outcome perceived team effectiveness were only related through quality of relationships (Model B); and (c) a partial mediation model including both direct paths from member competencies and effective leadership to perceived team effectiveness, and indirect paths through quality of relationships (Model C).

Model A or a direct paths model (see Figure 1) fits the data adequately with $df = 98$, $SBS-\chi^2 = 245.70$, $RMSEA = .06$ (90% confidence interval lower bound = .05, higher bound = .06), $CFI = .95$. Member competencies and effective leadership significantly predicted team effectiveness with $\beta = .45$, $p < .001$ and $\beta = .38$, $p < .001$ respectively. Both predictors accounted for 56% ($R^2 = .56$, $p < .001$) of the variability in team effectiveness.

Model B or a fully mediated model (see Figure 2) fits the data adequately with $df = 244$, $SBS-\chi^2 = 566.21$, $RMSEA = .06$ (90% confidence interval lower bound = .05, higher bound = .06), $CFI = .94$. Quality of relationships significantly predicted team effectiveness $\beta = .74$, $p < .001$. Member competencies and effective leadership significantly predicted quality of relationships with $\beta = .58$, $p < .001$ and $\beta = .33$, $p < .001$ respectively. Quality of relationships

Table 1. Zero-order Correlations

Variable	1	2	3
1. Perceived team effectiveness	--		
2. Effective leadership	.67***	--	
3. Quality of relationships	.73***	.69***	--
4. Team member competence	.69***	.64***	.78***

Note. *** $p < .001$

significantly accounted for 55% ($R^2 = .55$, $p < .001$) of the variability in team effectiveness. Member competencies and effective leadership accounted for 69% ($R^2 = .69$, $p < .001$) of the variability in social relations.

Model C or partial mediated model (see Figure 3) fits the data adequately with $df = 242$, $SBS-\chi^2 = 537.64$, $RMSEA = .05$ (90% confidence interval lower bound = .05, higher bound = .06), $CFI = .95$. Member competencies, effective leadership, and quality of relationships significantly predicted team effectiveness with $\beta = .24$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .28$, $p < .001$, and $\beta = .35$, $p < .001$ respectively. Member competencies and effective leadership significantly predicted quality of relationships with $\beta = .58$, $p < .001$ and $\beta = .32$, $p < .001$ respectively. Member competencies, effective leadership, and quality of relationships accounted for 60% ($R^2 = .60$, $p < .001$) of the variability in team effectiveness. Member competencies and effective leadership accounted for 67% ($R^2 = .67$, $p < .001$) of the variability in quality of relationships.

To determine whether a full or partial mediation model fits the data better we examined differences in the robust chi-squares for Model B and Model C (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). Chi-square difference test revealed that there was a significant decrease in chi-square from Model B to Model C with $\Delta df = 2$, $\Delta\chi^2 = 46.78$, $p < .001$.

