

# Issue of Teamwork in the Context of Theoretical Discourse

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In recent decades teamwork has become not only a popular topic for public discussion, but also the focus of numerous scientific insights. The abundance of publications on this subject suggests that organizing teamwork has become one of the phenomena of organizational activity. On the other hand, based on his numerous research, the author of the paper raises the question of whether the concept of teamwork analysed in such publications is studied within the framework of scientific concepts. For instance, some authors believe that the only distinguishing feature of a team is an efficiently working group; the formation of the team is a long-term process and to achieve this the group needs to undergo several stages of development (Hersey, Blanchard, Tuckman, Jensen, Katzenbach, Smith, Liker, Kasiulis, Barvydienė, Savanavičienė, Šilingienė, Gražulis); other authors use these concepts as synonyms (Boddy, Peiton) and analyse them in the context of formal and informal status. Thus, the concept of effective and ineffective teams has become the additional object of the research. Numerous researchers limit their research to the analysis of functional roles within well-established teams (Benne, Sheats), at the same time neglecting the impact of personality traits on the activity of the work group. Specialists do not agree on the team size (Manz, Sims, Miller, Stoner et. al.), purpose (Meskon, Katzenbach, Smith, Sakalas et. al.), and periodically arising constraints on the team development and the like. As a result, scholars and practitioners perceive the issues of team work differently, thus they often talk at cross purposes. The author of the paper believes that it is expedient to consider the information collected up to now on the topic of teamwork within the overall context of the development of management science, which at the same time would provide for the development of conceptual theoretical proposals for scientific teamwork models (systems).

**Keywords:** work group, team, team development stages, team roles.

## Introduction

Research on teamwork as one of the organizational forms of human activity was started in 1930-ies (Mayo, 1933, p. 3–5). G.C. Homans (1950) in his book ‘The Human Group’ emphasised the complicated nature of processes which take place

when people work together and suggested taking into account the social aspect of teamwork, where the major elements are the type of activity (physical or mental), cooperation (communication features, ability to negotiate, etc.), sentiments (trust, a feeling of closeness, attitude towards partners and clients, etc.) and norms (rules of behaviour, etc.). Unfortunately, because of the complexity of the processes which take place inside a group, for almost 40 years this kind of work form has not been widely applied in practice. Only in 1970s and 1980s research showed that collective decisions are more effective in comparison with decisions made individually by even the most gifted members (Krueger, 2000), and scientists became seriously interested in this form of work organization and its benefits for the organization. A significant theoretical contribution to the description of specific features of teamwork was made by G.C. Homans (1950), M. E. Shaw (1971), B.W. Tuckman and M.A. Jensen (1977), E.H. Schein (1980) R.M. Belbin (1981, 1993), J.R. Katzenbach and D.K. Smith (1994), who not only defined this form of organization as two or more people working together, but also formulated the basic criteria characteristic thereof: to achieve common goals, cooperate, and have impact on each other.

The first conducted research outlined the main directions which are still relevant today when analysing issues of teamwork: economic and social environment, personal experience and education, rules and norms, encouragement of employees and fulfilment of their expectations, relations between managers and employees, training, etc. Moreover, according to a Russian scholar A.D. Čanko (А.Д. Чанько), the above-mentioned features of collective work are insufficient to accurately grasp the peculiarities, thus the author suggest considering the enumerated descriptive features of a work team to be basic (2012, p. 40). In recent decades, scientific interest in the workgroups as an advanced form of work organization is determined by development processes which take place in modern organizations.

In Lithuania this topic is analysed as well, and scientific publications are published thereon (Sudnickas, 2002; Sakalas, 2003; Guščinskienė, Sapežinskienė and Švedienė, 2003; Žydžiūnaitė, 2005; Savanevičienė and Šilingienė, 2005; Dromantas, 2007; V. Gražulis, 2014, etc.). For instance, T. Sudnickas (2002) examined common methodological principles of a team management system according to C. Margerison and D. McCann, V. Žydžiūnaitė (2005), J. Guščinskienė, L. Sapežinskienė and L. Švedienė (2003) analysed possibilities of teamwork in health care system, A. Savanevičienė and V. Šilingienė (2005) drew up a textbook '*Darbas grupėse*' (Teamwork), V. Gražulis (2014) published a scientific study on organizing teamwork in organizations.

