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# Working Together is Success: Examining Cross-Functional Team Performance in the Global Apparel Supply Chain

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Working Together is Success:  
Examining Cross-Functional Team Performance in the Global Apparel Supply Chain

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Cross-functional teams have been utilized in many companies as a way to organize employees from different specialties to create new products or processes with lower development costs, faster speed to market, greater innovation, and better product design and quality (Sarin & Mahajan, 2001). Denison, Hart, and Kahn (1996) point out cross-functional teams differ from conventional teams in that team members are usually from different organizational departments, teams may be assigned temporarily depending on the task, and members typically have different organizational expectations and reviews. Additionally, cross-functional teams have become an increasingly popular way to link multiple teams across a supply chain (Chen & Paulraj, 2004). However, this unique nature of cross-functional teams may create challenges in group dynamics and even interpersonal conflict, eventually hurting the team's performance.

Drawing from organizational and psychology literature, the study attempted to assess an apparel cross-functional team's performance based on employees' emotional intelligence (EI), job satisfaction, and career success. Kafetsios and Zampetakis's (2008) showed that EI is an important predictor of work affectivity and job satisfaction (H1), and emotionally intelligent people have the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage their own emotions, therefore, develop a successful career (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; H2). Job satisfaction has been a predictor of individual outcome variables, such as career success (Schneider & Snyder, 1975; H3), and emotional factors are found to have a long-term effect on team performance (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; H4). Locke (1976) found job satisfaction correlates with a range of both positive and negative workplace outcomes (H5), and career success has been found to have a positive relationship with team success (Ancoma & Caldwell, 1988; H7). Finally, by virtue of the H1 and H5, H6 was proposed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between EI and cross functional team's success, and that H2 and H7 suggested H8, the mediating role of career success between EI and cross functional team's success.

An online survey method was utilized to collect 135 usable responses in January 2015 to empirically test the relationships of EI, job satisfaction, and career success on cross-functional team success. The sample included global apparel supply chain members that were recruited by snowball sampling technique. Participants' job positions included designers, buyers, technical designers, production/sourcing, as well as, vender and factory owners. Participants were 30% male and 70% female. Mean age was between 37 and 38 year old and mean years working in the apparel industry were 14.4.

Regression-based conditional process analysis with bootstrapped confidence intervals was used for data analysis (Hayes, 2013). H1 was supported and found to be statistically significant (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.542$ ,  $p < .001$ ). H2 was found to be statistically significant (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.424$ ,  $p < .10$ ). H3 was found to be statistically significant (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.523$ ,  $p < .01$ ). H4 was found to be statistically significant (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.256$ ,  $p < .05$ ). H5 was found to be statistically significant (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.439$ ,  $p < .01$ ). H6 was mediation was supported (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.256$ ,  $p < .05$ ). H7 was not supported significant (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.054$ ,  $p = .54$ ). H8 career success mediation was not supported (unstandardized  $\beta = 0.0538$ ,  $p = .61$ ).

The findings indicate that EI and job satisfaction positively affect cross-functional team success, as well as, job satisfaction mediating the relationship between EI and team success. The results suggest that employees who have EI and are satisfied with their jobs can enhance cross-functional team success. Both EI and job satisfaction can be developed within an organization (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008), thus implications for the industry are that organizations need to develop work environments that support emotionally intelligent employees. Implications for academia are the need to teach cross-functional team relationships and dynamics early to students. With many innovative and creative jobs, employees are being organized into diverse teams within the organization and across the supply chain. Future research would be fruitful to test the model with supply chain members that have low EI or job satisfaction scores to understand the relationship with team success.

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