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## An Overview on the Quality Improvement Factors in Inter-Agency Cooperation with an Attitude to Integrate Differences in Learning Organizations

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**Abstract.** The necessity to form teams and teamwork in the organization reveals the importance of studying team work (Raymond, 2005). Since the establishment of coordination and achievement of an optimum combination can lead to high performance of team, this paper studies the combination of differences by focusing on this issue and using "Myers-Briggs Type Indicator» (MBTI) tool which is one of the personality assessment methods which comes from Jung's theory through which we can investigate the preferences of human mental processes of individuals. This article attempts to identify the most important management key lessons and also factors affecting the success and quality of inter-agency partnership.

**Keywords:** Inter-Agency Cooperation, Integration of Differences, Learning Organizations

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the inter-agency cooperation, such as strategic partnerships and joint ventures are among the most important business management tool to improve the competitiveness of enterprises. Partnerships, fill the gap between the company's existing resources and future requirements and increase the competitiveness of enterprises and through access of organizations to external sources, as well as creation of synergies, promotion of learning and rapid change.

Teams are often made up of people with different personalities and behaviors and sometimes they have different expertise as well. Perhaps creation of coordination and access to an optimal combination of people lead to high performance of the team.

In this study it was tried to propose the characteristics of an ideal team through using some concepts, as well as providing a suitable background for organizing group work partnership in organizations, so that we could review some of the research findings in the field of inter-agency cooperation success. Participatory communication occurs in different stages (points) of the company value chain and it can be illustrated between two spectral ranges between "purchase" and "full integration - integration and ownership". Different types of cooperation between the company, such as joint ventures, strategic partnerships and... are within this range. We are going to investigate the key lessons of management and success factors which is mentioned for certain types of cooperation between the company (one or more). First, we will have an overview of research conducted in the field of performance success of strategic partnerships and in the end, based on research of Glaister & Husan, (2003) as well as research done by Mueller & Herstatt, (2000) we review the key lessons of Management of some partnership success factors.

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### **Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative group work provides a secure environment for the exchange of information between employees in the organization. Employees benefit from various viewpoints and are engaged in discussions, criticism and reaction. Such feedback can help them to learn to raise their learning awareness and getting aware of the ways that lead to such targets. Collaborative work acts as a scaffold for mutual support and enables employees to learn from each other. Because the most relationships are between the employees rather than the manager and the employee. (Millis, 2002)

The main characteristics and underlying of collaborative learning in learning organizations can be summarized as follows:

- Heterogeneous Learning Groups
- Mutual communication - emphasis on practical cooperation of employees in learning
- The production of knowledge, creativity and innovation
- Development of critical thinking, power of expression and leadership
- Growth of tolerating opposing views, analysis, inference and reasoning in discourse
  
- Attention to practical work, research and project - structural changes within the organization and considering new approaches in order for more flexibility and better compatibility with the system
- The integration of learning and work in practice
- Positive interdependence within the organization and emphasis on the friendly and camaraderie atmosphere
  
- Attention to the purpose, content and procedure
- Attention to internal discipline and sense of responsibility of individual workers
- Attention to face-to-face communication
- Attention to the group processing, self-assessment and other assessments in working system
  
- The role of the manager as a guide and consultant
- Attention to unofficial groups while learning and creating of hidden learning.

The effects of collaborative learning on learning organization can be summarized as follows:

- The creation of knowledge management and optimum use of it
- Individual leadership of every employee on himself
- Directing, controlling and using certain procedures to do works and creating an open environment for dynamic interaction
- Participation and effective use of all people in all levels of the organization
- Removing individualism in working system
- Welcoming the conflict of ideas and views
  
- Creation of perspective, vision and strategy in mind
- Attention to the interests, needs and expectations of addressees with respect to their physical, mental and spiritual conditions
- Systemic and holistic view to the organization and looking at everyone through the same view
- Ignoring the dismissal of the members and the activities of parts from each other, and attention to the productivity (efficiency + effectiveness) in the organization's activities. (materialistic and spiritual Source)
- The creation of new models of learning. (Problem-solving, role playing, group games) etc.
- Attention to past experiences and trying to experiment new themes and transfer of them to the organization and production of new knowledge

- Disallowing a specific time and place (boundary) to learning and paying attention to remote and virtual knowledge (Internet), etc.
- Attention to the development of internal and external communication networks and connections between them
- Outlining the prospects for the organization and direction of the organization in that regard.
- Attention to the multiple reward systems
- Attention to the extra-curricular activities in order to create joy and happiness and growth of employees. (Theoretical and practical)
- Attention to the culture, beliefs, values and attitudes within the organization.
  
- Providing a thinking climate among the employees and preventing them from involvement in administrative tasks
- Attention to the quality and quantity and defined learning processes until gaining specific and objective results
- Attention to the environment, physical conditions and appropriate facilities for working in the system without any concern
- Welcoming the feedback of co-workers in order to transfer the suggestions and criticisms.