The analysis of expert views on the concept of teamwork reveals that teams are primarily defined as groups of employees formed by the manager<sup>1</sup>, and their task

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<sup>1</sup> Most scholars agree that the concept of 'group' should be distinguished from the concept of 'team' on the grounds that a group of workers not always meets the requirements for a team, whereas

is to help the organization to implement the declared objectives. Scientific literature generally refers to teams of experts, new projects, improvement of the quality of work (e.g., health care, which is made up of doctors and nurses), departments, municipalities, and others. Often the importance of team size is emphasized, however, specialists do not have a unanimous opinion on this feature. For instance, C.C. Manz and H.P. Sims (1993, p. 4–16) specify that the number of people in a team is from 3 to 8, D. Boddy and R. Paton (1999, p. 298–299) – up to 12 people, A. Savanevičienė and V. Šilingienė (2005, p. 110) – from 5 to 11 people, C.B. Miller (2004, p. 6) – from 15 to 20 people, A.D. Čanko (2011, p. 110) – from 3 to 20 people, whereas J.A. Stoner (2001, p. 491) believes that a team can consist of up to 30 people. Some authors agree that teams can be absolutely independent, or have no autonomy; they should be ready to carry out creative tasks of strategic nature, but must also be able to perform routine tasks (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Boddy and Peiton, 1999; Meskon et al.; Stoner et al., 2001; Sakalas, 2003; Savanevičienė and Šilingienė, 2005; West et al., 2011). Thus, scientific interpretation of the concept of teamwork remains in the focus of professional discussion, and therefore, this article will discuss the theoretical context of organizing teamwork.

**Research subject** is theoretical assumptions of organizing teamwork.

**Research methods** is critical analysis of organizing teamwork in different sources of literature, systematization, grouping and summarizing of scientific information.

**The problem** lies in the fact that ignorance of the principal requirements for the development of teamwork impede the possibility of a group to become a team.

**Research goal** is to systematically examine the conditions for the formation of work teams and provide an integrated model of team development phases.

Research objectives are:

1. to provide a critical analysis of concepts on the topic of organizing teamwork presented in the scientific literature,
2. to systematize the essential requirements for organizing teamwork and develop a theoretical model for team formation.

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each team is always a group (Savanevičienė and Šilingienė, 2005, and others). It is assumed that the distinction is considered scientifically valid, because the difference lies in efficiency (competitiveness) of activity. In this case, it is recognized that a team is an efficiently working (competitive) group.

## Theoretical evidence

R. M. Belbin (1993), E. Applebaum and R. Batt (1994), S.G. Cohen and D.E. Bailey (1997), S. E. Hill (2009), M.A. West (2011) note a number of advantages of organizing teamwork:

- contribution to a faster access to the market with competitive products and services due to a more efficient response to the constantly changing environment,
- encouragement of innovation, because organizational changes in the particular areas of work increase the overall competitiveness of the organization,
- motivation to continuously improve team members' skills, improve their qualifications and develop competence, team members learn from each other, increase operational efficiency, etc.,
- opportunities to properly assign roles within a team,
- an increase in team members' interest in the organization's cultural strengths, a reduced risk of conflict and causes of stress.

Studies show that teamwork fosters the synergy effect among its members, because each member is consciously committed to the organization and expresses his/her loyalty (Gražulis, 2014, p. 16–17). R. Brown (2000) believes that reaching the synergy effect means the team gains an extra advantage in comparison with employees working individually. However, it is not always easy to achieve this. The reason behind this is the fact that members do not exercise their right to express their views or this right is violated. It was noticed that poor conditions for active self-expression bring the team down to the simple level of a groups of co-workers (West, 2011).

In order to analyse the principles of organizing teamwork, according to A.D. Čankó (2011, p. 110), it is necessary to assess features of internal and external environment characteristic of a team (Table 1).

So, this dual nature of teams creates preconditions to talk about them as a progressive form of work organization and provides for comprehensive consideration of the issue from points of view of various disciplines (management, psychology, etc.).

According to conclusions drawn by renowned specialists of organizing teamwork (Tuckman and Jensen, 1977; Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2007), due to the emerging barriers between people in a newly formed workgroup it cannot work smoothly from the beginning of its formation. The reasons for this lie in the fact that at the initial stage, group members will inevitably have to consult the expectations of others, to understand the requirements for the task, to know how

their contribution will be assessed; in other words, new members of the group first have to adapt to each other. This does not depend on whether the new co-workers are inexperienced, incompetent and not motivated to work in the new environment. In order to reduce the potentially negative impact, the group must first begin to change and learn to work together. Besides, the research of D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis and A. McKee revealed that work teams start to change only when they comprehend the situation they are in, and the members comprehend that they work in the environment which is not harmonious (2007, p. 170).