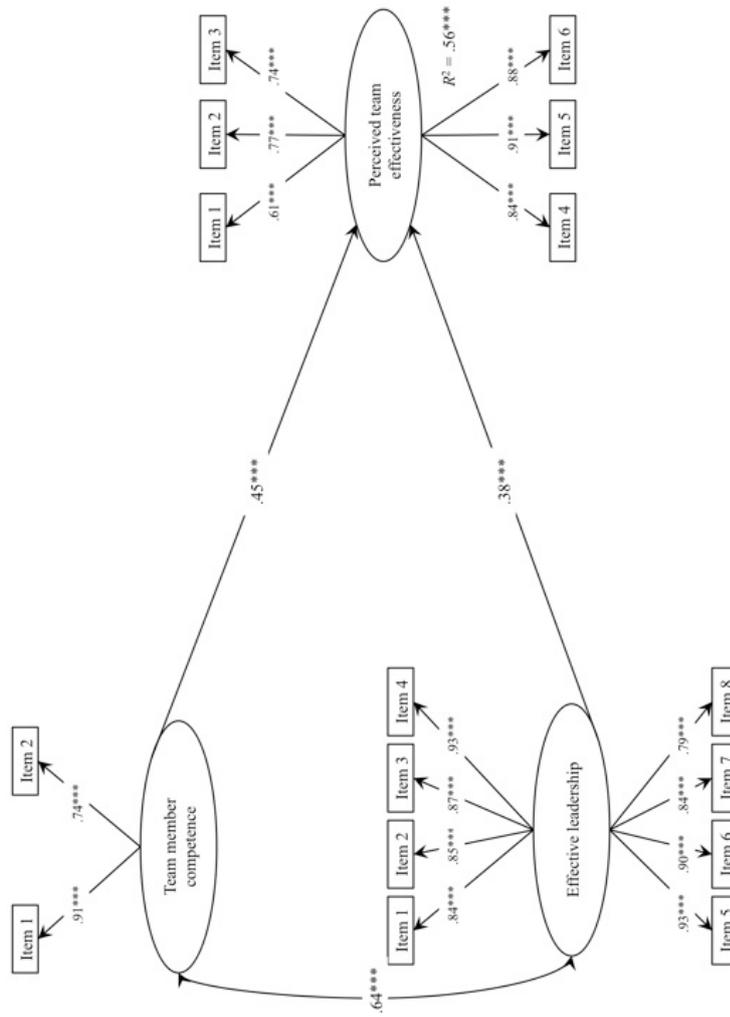


Figure 1. Presented are the standardized slopes for the direct path model (Model A). Residuals were omitted for ease of presentation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

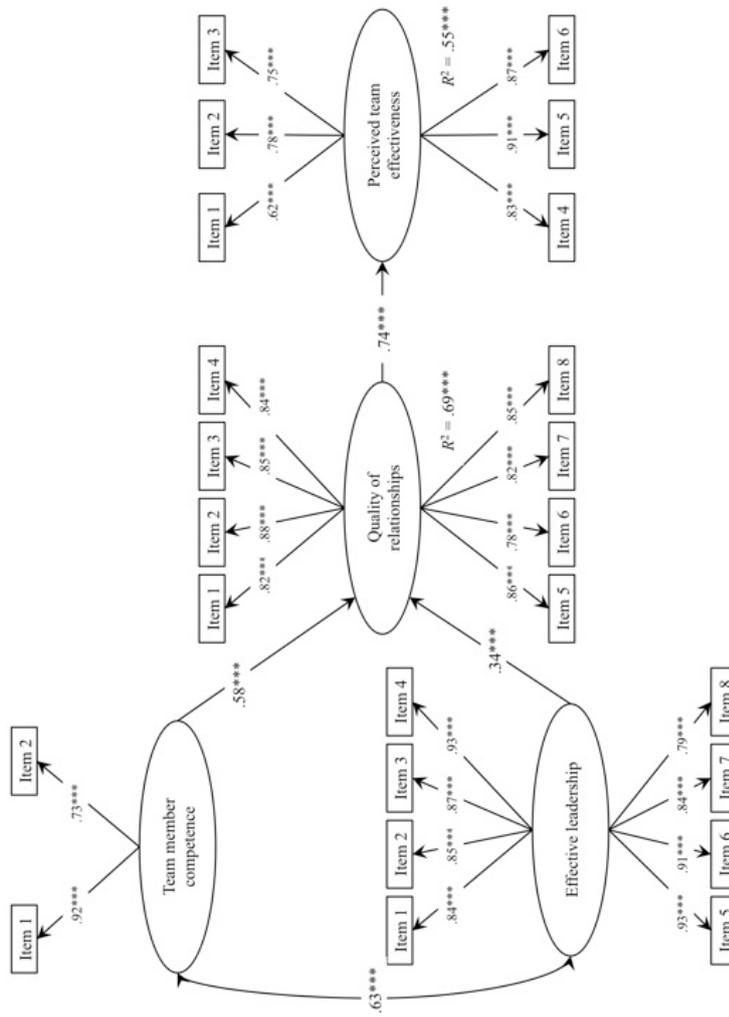


Figure 2. Presented are the standardized slopes for the full mediation model (Model B). Residuals were omitted for ease of presentation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