Preliminaries of learning in learning organizations include: personal development, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systemic thinking. These preliminaries are associated with features of cooperative learning i.e. positive interdependence, creation of a sense of commitment and responsibility (individual accountability), face to face communication, social skills development, group processing (Johnson, 2004).

1. Personal development in the learning organization will lead to enhance in the ability of the individual to create the desired results and creation of organizational environment that encourages all members to achieve their desired goals. This method is associated with positive interdependence feature among individuals in which achieving to the results for the group requires contribution and help within the group. Personal feeling of responsibility also affects personal growth. Personal growth requires positive and balanced growth and collaboration between individuals that makes people appear in the field of social life after leaving the group as a trained, knowledgeable and expert individual.

2. Creation of mental models that is generating a positive internal perception of self and environment variables in the surrounding world that is associated with two learning features of collaborative learning or face to face communication to discuss, exchange ideas, and develop social skills (increasing the power of thought, expression and verbal and nonverbal communication and gaining friendly relations based on mutual respect and confidence of the people). Achieving new ideas and creation of knowledge, and learning the ways of creativity and innovation in organizations requires effective interaction and discussion. Gaining important mental achievements automatically increases people's social skills.

3. Creation of a shared vision i.e. building a sense of commitment to the group is consistent with creating a desired image of the future with individual responsibility feature, which leads to a sense of commitment and responsibility in all members of the group. This means that each member is responsible and committed to their own and others' learning.

4. Creation of a systemic thinking requires a correct understanding of the whole system, identification of areas for improvement, understanding the strengths and development of ways to solve problems. It means that group, discuss the information and exchange ideas and each will take measure through a systemic view to collective thinking, group feedback and ultimately through creation of new strategies and knowledge productions in a subject or context. Collaborative learning method in learning organization will transfer thinking skills. On this

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basis the learning organization and collaborative learning communicate with each other, and each without the other is meaningless.

### **Organizing Cooperative Groups**

Various views are expressed on organizing cooperative groups that we point to some of them in this section. According to Johnson et al (2004) Partnership Group replaces structure-based group cooperation with competitive structure, and the manager as an engineer in this process, should organize group work so that employees can easily gain knowledge and experience. To achieve this purpose at least 80-60% of the time in partnership group should be allocated to collaborative work.

Pin and Whitaker believe that the following steps are essential in organizing participatory group work:

- Introducing the goals of the group to members
- Determining the procedures for achieving the goals of the group
- Assigning the tasks of members
- Specifying the type of cooperation, conflict resolution, and decision-making
- Reaching agreement on evaluation and control of the Group performance
- Checking the above five steps and fixing defects
- Conversion of the group to a team. (Pin & Witaker, 2000).

Gokal in relation to the organization of participatory group work suggests the following:

- Determining the exact task of groups and each group member
- Explaining the structure of participatory group work
- Distributing leaflet among employees to teach them how to work in a participatory manner in organizations
- Determining acceptable behavior and the terms and conditions of implementation process of teamwork participation such as listening when members speak, avoid accepting comments without thinking, observing turns... (Gorkel, 1995).

Tileston emphasized the following guidelines in organizing collaborative learning approach:

For a short time start working in groups of two people. Provide the required information to employees between 15-20 minutes and then ask them to talk about the mentioned topics. This will develop their social skills in addition to new learning. In the beginning of the group work discuss about relative new issues so that they find a positive attitude towards teamwork.

\* Do not waste time and work on schedule. Determine a specific time to perform certain tasks in a partnership and ask them the assigned job in due course of time. If you determine 8 minutes for a task and but give them 15 minutes then they will not take it serious the next times.

Before starting work, explain the employees the reason for working in a participatory manner, the importance of gaining life skills in the real world and the importance of cooperation and synergy. Teach participatory working techniques and how to work effectively with each other to your employees. (Tilson, 2000)

Therefore, considering participatory organized groups we can point out the following steps:

- Determining educational goals
- Specifying the number of subjects in each group

- Sorting out the room
- Providing educational material
- Describing job for the employees
- Providing grounds for the establishment of interdependence, individual responsibility and internal cooperation
- Explaining the success criteria
- Clarifying expectations and desired behaviors
- Monitoring employee behavior
- Guiding employees
- Teaching Partnership Skills
- Estimating how to improve team performance

### **The Role of the Manager in the Implementation Process of Collaborative Group Work**

Collaborative group is based on two types of learning: the first group is formal and its members cooperate with each other to get things done. The task of manager is to: identify the objectives, provide the necessary educational means, explain working issues to employees, express the importance of positive relationships within group to employees, monitor the performance of them, provide necessary guidance, evaluate the real amount of learning, and make sure that all members of formal group have an active role in the process of doing things. The second group is informal, that may be formed within or outside the organization. Members of these groups have a long history of friendship with each other and if the partnership approach is not carried out, they actually work together in a partnership approach.

One of the main tasks of the manager in the process of collaborative group work, is to prepare employees for participation. To this aim designing a short-term training course to justify the staff on how to work in team is necessity. In this course we should not only try to inform the employees of labor laws but also we should help them to internalize the norms and the laws. In such courses the norms of traditional organizations should be largely broken. Norms such as: just do your job, do not engage with others, never ask for help and advice from other employees, only pay attention to what the director says.