**Table 1. Features of internal and external environment of a team**

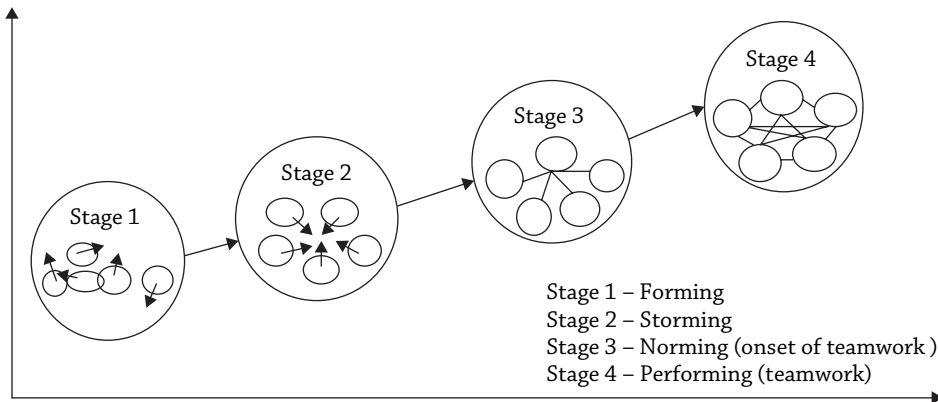
Features of internal environment	Features of external environment
<p>A team is a group where all its members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– view their group as a unified team;</li> <li>– highly appreciate their membership in it;</li> <li>– have a clear vision of cooperation and a goal;</li> <li>– take up and share with each other the assigned tasks;</li> <li>– have a good understanding of links between the business, the organization, the team and personal goals;</li> <li>– within their competence and in accordance with the commitments made jointly with others participate in the implementation of the objectives set;</li> <li>– beside their personal responsibility for their area of work, they share the responsibility for the overall performance and the final operational result;</li> <li>– have compatible values;</li> <li>– openly exchange information and views on the work processes;</li> <li>– trust each other when solving work issues;</li> <li>– know each other well, are able to evaluate features of each member's style of work and purposefully adjust their behaviour;</li> <li>– depending on the kinds of a task addressed and the specific situation are able both to lead and to follow the leader;</li> <li>– are interested in continually enhancing the overall operational efficiency.</li> </ul>	<p>A team is a group which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– has a special status in the organization (operates as a functional unit in an organization, where it was established);</li> <li>– is compact (consists of 3 – 20 people);</li> <li>– gives the same status to all members, there is no internal hierarchy;</li> <li>– has autonomy: the operational objectives are focused on the outside (the team works to satisfy the external user needs: the organization and the public) and is relatively independent of the company production process;</li> <li>– the expected results and the final product are characterized by 'interdisciplinarity': the production requires integration of different professional expertise and skills;</li> <li>– continuously provides the possibility of direct and indirect regular contacts between all departments;</li> <li>– provides documented approval of agreements on common goals and commitments;</li> <li>– has performance evaluation criteria identified by the team members and agreed with the organization's management.</li> </ul>

Source: V. Gražulis on the basis of Чанько (2011, p. 110).

Research of B. W. Tuckman and M.A.C. Jensen (1977) revealed that, when forming a team, each work group will inevitably go through 4 stages of

development – from formation of the group (*Forming*) to working together effectively (*Performing*) (Picture 1).

**Figure 1. Stages of development of a group into a team**



Source: on the basis of B.W. Tuckman and M.A.C. Jensen. (1977, p. 419–427).

The authors indicate the necessary conditions for the process: growth, providing necessary skills and a sense of confidence. Basically, the theoretical model proposed by the above-mentioned authors is supported by all scientists who recognize stages of team formation<sup>2</sup> (Katzenbach and Smith, 1994; Boddy and Peiton, 1999; Savanevičienė and Šilingienė, 2005; Kasiulis and V. Barvydienė, 2005; Liker, 2008; West, 2011). Our ongoing studies also suggest that the concept formulated by B. W. Tuckman and M.A.C. Jensen is a suitable theoretical construct that helps accurately grasp the process under which a working group becomes a team (Gražulis, 2014, p. 25–27):

**Forming** is a stage of initial orientation of team members, because the new employees need to get to know other team members and exchange primary, and very often formal, information about themselves; the more active members provide suggestions concerning the process of organizing work in the near future. At this stage group members are characterized by anxiety<sup>3</sup>, because each of them

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that according to the authors of the term 'situational leadership' P. Hersey and KH Blanchard (1972), the formation of a team is regarded as a long-term process, which does not end with simply a few people formally gathering in a group, because it is impossible to instantaneously create an efficiently working team.

<sup>3</sup> Very often new group members are worried, afraid and experience a first working day shock (Gražulis et al., 2012, p. 74), thus is it possible to agree with the opinion of other specialists (e.g., Savanevičienė and Šilingienė, 2005, p. 47; Čanko, 2011, p. 56 et al.) that during the first meeting in a group its members very often ask themselves questions like 'What does the group expect from me?'

form their initial impressions about the new colleagues. Most often group members carry out independent tasks, although some of them may be assigned a common task as well. The communication process in the group is poor. Vibrant business discussions are rare, only the most active and communicative ones express themselves. Group members are not sufficiently interested in the features of the prevailing organizational culture in the organization; they are more concerned about the formal role of the leader and his/her management style. The main concern of the manager at this stage is to formulate clear tasks.