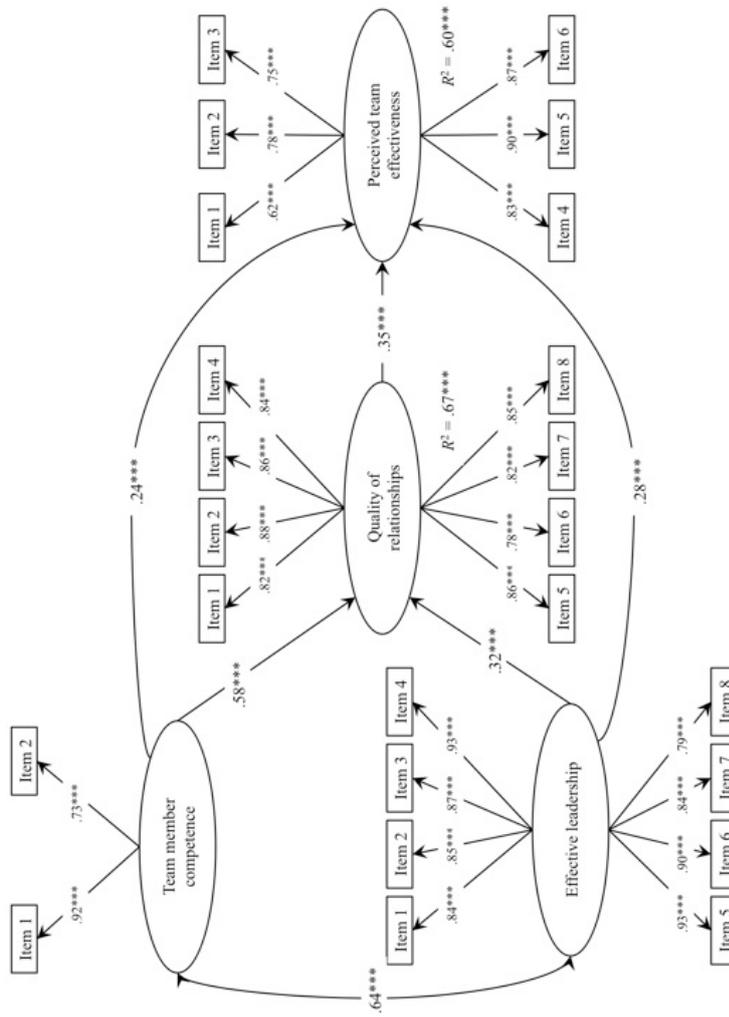


Figure 3. Presented are the standardized slopes for the partial mediation model (Model C). Residuals were omitted for ease of presentation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

We also looked at the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) to determine which model fits the data better. Lower values indicate better fit. The AIC for Model C (22890) was lower compared to Model B (22932). Both results indicate that a partial mediation model fits the data better.

Indirect effects were examined using bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2010) with 95% bias-corrected confidence interval and with the original data resampled 10,000 times. The indirect effect of member competencies on team effectiveness via quality of relationships was statistically significant with a point estimate of .18 and a confidence interval of .07 to .34. The indirect effect of effective leadership on team effectiveness via quality of relationships was also statistically significant with a point estimate of .32 and a confidence interval of .13 to .55. Point estimates and the confidence interval estimates were all completely standardized (MacKinnon, 2008).

DISCUSSION

The result of our data analysis validates that team member competence, effective leadership, and quality of relationships are significant predictors of perceived team effectiveness in Filipino organizations. Together they account for approximately 60% of the changes in perceived team effectiveness. Although some of the findings reflect the claims of the Western models (Hackman, 1987; Kohn & O'Connell, 2007; Kozłowski & Bell, 2003; Marks et al., 2001; Salas et al., 2008), the results emphasize the nuances of national culture on work team effectiveness and its antecedents.

The strong combination of predictors supports the basic description of "input" in the input-process-output (I-P-O) framework. According to Forsyth (2010), inputs include any resources that may influence, directly or indirectly, the team members and the team itself. In this study, the internal resources are effective leadership, team member competence, and the quality of relationships present in the team. Likewise, our three input variables are from multiple levels – team member competence is at the individual and team levels, quality of relationships is at the team level, and effective leadership is at the team and organization level.

The difference however is that in the classic Western models,

the most common inputs found were task characteristics, group composition, and organizational factors (Goodman et al., 1986). In contrast, our study showed that structural and system elements were not salient in the Philippine model. Rather, quality of relationships was the strongest predictor of perceived team effectiveness. Although quality of relationships has also been identified in Western models, what appears to be culturally nuanced is that these relationships as defined by our participants go beyond professional relationships. Rather than just being able to work together, Filipinos place a premium on being able to exchange personal experiences and stories with their team members. In addition, feeling like a family and demonstrating “*malasakit*” or a deep concern for the team and its members are powerful manifestation of Filipino values (Jocano, 2000).