### **The Combination of Partnership Group Members**

In the combination of the members of the group, characteristics such as race, language, culture, emotional relationships, the level of agreement with each other and improvement of the performance of different approaches have been proposed and most of the comments have stressed on the heterogenetic partnership group members.

Pin & Witaker, 2000 examined the unconditional agreement of the learning groups to the benefits and losses. They believe that the high morale of the members of these groups would be an advantage. In this context, they pointed to the friendship between the members of a sports team as a point of victory

Also the honesty, trust, self-esteem, mutual acceptance of the members and the commitment and loyalty of members towards the common goals of the group makes it easier to work together. In a group the individual behavior is affected by other people's behavior and it is very hard to resist the demands of the group. In contrast, there is a risk that, because of friendship members don't be able to note each other's weaknesses. So people who break the law and discipline in the group will not receive the necessary feedback. Because there are fewer obstacles and resistance against any emotional decision there is very high probability of error. Too much agreement of the members with each other removes the areas of challenge and critical thinking and whenever the group experiencing setting back, rather than assess individual behavior of its members it makes the external factors as the guilty factor. So although the existence of friendship is a

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desirable feature of each group, it is necessary to change disagreement into agreement as well as preventing the loss resulted out of too much agreement. (Pin & Witaker, 2000)

Accordingly "most styles of collaborative learning emphasize on small groups of 4 - 5 people, the heterogeneity of the group members, and the responsibility of the members against the performance of group». (Damas, 2002)

According to Herstat and Slavic, employees should not be divided on the basis of their ability so that strong people are placed in one group and poor ones in a separate group. In his opinion, if the members of a group are different in terms of cultural and educational background, they will gain more beneficial experiences. (Herstat, 2000)

Dan and Bennett also believe that the group of strong individuals work very well, but poor groups generally operate very badly, because their level of knowledge and understanding to help and support each other is insufficient. Their studies shows that the best group combination consists of four members. For example, a survey conducted in Britain showed that most managers prefer groups of 4 - 6. (Dan, 1995)

The research done by Kagan indicates that the most ideal group size is 4 people. Cole and Chan in their study concluded that the best combination is the group in which one person in each group is selected above average, two medium and one below average. Thus, they also emphasize the combination of 4 members. They believe that in the early stages of establishing collaborative groups it is better to start with a group of 2-3 members and after the fact that people in a small group have learned the principles of collaboration then continue with 4 people.

Studies of Harvard University show that learning groups are effective when each member has performed his duties which is dependent on the rate of responsibility of the group members. According to the findings of the mentioned research, it's better for the learning groups to be less than six since if the group size is more than that then the face-to-face communication reduces and opportunities for members to avoid responsibility increases. Also, even if the number of subjects in each group is even (e.g. 4 or 6) working in pairs in the group becomes possible. It the opinion of Gokal groups that are less than three members have less diversity, mobility and may not have the necessary efficiency. In contrast, groups that have more than four members are difficult to ensure that all members of the group were involved in the discussion.

Pin and Whitaker distinguished between the team and group. They believe that team excels over the group and in collaborative learning we should work on formation of a team. Features of an effective team includes:

- Care of members to each other.
- Free expression of feelings of members along with observance of kindness and precaution.
- Trust of members to each other.
- Clarification of instructions and rules for members.
- Existence of honesty among members because of the obvious strengths and weaknesses for all.
- Sense of responsibility and commitment of members to achieve common goals.
- The absence of negative feeling among members, even though not all members may agree with the made decisions.
- Understanding the differences and effort of all members to resolve it.

Meredith Belbin has conducted a study on performance of a successful team and proposed a team model in which nine fundamental roles are proposed:

**Coordinator:** Coordination, organization and control of the team are considered in this role. Coordinator motivates the team when necessary. Coordinator usually has a lot of influence and is the favorite of the team, he is a self-leader individual and with dignity, and is able to create the necessary balance in the team by analyzing the current situation.

**Designer:** The designer leads the team to act with the enthusiasm and tries to create unity between the disparate views.

**Executor:** executor is the one who implements ideas and programs. They are usually hard-working people and would like the team to have a goal and a clear path. He is generally a flexible and conservative person.

**Supervisor:** His task is to evaluate the problems of the team and suggestions. By analysis and thinking on the suggestions of team, he prevents rash behavior.

**Informant:** He essentially generates ideas. Generally, he is a dreamer, innovator and creative person, he pays too much attention to the impractical aspects of cases and may sometimes be confused due to the lack of realism. So he is in need of greater control on behalf of the team.

**Inspector:** Inspector finds golden opportunity to improve team performance and for this purpose may negotiate with others outside of the group. The inspectors generally, are passionate, creative, sociable and entertaining people, and sometimes they may not fulfil their promises. For the sake of good manners and communication skills they can more easily avoid their responsibility.