**Storming** is a stage which, due to the employees' different personal approach to work carried out, is referred to as a period when group members search the answer to the question 'What is my place in the group?', difference in values and evaluation of the situation by the group is expressed, relationships are unstable, and the most active members of the group try to impose their understanding of the task on others, because they believe that in this way they will be able to achieve the goals as fast as possible; however this often flares conflicts over personal influence<sup>4</sup>. In such environment, often several small groups are formed within the group to safeguard their interests. The work performed is often understood only as directions from the manager, which must be carried out in any case, regardless of the available resources, environmental impact and other factors. Those who find it difficult to adapt, or cannot adapt at all, often leave the group, thus causing additional 'storming'. The duty of the formal team leader in the diversity of relations and task perception is to encourage the employees to become committed to the goals set by the group and build trust.

**Norming** is a stage referred to as a period when group members realize that they can work together efficiently, thus the group members for the first time view themselves as 'we'. This increases the scope of the tasks performed together, requirements for the quality of work become higher, long-term 'rules of the game' are determined, gradual adjustment to peer behaviour takes place, team members form emotional compatibility and search for positive solutions of conflict situations<sup>5</sup>. During the group 'norming' stage it is possible to note the first features of

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'What can I expect from new contacts?', 'What are my possible relations with this group?', 'Who are other members of the group?', etc.

<sup>4</sup> The inability to openly discuss in the group and poor perception that there may be another opinion often slow down the proper decision-making process, as emphasized by some scholars, thus team members can begin to avoid any dispute (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2007, p. 169). With time, this experience becomes a 'bad habit' (ibidem, p. 170), which in turn becomes a barrier for further successful development of the group.

<sup>5</sup> In this case we can speak about the formation of a unique subculture, characteristic of a particular team only. At the same time, F. Liutens (1999, p. 566) states that managers and work teams must be aware of the fact that subcultures can weaken the organization and cause serious damage, if they are in conflict with the dominant culture and/or general goals.

employees' team roles, the organizational structure is more flexible. The communication process is tailored to the needs of the group, benefit of an individual personal leadership of a group member is recognized, which enhances performance efficiency, the group shows first signs of competitiveness. During the 'norming' stage, features of the organizational subculture characteristic of exclusively of this group are formed and related to the prevailing organizational culture within the whole organization. The formal group leader tries to align his/her role with roles of other group members, thus creating favourable conditions for each group member to take more responsibility for work being carried out.

*Performing* is a stage referred to as a period when team members are able to properly use the diversity of each member, to achieve competitive results, because the work is organized on the basis of competencies of team members and their constant development, and performance is characterized by competitiveness. During this stage there are no 'strangers', generally recognized norms of behaviour are followed, joined decision-making prevails. Conflict situations are solved constructively, thus they become a prerequisite for the development of the whole team<sup>6</sup>. Each team member understands his/her participation in the team as a three-dimensional equilibrium between 'I', 'we', and 'the objective'. The organizational structure is characterised by flexibility, thus response to change is timely. The appointed leader exercises the function of a coordinator<sup>7</sup>. Team organizational culture is characterized by features of a strong culture; meanwhile it manifests itself as an independent subculture throughout the organization. During this stage an important task of the team is to maintain focus and avoid the 'Groupthink' phenomenon among its members, because it can cause disintegration of the team. The team, which has become the leader in its field of activity, can be called a super team.

According to J.R. Katzenbach and D.K. Smith (1994), successful teamwork requires the employees to follow the trends in its dynamics and constantly communicate with each other; therefore not any group of people can be regarded as a team. On the other hand, as J.A.F. Stoner and his colleagues claim (2001, p. 497), groups which try to ignore the 'storming' and 'norming' stages, can experience only short-term success.

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<sup>6</sup> D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis and A. McKee (2007, p. 173), who discussed the aforementioned situation from the emotional aspect, note that employees in a team listen to and question each other with respect, they support and helps each other, and solve disagreements openly and with humour.