Effective team leadership is likewise a significant predictor of perceived team effectiveness, where leaders and/or managers provide a supportive environment to ensure the constant performance and development of the team and its members. The study also validated the importance of exercising good judgment, offering coaching and good advice, and consultation on matters of importance as well as providing adequate resources. The results are reflective of the value of paternalism, or concerned leadership with a degree of centralized authority (Jocano, 1999) that is valued by Filipinos. Paternalism is not meant to be authoritative, dictatorial, or coercive. Rather, in the context of Philippine culture, leaders are expected to be nurturing but at the same time firm given Filipino workers who are generally less task-oriented and more relationship-oriented.

Contrary to expectations, the study revealed that quality of relationships did not fully mediate the relationship between the antecedent variables (team member competence and effective leadership) and perceived team effectiveness. This may mean that although a significant part of team leadership and member competence will only result to team effectiveness if there is positive relationships among members of the team, there are some aspects of these antecedent variables that are not dependent on the quality of relationships within the team. These may include the leader’s efforts to ensure that the team has adequate resources as well as the perception that team members have diverse skills.

Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

This research poses some limitations and potential for further research. The team effectiveness survey was a self-rating instrument accomplished by team members at one time. Thus, there is a possibility of common method variance. Also, the study was only able to measure perceptions. Future research may explore more accurate and objective measures of team effectiveness such as assessments by external parties. Example of these would be clients that receive the products and/or services from the teams and who can assess performance against pre-set standards.

The research design was likewise cross-sectional. Thus, conclusions on the direction of effects are not conclusive. Future research may test the model longitudinally (preferably using a cross-lagged design) to ascertain the direction of effects.

From a broader perspective, the study was able to demonstrate the influence of national culture on the perception of team effectiveness and the factors that contribute to it in the Philippine context. Similar studies can be conducted in other non-Western cultures to further validate the claims of this study. Comparison can likewise be made across findings in various non-Western cultures.

Implications for Practice

Filipino anthropologist F. Landa Jocano (1999) once said:

In the Philippines, it is better to use traditional values as points of departure in communicating management principles to the workers, in motivating them, and in harnessing their potential for teamwork and cooperation. Foreign practices may be academically attractive, but they are seldom suited for the Filipino cultural temperament. (p. 17)

Thus, at its most basic level, this research is able to contribute to existing theory by developing a model of work team effectiveness in the context of a collectivist and highly relational culture such as the Philippines. Given the dearth of local literature on team effectiveness,

the study hopes to build knowledge on the dynamics of Filipino teams and enable Filipino organizations, as well as multinational organizations operating in the Philippines, to adapt a more culturally sensitive approach to building team effectiveness — an approach that is less reliant on Western models yet still backed up by scientific research that is grounded on Filipino culture and values.

For leaders who seek to increase team effectiveness within organizations in non-Western, collectivist, large power distance cultures such as the Philippines, this study suggests that focus be placed on enhancing social relationships and strengthening team leadership. Of these, maximum results can be gained from putting most emphasis and resources on social relations which is built through time and can be encouraged and nourished through both structured and unstructured ways. Structured ways include learning programs around effective communication and conflict resolutions as well as teambuilding programs aimed at deepening personal and work relationships. It will help if some of these events involve the families to truly strengthen the familial ties amongst co-workers.

Another critical area to look at is leadership. Leaders of Filipino work teams play a critical role in developing team effectiveness. As such, it is important for team leaders to possess certain competencies that will help drive achievement of goals. Given the importance of building good relationships, team leaders need to be able to display excellent interpersonal skills, know how to build relationships amongst team members and manage conflicts as they arise. As the results show, at the end of the day, team leaders will be most effective if they are able to show concerned leadership, balancing focus on task achievement and sensitivity to relationships.

Finally, the results also point to the importance of team member competence. Organizations will be wise to review their recruitment process for employees who will eventually work in a team environment. Organizations will want to hire people who will complement the technical capabilities already present in the team. More so, organizations may determine how the over-all profile of the potential member will impact on the relational dynamics of the team.

In summary, this study aimed to demonstrate the influence of national culture on team effectiveness and its antecedents using an

inductive sequential mixed-methods approach. To test the hypotheses, it explored and validated the concept of team effectiveness and its antecedents in a highly relational, collectivist, and large power distance culture such as the Philippines. Results point to the significance of three factors in predicting perceived team effectiveness: team member competence, effective leadership, and quality of relationships which demonstrates notable deviations to existing Western team effectiveness models. These findings validate the influence of national culture on the dynamics and outcomes of work teams.

AUTHORS' NOTES

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