**Task Force of the Team:** the energy of the task force is spent on improving communication among members. He is basically a reliable person and can reveal hidden agendas. Although the task force is a good interface but does not participate much in team tasks and if he wasn't able to strengthen the team he can be easily forgotten.

**Complementer:** the complementer emphasizes on the states of emergency and the deadline for achieving the objectives. These people are usually angry, sensitive, and are worried about completing tasks, in the meantime they are very disciplined and vigilant. "Complementer" can't tolerate careless members and warns them about the passage of time. These warnings may sometimes undermine the morale of some of the team members.

**Expert:** The role is added to the initial model of Belbin. The expert applies his technical skills or special knowledge to improve team performance and generally moves ahead of the team. Sometimes these people act solitary in their performance. Belbin believes that if one of the above roles in the team is more highlighted than the rest of the team, then the effectiveness of the team reduces, although because of its high effects it may seem that the effectiveness of the team is high. Since in the formation of collaborative groups usually the focus is on the combination of 4 persons, therefore the classification of Belbin can be used on the roles of nine sided participating team and it can be used also to choose some of these roles.

Carl Jung (1875-1961) is a close friend of Freud and founder of analytical psychology. He believed that personality in addition to the past it is formed by the future and had more emphasis on the unconscious side of people. A large part of conscious perception and reaction to the world around us determined by extraversion and introversion attitudes. Introverts often choose solitude, are often shy and are self-focus. Extroverts are more open, accept people easier and are socially aggressive. Jung on the following suggested the psychological functions which were stated in four functions of thinking, feeling, sensing (experimental), and initiation:

1. Extrovert thinking type;
2. Extrovert feeling type;

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3. Extrovert sensing type;
4. Extrovert intuition type;
5. Introvert thinking type.
6. Introvert feeling type;
7. Introvert sensing type;
8. Introvert intuition type

Myers-Briggs is a tool for personality assessment that is already being used on many cases. Annually between 3 and 5 million people in the world are assessed using this self-assessment tool, which is sometimes used by computer. This tool has been extensively tested for reliability and validity assessment and it can be said that it is used widely by non-psychologists and in the business world it is widely used as well. (Murray, 1990).

This tool is not used to separate individuals, but rather a tool that allows preferences to be understood in the context of life. These preferences finally lead to differences in learning, forms of communication, conflict management and relationships. This psychological tool, is a tool for self-assessment and a questionnaire package including 100 to 160 questions that expresses the preferences of individuals with 16 questions. (Robins, 1995). These types are expressed in two polar and opposite features. According to the theory of personality types they use one of the four following modes in their behavior:

- How does a person receives energy? through extroversion (E) versus Introversion (I);
2. What information does a person get? By sensing (S) versus intuition (N);
  3. How does one decide? Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F);
  4. The lifestyle a person accepts, Judgment (J) versus perception (P).

For the convenience of viewing the relationship between personality types, they will be shown as in the table (1). Each of these states have been expressed in abbreviation. (Jessup, 2002)

**Table 1.** Abbreviation of Each of the characters.

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ

Thinkers express that the variety of psychological types leads to the successful performance of the group. They express that a different team psychologically, however, may have delay in the completion of a project, but the ending result would always be better. The way in which the opposite types can help to the group process can be stated in the following terms: Extroverts (E) provide the possibility of communication between members of the group, while introverts (I), show the internal reaction of group discussions. Sensing ones (S), propose the facts and technical questions, while intuitions (N) guess new possibilities, Thinkers (T) will provide a logical analysis of the decision situation. While feelings (F) express the signs that how the feelings of the other members of the group or customers are affected. Judgment People (J) advance the team based on the scheduled program, while perceptions (P) mention considering other solutions to team

Kroeger and Thuesen and other researchers (MBTI) express that the executive managers are (ESTJ) while natural leaders are (ENTJ). The success of each of these types depends on the circumstances. In a complex situation, an innovative solution is needed, therefore, (ENTJ) seems suitable and if the situation is normal and daily, (ESTJ) is more desirable. (Spiegel & Torres, 2001)

In a study by using an MBTI which was conducted on students, it became clear that their business interests was largely associated with Jung's psychological types. Introverts were interested in jobs that didn't require close interaction with other people, such as technical and scientific jobs, extroverts were more interested in jobs that provided them with high levels of social interaction, such as sales and public relations. Table 2 shows the combination of the sixteen personality types and related occupations.

Finally, we can say that the theory of personality types and (MBTI) tool help us in better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and the impact of these factors in the formation of teams and their development cannot be ignored. People with different preferred types, will have different functions in a group or team and sometimes the fate of a team becomes dependent on the performance of some individuals. In the following it's tried to show this impact by using a model.