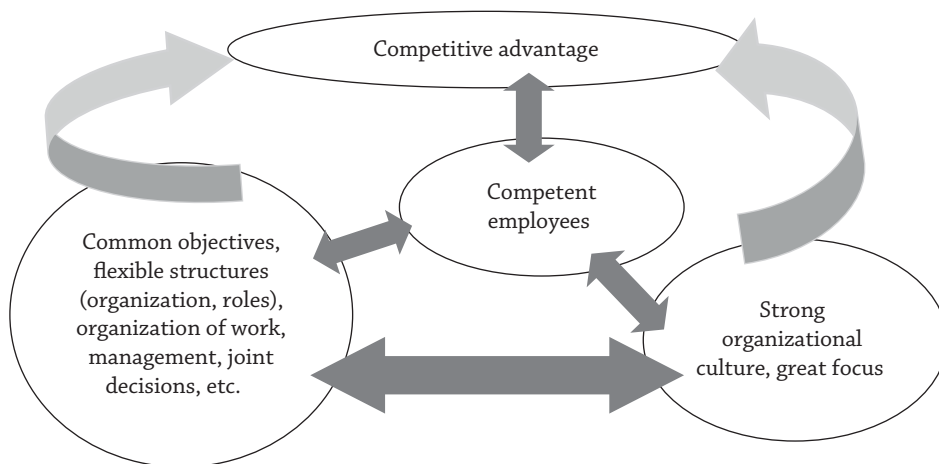
<sup>7</sup> E.g., teamwork specialist S. E. Kogler Hill, when talking about a team leadership model, describes the manager's role as a 'team performance driver', whose exclusive responsibility is to act in a way that would help the group to work effectively (2009, p. 181). A similar position is shared by D. Goleman and colleagues, who say that when employees are aware of the basic values and principles, the team manager does not need to put much effort for the team to work efficiently (2007, p. 178).



Practice shows that, in comparison with a work group, a well-formed team is easier to manage, because its activity is based on proper application of the abilities and competences of all team members. The better team is built, the more opportunities it gains in the competitive environment. It is possible to claim that when a team gains additional competitive opportunities, it is regarded as a super team. J. A. F. Stoner presents quite a lot of examples in favour of this conclusion (2001, p. 491–493).

The aim of the work group to be effective and become a team mainly serves its primary objective to gain a competitive advantage among its structural units and beyond. Figure 3 presents the system of development of competitive advantage of teamwork used by Toyota Corporation for many years.

**Figure 2. The system of development of competitive advantage of teamwork used by Toyota Corporation**



Source: compiled by V. Gražulis, on the basis of *Лаўкеп, Хоцеыс* (2011).

Further practical application of teamwork over time has showed some possible negative effects of this form of work organization. A strong organizational culture formed in a team can lead to the 'Groupthink' phenomenon, which can result in conformism of the team members. The usual 'Groupthink' symptoms are unconditional faith in the ethical aspect of their performance, the belief in their infallibility, a stereotypical attitude to opponents, self-discipline in critical statements, an illusion of uniformity of views, and the like (Newstrom and Davis, 1997). One of the first scholars interested in 'Groupthink' issues was I.L. Janis (1972), who observed many positive features in it, which characterise the unity of the employees. Meanwhile, the author reckoned that group thinking can have

negative consequences which are difficult to remedy, such as self-censorship, lack of expert opinion in decision-making, avoidance of critical statements, an illusion of unanimity, and pressure due to the desire to distance themselves from any different position or different information (Janis, 1972). Some Lithuanian authors, however, note more positive ‘Groupthink’ aspects (Kasiulis, Barvydienė, 2005, p. 66); nevertheless, our observations show that conformism eventually becomes an unbearable burden for proactive and creative employees.

Another problem can occur when a team starts to ‘blindly’ transfer principles of activity (or culture) of another successful team to its own working environment. As a rule, in such cases the process of copying such principles is only superficial, thus J.K. Licer and M. Hoseus, on the basis of ‘Toyota’ experience, suggest to find your own way (2011, p. 281–284).

C. Argyris (1990), who analysed possible causes of difficulties which arise in a team, observed the so-called defensive patterns which, although indirectly, can cause irreparable damage. On the one hand, defensive patterns help the team due to the formed system of protection against threats to its stability (e.g., storming); nonetheless they occur mainly due to uncritical assessment of opinions. E.g., it is quite common that the blame for various problems at work is, first of all, placed on the external environment of the team, i.e. managers of the organization, other departments, partners, etc., the emphasis is put on differences and the predominant attitude is ‘we’ vs. ‘they’, ‘our’ vs. ‘strangers’, etc. This attitude towards others very often results in favouritism, a situation when minimum differences encourage the employees to support their own team members. M. A. West (2011) notes that defensive patterns are meant to relieve ‘headaches’ of the team, thus, he believes, they more often than not hinder the smooth teamwork. In order to overcome the defensive patterns observed in a team M. A. West (2011) suggests several basic guidelines to follow:

- defence arguments must be compelling, relevant and publicly verifiable,
- promises must be realistic,
- team members are encouraged not to blame, but be able to constructively discuss mistakes.

Uncritical transfer of other experience to one’s own working environment, conformist moods, defensive patterns, and difficulties in adapting to the new conditions, increase the risk of losing the acquired features of a team, and as a consequence the team returns to the previous stage of group activity.

Although diverse knowledge and experience of employees in a team helps to increase the overall efficiency, very often a working group is doomed to failure from the outset and will never become a team. K.D. Benne and P. Sheats (1948) were among the first to reveal the importance of functional roles of employees

in a group. The authors found that the analysis of the efficiency of work groups should not be limited to the leader's role; it is necessary to systematize functions performed within a group. K.D. Benne and P. Sheats divided all tasks performed in a team into focused on the task, on the group and on one's self, which reflects functions of initiation, information, coordination, evaluation, encouragement, assistance, etc. performed within a group. The contribution of these authors into perception of teamwork is essential, because it helped to further reveal the importance of not only functional, but also individual innate qualities for working together.

## The importance of R.M. Belbin's theoretical model in organizing teamwork

In 1990s R. M. Belbin found that contribution of each employee to the task is qualitatively different and depends on personal characteristics. According to R. M. Belbin, the team role of a person reflects his/her possibilities to take part in one or another stage of the process of collective activity exhibiting his/her innate behaviour (e.g., he/she is more successful in organising work or presenting an idea, or in noting positive changes in the external environment and helping to transfer them into the work environment, and, finally, in the ability to evaluate the quality output of the work done, etc.). Thus, regardless of having similar functional competences (skills, knowledge and experience), employees very often behave quite differently. R.M. Belbin (1981 m.) identified 8 roles that help to understand the reasons for different behaviour<sup>8</sup>:

**Chairman**, who is extremely concerned about the development of social contacts, ensures that the objectives are achieved, is able to persuade, make an appropriate decision, and listen to other opinions. Unfortunately, a Chairman is quite frequently not very creative, but due to his/her personal strengths he/she knows how to compensate this lack of creativity by getting it from other team members, which can be seen by others as manipulation. Although a Chairman may be not necessarily assigned this role, such a person is the best team leader, thus a poorly expressed role of a 'chairman' does not help the team members unite different views and formulate goals properly.

**Shaper**, focused on the implementation of the task, is able to formulate clear objectives, gets involved in the task and encourages other team members to do the

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<sup>8</sup> In this article, the discussion of team roles is based on the description which relies on the long-term studies conducted by Gražulis (2014, pp. 75–77).

same. These people are often extrovert, energetic, confident, enjoy leading and seek victories. A Shaper is often a motivated leader, who challenges others, is impulsive and impatient, and can get involved in scandals despising the feelings of others; however, as a rule he/she does not feel angry at others. Sometimes a Shaper doubts innovation; however, he/she puts a lot of effort, which helps the teams to reach great results.

**Company Worker**, focused on practical tasks, is concerned about implementation of the tasks and meeting the deadlines; their motto is 'let's do it'. Although frequently they are characterized by being tolerant, they are often too conservative, insufficiently attentive and flexible, not always see new ideas, slowly respond to change, and are too focused on narrow functional areas of activity (tasks) and constantly try to improve them.

**Team Worker**, who is concerned about supporting the team spirit (unity), is sensitive, but not inclined to do harm to others, thus puts a lot of effort to reduce conflicts between colleagues and is able to understand ideas of others, is helpful, flexible and a good listener, has a sense of humour, and thus is seen as a the group basis, which is attributable to the team assets.

**Plant**, is good at generating ideas and strategies, thus often loses interest if the group needs and goals, not always hears other 'casual' opinions, thus, is least prone to feel a team member, therefore one should pay more attention to control their activity in order to use their potential.

**Resource Investigator** is usually extremely enthusiastic, curious and sociable, optimistic, constantly looking for external resources, and as a result is a very communicative person and a good negotiator. He/she maintains good business relationships not only within the team, but also outside it, is able to quickly identify the importance of new ideas and possibilities.

**Evaluator** is focused on the task, exhibits strategic thinking, is cautious, but principled, considers 'pros' and 'cons', is not very emotional. He/she makes clear decisions, contributes by analysing ideas, is able to view the whole of the proposals, is able to evaluate competing proposals, and thus successfully ensures that the team does not engage in senseless work.