Although the factors that lead to the success of a team are abundant, but some are more effective. Teams' inefficiency maybe due to inappropriate combination of members. The most important step (before any measures) is to form a team, which its success is definite. There are many cases which disturb group dynamics and lead to the inefficiency of the team. The more organizations emphasize teamwork, the more this concept should be considered that how different people interact with each other in a team. (Spiegel & Torres, 2001)

**Table 2.** General characteristics and trends of sixteen personality style job.

	<b>Sensing</b>		<b>Intuition</b>		
	<b>Thinking</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	<b>Thinking</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	
<b>Judgment</b>	ISTJ Action oriented, moderate, decisive, independent, management and administrative sciences	ISFJ Action oriented, Abstract, contributive, sensitive, medical sciences and religious affairs	INTJ Scholar, ideologist, sensible, independent, scientific affairs, computer and technical	INFJ Scholar, Symbolistic, ideologist, committed, consulting services, religion and education	<b>Introversion</b>
<b>Perception</b>	ISTP Independent, logical, problem solver, realist, difficult businesses, and technical fields	ISFP Reliable, kind, sensible, abstract, Action oriented, commercial fields, hygiene and health	INTP Logical, curious, independent, scholar, kind, scientific and technical fields	INFP Logical, clever, ideologist, curious, innovative, art and commercial sciences	
<b>Perception</b>	ESTP Observer, active, problem solver, claimant, marketer and business	ESFP Observer, active, ideologist, cordial, hygiene and health	ENTP Innovative, theorist, analyzer, logical, scientific asker, management and technology	ENFP Curious, innovative, energetic, kind, contributive, cordial, consulting services, education	<b>Extroversion</b>
<b>Judgment</b>	ESTJ Logical, decisive, critic, Action oriented and systematic, management and administrative sciences	ESFJ Realistic, active, ideologist, decisive, Action oriented, education, hygiene and religion	ENTJ Analyzer, concepts, planner, influential, management and leadership	ENFJ Kind, truthful, altruist, advocate, art, religion, education	

### **The Effectiveness Factors of a Team**

Members of an ideal team must have diverse talent and knowledge, so that they can easily communicate with each other without any problems.

Various models are provided for effective teams, in this study the model proposed by Kroeger & Thuesen, 1992 is used for the development teams of information systems (IS). (IS) Teams are a suitable case study because of the complex design of information systems and using different parts of the organization. Maybe the results of this study can be extended to other teams.

Among joint models in a team approach the common application design pattern can be noted. This pattern shortens the design time, while the results provide a comprehensive and high quality. (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1992). For example, a team which is designed with a common application for accounting systems, includes accountants and computer specialists.

In joint application design pattern, three factors are affected by different people: effective leadership, within team communication and group cohesiveness. Almost all of the factors depend on people who are involved in team. Effective leader is one of the most important factors in the success of the team. Ineffective Leader will destroy productivity of the team. A bold and knowledgeable leader must be able to provide different levels of performance and management. He should be able to control team meetings and participate almost everyone in the negotiation to achieve an acceptable result. (Bradley, et al, 1997).

Often finding a good leader is a difficult work. Not any one has the right mix of technical and character ability. In addition, the team leader must be able to manage and resolve conflicts quickly. (Spiegel & Torres, 2001). Communication within the team is another factor that affects the success of the team, and problems in this field can appear in different forms.

Team cohesion is as an integral part of team effectiveness. In a cohesive team the spirit of being with each other and support can be seen clearly. This integration will help team members to resolve conflicts quickly. As the level of team cohesion increases, the group will accept the same approach. (2002, Huber) Personality variety of team members is the fourth factor of success. A number of studies have shown the impact of team variety on successful group performance. These research generally express that in complex issues, teams with different members and different technical and knowledge abilities are more effective than teams that are almost identical in this aspect. (Bradley, et al, 1997)

Specific Individuals become natural leaders, while others prefer to play the role of followers. Some people are natural speakers, while others are unable to express their inside intentions. Every person, however, can have a positive impact on overall effectiveness of the team, but there must always be a balance between personality types. (Jessup 2002). Generally, the best leaders are (ESTJ) or (ENTJ) depending on the desired position, but if there's no need to find creative solutions and new technology and if the issues are structured and straightforward, then sensing leader (ESTJ) is a good option. But if there's a need for new approaches to solve problems and the problems are not easily understood, then intuitive leader (ENTJ) is a good option.

Naturally extroverts communicate more easily than introverts. Sensing people more than Intuitive and thinkers more than feelings can communicate. Extroverts are natural speakers, but the truth is that large number of them by expressing too much ideas can disturb the team. Sensing People receive the facts and share them easily with other team members. (Bradley, et al, 1997).

An effective team must have a healthy mix of extroverts to establish adequate communication within the team. The cohesion of the team is affected by thinkers against sensing types. Thinker members of the team by being persistent in expressing judgments, often attack sensitive members of the group, and create a certain pressure on the group feeling. Feeling members on the contrary are well aware of the spirit of team work and do their best to keep the team harmony. Team cohesion, does not deny the existence of conflict, because contrast help to judge ideas. A cohesive team is a team that is capable to solve conflicts that avoids long divisions and achieve synergy that is the result of teamwork.

Usually homogeneous teams conclude sooner, but they're solutions are not always as creative and innovative as the solutions of heterogeneous teams. Each team must have an optimum combination of people and that this combination is different depending on the circumstances and the issues facing teams

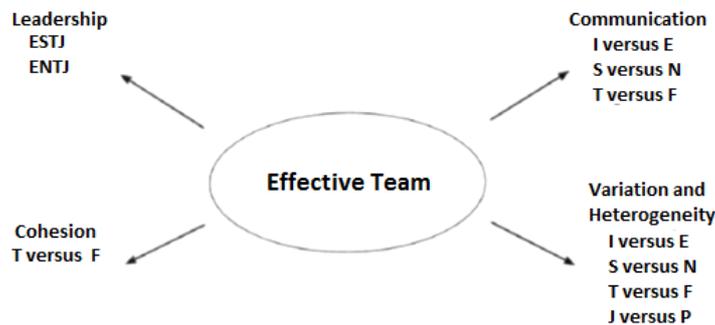


Figure 1. The combination of personality of individuals with the team performance model.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT FINDINGS**

Strategic partnership is one of the most important types of inter-agency cooperation. We in the present study investigate the studies conducted on its performance. These studies appear in two forms: one on the participation performance and its influencing parameters and the other is in the form of factors that influence the success of the partnership.

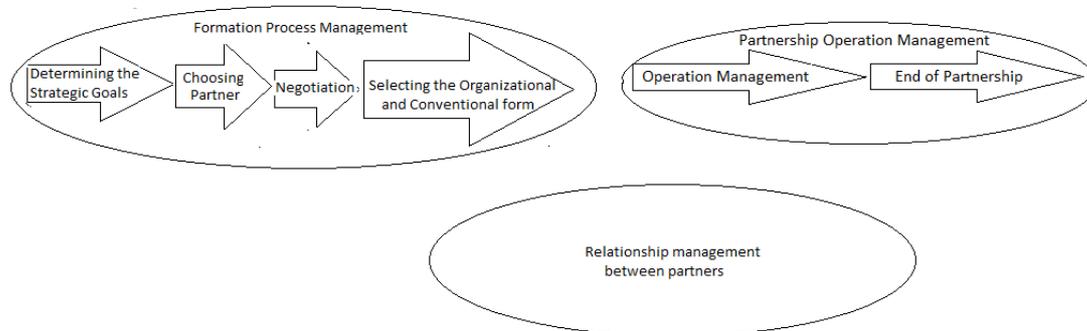
In Table three also factors affecting the success of the partnership based on research are expressed. Since we define the participation performance as the achievement of partners to their goals, therefore, the affecting factors on the success of participation are actually the same factors affecting performance. And in the next part we propose these parameters in classifications raised by "Glaister".

**Management Key Experiences**

Glaister & Husan, 2003 by conducting a survey on 20 international joint venture, identified the key lessons of management from the perspective of the managers and experienced partners of those companies in their article. They divided these experiences into three groups: (1) formation process management, 2- Participatory operations management 3. Management of communication between the partners. Mueller & Herstatt, (2000) also by presenting their process-based model, described the affecting factors on the success of the partnership. He considered terms such as "Collaboration" and "Partnership" and "Alliances" and "Cooperation" which could be seen in the literature of the partnership and cooperation as synonymous and defines all as the following: "collaboration and partnership between companies that work together to gain some strategic goals "(Mueller & Herstatt, 2000, p49). Therefore, "Mueller" in the expression of the success factors, didn't consider a certain type of inter-agency partnership.

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By considering a process-based model offered by the "Mueller" and "Herstatt", we provide a completed form of No. 1 (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The success factors of the "Mueller"

So, useful experiences of participatory managers and critical factors of the success of can be classified into three groups based on the research of "Glaister":

### Management of Formation Process

*Objectives:* The most obvious lesson of the international investment management process is the need of partners to develop a clear and shared strategic perspective. This issue will smooth the path and the effective implementation of the partnership. Both partners must agree in their long-term objectives in the formation phase of the partnership. An English director of international joint ventures, says: "I think that the first thing that both partners should be sure to understand is why they work together? What is their common goal? What is the long-term vision that is shared? What are both companies trying to achieve? "

*Partner selection:* in choosing a partner, identification of resources and complementary skills, insurance of their availability and that what is shared between the partners is important. During the phase of formation of the partnership, the partners must have formal analysis of financial issues and provide accurate analysis to deliverable items by partners.

*Negotiations:* the climate of the talks is important and it is necessary that the partners have a high honesty and truthfulness. Partners should be explicit and avoid hiding things that have no interest and advantage for them.

The rate of trust between the partners and their commitment to each other, personal relationships, business that partners had in the present or past, are effective on the climate of negotiations. In discussing communication management these issues are raised as well.

*Structure:* During the formation process, it is necessary to predict the determined structure of the international joint venture and its administrative issues. This factor will be discussed in detail in phase of operations management. *Exit Strategy:* Partners should also have anticipated exit strategy from participation. However, this doesn't mean planning to fail, but a kind of preparation when needed. When the strategy of partners is changed and consequently their attitude to international joint venture changes, then getting out of the partnership is indispensable. During this phase, other items such as the identification of values and expectations of the parties (which helps build confidence and balance in relationships and is also essential for effective implementation partnerships), deep understanding of the partnership culture and the internal personnel communication of both partners, formal analysis of financial issues and analysis of deliverable items by partners are also raised. Also according to tables No.