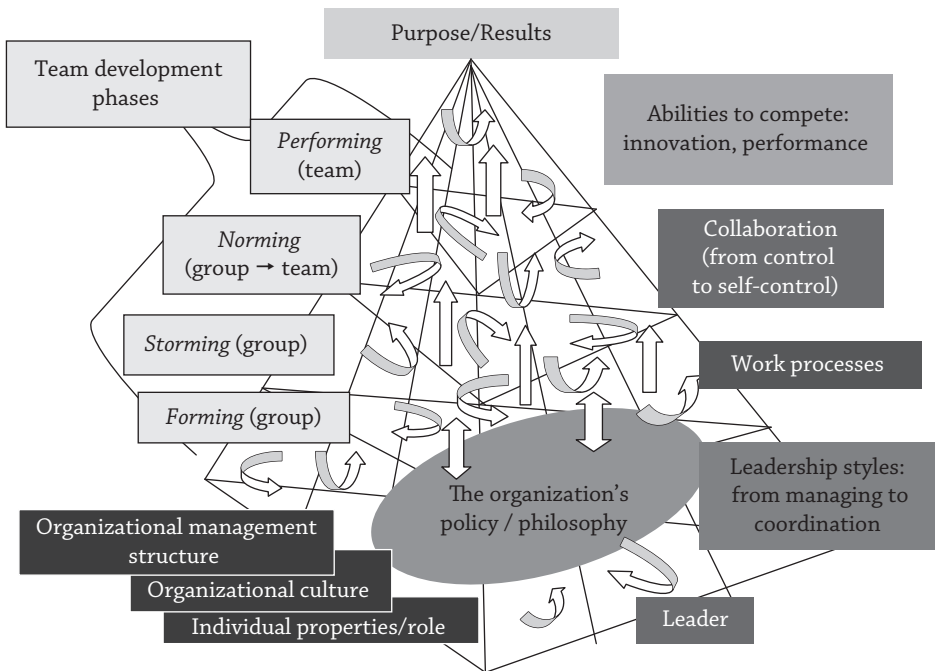
**Completer/Finisher**, focused on the task implementation, is orderly and honest, is able to transform colleagues' ideas and decisions into the team objectives and seek for the work to be carried out timely and qualitatively, and for the objectives to be met. Completer is very attentive to detail and is often worried about trifles, thus ensuring high quality.

The model of 8 team roles as proposed by R.M. Belbin (2009) was verified by numerous complex experiments, thus, as the author notes himself, all these roles are essential, whereas team members perform only the functions that are characteristic of them regardless of the size of the team. Besides, the research

conducted by R. M. Belbin clearly revealed that the greatest threat to a forming team occurs when one team comprises people who are similar to each other, e.g. chairmen, shapers or completers, etc. During the research the author observed 200 teams from various organizations, 25 of the teams were formed from individuals with the intellect higher than average, however, as the experiment revealed, the performance of these teams was the lowest among all teams.

The model of 8 team roles as proposed by R.M. Belbin (2009) revealed that if a team does not follow the essential principles of team formation, its fate is ‘to drag behind’. As follows, one of requirements for team formation should be providing proper conditions for the implementation of employees’ inner abilities, skills, knowledge and interests, because this is the only way to ensure that employees carry out the assigned task most effectively.

**Figure 3. An integrated model of team development phases**



Source: Gražulis (2014, p. 38).

**Post scriptum:** In conclusion, the analysis of conceptual positions of well-known specialists of teamwork organization presented in the article, reveals that a number of conditions are required to ensure competitive advantage of a team:

- competent employees, focused on competition,
- appropriate distribution of team roles according to functions and features,
- unity of objectives and values of the ongoing teamwork,
- continuous ability to learn and develop,
- flexibility of the organizational management structure,
- the attractiveness of the team and its importance to all members.

Figure 3 presents an integrated model of team development phases, as proposed by the author of the article, which shows that the processes by which a group becomes a team reflect the context of the whole organization: its policy (mission, vision, and strategic goals), organizational management structure, organizational culture, employee characteristics, leadership styles, work procedures and cooperation principles, and finally, abilities to compete.

## Conclusion

1. R.M. Belbin (1993), E. Applebaum and R. Batt (1994), S.G. Cohen and D.E. Bailey (1997), S.E. Hill (2009), M.A. West (2011) and other scholars have contributed to formulation of the basic advantages of organizing teamwork; moreover, features of internal and external environment characteristic of a team should also be taken into consideration (Čanko, 2011).
2. When forming a team, each work group inevitably has to go through several stages of development – from *Forming* to *Performing* (Tuckman and Jensen, 1977). The reasons for this phenomenon is the fact that during the initial stage of team formation barriers emerge between people in a newly formed workgroup, and the workgroup cannot work smoothly from the beginning of its formation. Work teams start to change in the direction of a team only when they comprehend the situation they are in, and the members comprehend that they work in the environment which is not harmonious (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2007). This is why not any group of people can be regarded as a team (Katzenbach and Smith, 1994).
3. Team organizational culture is characterized by features of strong culture, meanwhile it manifests itself as an independent subculture throughout the organization. During this stage an important task of the team is to maintain focus and avoid the ‘Groupthink’ phenomenon among its members and defensive patterns, because this can cause disintegration of the team (Argyris, 1990; Newstrom and Davis, 1997; West, 2011).
4. Contribution of each employee to the task is qualitatively different and depends on personal characteristics. Thus, regardless of their similar func-

tional competences (skills, knowledge and experience), during each stage of the process of collective activity employees exhibit their innate behaviour (team roles), e.g. they tend to succeed better in organizing work, generating ideas or noting positive changes in the external environment and helping to transfer them into their work environment, etc. (Belbin, 1981). Thus if a team does not follow the essential principles of team formation, its fate is ‘to drag behind’ (Belbin, 2010).