1 and 2 the following cases can also be considered as a part of the area of the management process formation, alignment of approaches and management techniques, understanding the needs of partner, stable goals, matching objectives, win - win attitude, sharing risks, the existence of adequate and complete resources, dependence of partners to each other, the initial conditions, the analysis of partners (supplement of strategies, capabilities of resources and management), matching partners (cultural, operational), the ability to participate.

### **Management of Partnership Operations**

Executive discussions of partnership are predicted and the responsibilities are identified. In order to remove the ambiguities and notify the future roles of the managers, some issues such as management, infrastructure management, tasks of management and their communication must become clear.

In the process of the formation and management of partnerships it should be determined that which side is responsible for the delivery of the final items of the project and how the project plan is improved and evolved. The person in charge for every activity should be identified so that a work is assigned to several people (It will prevent people from removing each other as well as the manager will not be obliged to play policy between several people). It should be clear that who is responsible for what part of the decisions, in other words different levels of decision making should be determined. This issue requires the existence of effective communication between partners to encourage them to work together.

The balance in the relationships (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000): Given the diversity of objectives, the problems of partner selection and organizational structure and complexity, there is not a unique and excellent way for management of participation. According to previous research, one of the key factors for the success of the partnership, is the balance of relations based on cost-risk sharing and exploitation of knowledge so that both parties benefit. If the benefits of one become more than the other, the communication then is one-way and non-sustainable. Also, if the cost and risk is not distributed between the parties, participation will not be in a state of equilibrium and is quickly ended by the victim partner. Unbalanced participation may come into existence due to unequal exploitation of knowledge.

Learning processes (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000): having effective practices of learning is one of the important factors of success in participation because through this we can benefit from the supplement capital that the other side has shared. "Hamel" found that in the partnership between Japanese and Western companies, Japanese partner profit more. The main reason is the willingness and ability of the Japanese to learn from counterparts. As an executive manager of Japan stated: "the Western attitude to us is like the attitude of teachers to students, and we are glad of it because we have an attitude of a student."

Ability to absorb (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000): knowledge is often implicit and invisible, and therefore it is difficult to be transferred between the partners. The ability to absorb, expands the ability of the local knowledge and increases conformity with external innovation. Therefore the new technological knowledge can be absorbed better.

### **Management of Communication between Partners**

All issues related to communication management is related to the process of formation, or management of operations, and in fact this is a key debate for both activities.

*Mutual commitment:* Partners must be fully committed to the international joint venture. Commitment requires the full involvement of partners in a partnership and their trust and confidence to each other.

## An Overview on the Quality Improvement Factors in Inter-Agency Cooperation with an Attitude to Integrate Differences in Learning Organizations

*Past relationships:* past relationship can be very useful because it can be a formal mechanism to control controversial categories and create trust. Past and present relationships of partners, can contribute to greater understanding of partners towards each other.

*Development of personal relationships:* good personal communication at managing levels of partners, is one of the most important things that will lead to an increase in international joint venture interests. Where communication is poor, the problems occur. Development of personal relationships, increases understanding and confidence. One of the European executive says: awareness about past experiences, work communications and trust between the parties at the management level of business partners, is seen as a help. Senior management has a strong positive impact on employees. If the joint venture international managers feel that they are protected, they will feel more confident. "Good personal relationships play a key role in resolving the problems and disputes. Although formal mechanisms are implemented to resolve disputes, and lack of agreements (often through negotiations at the level of board of directors), but there is no tendency to these guidelines. A suitable alternative for this issue is to have good communication with counterparts that reduces tensions from the beginning. When affective personal Communications does not continue, there may problems occur that have a negative impact on the performance of international joint venture. Each of the partners must understand the culture, and business goals of his opponent. There might be reluctance to the issues that might seem sensitive. So the partners should be patient in order for the important issues to appear.

Exchange of information (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000, p59): innovation processes are essentially the process of exchange of information. Therefore, effective information exchange between the partners is the basis of success of the innovation process. "Ohmae" has suggested that managers pay more attention to softer skills in interactions with companies and recommends that regular and appropriate meetings should be held at least in three organizational levels of senior management, middle managers and involved personnel. Leakage of confidential information could lead to a competitive advantage of the opposite side. On the other hand, most of the information occurs in daily interactions of engineers, marketers and product developers. Therefore, companies must control gates between the partners and limit the volume of unofficial information in order to prevent the transfer of knowledge that is confidential. Companies should have encouraging programs and motivated employees so that employees are encouraged to act in line with the interests of the company and make informal decisions well. Partners should not escape or hide from problems but should try to reveal the issues as soon as possible. They should avoid hiding things that are advantage, but are of no benefit to the project.

Advocate of the participation and support of senior management of parties (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000, p59): Some authors have emphasized the existence of a hero and defender of participation. This person or team controls the flow of information, creates the connections between people and reduces tension between the partners. They must be accepted by the parties to be able to mediate between organizations. Also support of participation by senior management, makes a certain amount of error that is appropriate for each project participant, permissible.