5. An efficient instrument for building a work team could be ‘An integrated model of team development phases’ (Figure 3) designed by the author of the article.

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## Streszczenie

### Problemy pracy zespołowej w kontekście dyskursu naukowego

Autor artykułu na podstawie swoich badań dotyczących pracy zespołowej zadaje pytanie, czy w literaturze przedmiotu bada się tę pracę jako system koncepcji naukowej?

W artykule akcentuje się, że w części publikacji przeprowadzana jest obrona koncepcji, iż mianem zespołu możemy określić tylko tę grupę pracowników, która pracuje efektywnie. Natomiast sam proces formowania jest procesem długotrwałym, który składa się z kilku etapów rozwoju (Hersey, Blanchard, Tuckman, Jensen, Katzenbach, Smith, Liker, Kasiulis, Barvydienė, Savanavičienė, Šilingienė, Gražulis). Także inni autorzy wykorzystują te pojęcia jako synonimy (Boddy, Peiton, Kogler) oraz badają je w kontekście formalnym lub nieformalnym. W artykule akcentuje się, że w literaturze przedmiotu nie ma jednego poglądu dotyczącego wielkości zespołów (Manz, Sims, Miller, Stoner i in.), celu (Meskon, Katzenbach, Smith, Sakalas i in.), jak i problemów powstających przy ich działaniu itp. W rzeczywistości – z powodu różnego podejścia do tej problematyki, naukowcy i praktycy pracy zespołowej często mówią różnymi językami.

Na podstawie badań B.W. Tuckman i M.A.C. Jensen, w których zostały reprezentowane etapy rozwoju zespołów, pokazano treść poszczególnych etapów formowania zespołów. Zdaniem autora, główne cele formowania zespołów to

efektywność działania, jak i wzrost konkurencyjności organizacji. Autor zaznacza także, że dotychczas zdobytą wiedzę o formowaniu zespołów należy badać w kontekście rozwoju nauki zarządzania. Takie podejście stworzy możliwość konstruowania modeli pracy zespołowej (systemy).

W artykule został także zaprezentowany stworzony przez autora teoretyczny model pracy zespołowej, który pokazuje, że gdy formuje się zespół, zachodzą pewne procesy odzwierciedlające się w funkcjonowaniu organizacji: polityka (misja, wizja i cele strategiczne), organizacyjna struktura zarządzania, kultura organizacyjna, wydajności pracowników, stylu zarządzania, procedury i zasady współpracy, w końcu – zdolność do konkurowania.

Autor ma nadzieję, że reprezentowany pogląd pomoże lepiej zrozumieć zespoły oraz w przyszłości uniknąć problemów przy ich formowaniu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** grupa robocza, zespół, etapy rozwoju zespołu, role zespołowe.

## Резюме

### Вопросы командной работы в контексте теоретического дискурса

В последние десятилетия командная работа стала не только популярной темой для публичного обсуждения, но и в центре внимания многочисленных научных идей. Обилие публикаций на эту тему показывает, что организация совместной работы стала одним из важных явлений организационной деятельности. С другой стороны, на основе собственных исследований, автор настоящей статьи поднимает вопрос о том, что не всегда совместный труд в команде анализируются в рамках научных концепций. Например, некоторые авторы считают, что отличительной чертой команды является эффективно работающая группа, формирование команды является долгосрочным процессом и для достижения этой цели группа должна пройти несколько этапов развития (Hersey, Blanchard, Tuckman, Jensen, Katzenbach, Smith, Liker, Kasiulis, Barvydienė, Savanavičienė, Šilingienė, Gražulis); другие авторы используют эти понятия как синонимы (Boddy, Peiton) и анализируют в контексте их формального и неформального статуса. По этой причине понятие эффективных и неэффективных команд становится дополнительным объектом исследований. Некоторые специалисты свои исследования ограничивают анализом функциональных ролей работников в команде (Benne, Sheats), в то же время пренебрегая влиянием личностных качеств на результаты деятельности рабочей

группы. Среди специалистов нет единого мнения о величине команды (Manz, Sims, Miller, Stoner др.), ее назначении (Meskon, Katzenbach, Smith, Sakalas и др.), а также периодически возникающих ограничениях развития команды и тому подобное. В результате, ученые и практики вопросы работы в команде воспринимают по-разному, поэтому они часто говорят на «разном языке». Автор настоящей статьи считает, что информацию, собранную до сих пор на тему совместной работы целесообразно рассматривать в рамках общего контекста развития науки управления, которая позволяет разрабатывать концептуальные научные модели (системы) коллективной работы.

**Ключевые слова:** работа в группах, команда, этапы развития команды, командные роли.

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