*Cultural issues:* culture is related to three areas of the formation process, operations management and communication. The most effective aspect of culture, is national culture that is not controllable and therefore should be carefully evaluated before participation. Partners need to make sure toward understanding cultural differences as well as their management before participation and learn how to behave with these differences.

*Trust:* the basic concept of trust is as follows: "the partner expects and believes that the other party acts on the basis of commitments, his behavior and acts are beneficent or at least are not

harmful to the other side, fully does his job, has a good intention and acts nobly even if there were not any promises. » Trust removes the concern that opportunistic behavior of a partner now or in the future may harm their interests. The lack of existence of trust is an alarm for participation.

Trust and honesty of the partner is very important in the decision-making process, and the parties expect such behavior from each other. Although trust grows in regular interaction between partners, but it must be intentionally induced. Many of the issues of communication, mutually reinforce each other. In fact there is a positive cycle of connections that reinforce each other, which started from the previous participation record (this record also includes strong personal relationships between senior managers) and ends in understanding and commitment of the party to the joint venture. Building trust, limits the opportunistic behavior and increases the efficiency of the organization. It also acts as a control mechanism that is the complement of the details of the contract. Trust is not sufficient only at individual level and it should be at a wide range and in all the values, norms and routines of the organization. (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000, p61)

*Conflict resolution mechanisms* (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000): In case were there is an unbalanced relationship between partners, there will be no confidence or conflict between them. It is important to understand how this conflict is resolved. Therefore before any conflict, there should be an advanced management to conflict resolution. Mohre divides conflict resolution techniques into three groups:

1. The structural techniques such as collaborative problem solving and encouraging and motivating;
2. Destructive techniques such harsh words;
3. Other techniques such as judgment of a third person, pretending to be ignorant and avoiding the issue.

Conflict resolution techniques influence the public success of participation. Collaborative problem solving has a large positive effect on the success of the relationship. Harsh words, pretending to be ignorant and other destructive techniques in the long term can not resolve the conflict. Thus, the interference of a foreign judgment will be very useful. If none of these techniques are successful, the partnership will probably fail.

*Termination of participation* (Mueller & Herstatt, 2000, p61): participation is often over a period of time. Contract is not a permanent process but a temporary project that is in compliance with environmental changes.

If the contract is dry and inflexible due to the uncertain outcome of R & D and high-speed technological changes, the required flexibility for innovation is destroyed and the contract may be terminated.

According to the Table 1 and 2, the following items can be considered as a part of the communication management domain between the partners:

Group trust and control, mutual trust, harmony, quality of communication, creation of a strong and effective communication, open communication, mutual long-term commitment, faith in participation, support and commitment of senior management, teamwork and cooperation, lack of opportunistic behavior, flexibility, conflicts elimination system, continuous evaluation.

## CONCLUSION

## An Overview on the Quality Improvement Factors in Inter-Agency Cooperation with an Attitude to Integrate Differences in Learning Organizations

1. The use of (MBTI) tools, along with other analysis and performance assessment tools, has helped us better understand the people and team performance. Based on the presented analysis in this paper, it can be said that the personality combination of the team has an important role in the performance differences of teams. Diversity and balance in people is an essential factor to create successful team performance. Organizations that wish to have an effective team, must work on the combination of the team members and help them understand their own behavior and the behavior of other members.
2. Organizations today more than ever need self-awareness, self-assessment, self-teaching, other-teaching, customer orientation, risk-taking, development and innovation. On the other hand, strengthening the emotional relationships and accountability, increasing face to face interaction, improving interpersonal skills and developing self-control among employees emphasizes the necessity of developing educational programs with a strategic view. The role of the manager in the process of organizing participatory groups is to prepare employees for participation. Agreement among the members as well as heterogeneity of members increases the effectiveness of the partnership approach.
3. In investigating inter-agency cooperation, we face many key lessons and success factors but different, all of which can be categorized into three groups: the first section is the formation process management which includes topics such as clear and shared strategic attitude, understanding of the objectives, agreement and compliance with it, identification of the values, expectations of the parties, selection of partner, a deep understanding of corporate culture and internal communications of both partners, open and honest negotiations, prediction of exit strategy from participation when necessary, official analysis of financial issues, analysis of deliverables by the partners, etc. the second section is the field of participation operations management for which these cases can be mentioned: predicting performance issues, determination of responsibilities and tasks, responsibility of the delivery of the last items of the project, way of improving the action plan, explaining the levels of decision-making (who is responsible for what part of the decision), balancing relationships based on sharing the costs and risks as well as exploiting knowledge so that both parties benefit. Management of the relationships between partners is the third section for which some of cases include these topics: the commitment of both sides, good personal relationships of managers with their peers, senior management support, existence of a good and advocate partnership, mutual trust, harmony, quality of communication, creation of a strong and effective relationship, open communication, teamwork and cooperation, lack of opportunistic behavior, flexibility, system of conflict elimination, continuous evaluation.

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