Group Syntality - Causes, Effects, Manifestations

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Abstract: Each group differs from the others, and the difference consists of its own characteristics, which do not represent a simple sum of the characteristics of the individuals that make up the group. The syntality of the group makes individuals lose their importance - when we talk about collective behaviors - and what matters is rather the group as a whole, which is able to create collective behaviors, as a result of the languages, codes and rituals that characterize the group. Syntality predicts the behavior of the group starting from its constituents, as mentioned above. The article aims to analyze the psycho-social dimensions of group syntality, in terms of its causes, effects and manifestations.

Keywords: *Group syntality; psycho-social behaviors; collective behavior.*

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1. Introduction

The term syntality is defined in the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2014) as „the inferred behavioral tendencies of a group acting as a group that correspond to personality in an individual”. In Romanian language, the term syntality appears in dexonline defined as: "SINTALITĂȚE s. f. the totality of the essential particularities that give a social group a distinct identity" (The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, 2016; Marcu, 2000). Dexonline also attributes to the term syntality the meaning of “the totality of the essential particularities that are depictive for the moral profile of a group or the personality of a collective” (Romanian Academy, 2009; The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, 2016).

The specialized literature defines syntality as what binds the group together. R. Cattell (1948) considers that the syntality of the group is sufficiently similar to the concept of personality, going so far as to propose the methodological transfer from the research on the personality of the individual to that on the syntality of the group.

Cattell and Wispe (1947) consider that a group can be described on three levels: the level of syntality (which depicts the behavior of the group itself, in the same way that syntality describes the behavior of the individual), the level of group structure and the relationships between its components, and the average psychosocial characteristics of the members of the group. The cited authors consider that syntality can be seen in relation to the psychological characteristics of the group members and its internal structure. Therefore, they describe group syntality in three ways: abilities, temperament, and dynamics. They also consider that the approach of group syntality based on labels such as "democratic group", "totalitarian group" and so on is incorrect and does not capture the specifics of groups. However, in social psychology such classifications of group syntality are common (Cattell et al., 1953; Cattell & Stice, 1952).

2. Psycho-social dimensions of syntality

Each group differs from the others (Fedor, 2019), and the difference consists of its own characteristics, which do not represent a simple sum of the characteristics of the individuals that make up the group. The syntality of the group makes individuals lose their importance - when we talk about collective behaviors - and what matters is rather the group as a whole, which is able to create collective behaviors, as a result of the languages, codes and rituals that characterize the group. Syntality predicts the behavior of the group starting from its constituents, as mentioned above.

The origin of group syntality consists precisely in the dynamics that appear within groups: the positioning of individuals both in hierarchical relations and in relations of symbolic power (Dascălu, 2016), the convergence and cooperation between the individual members of the group and their regrouping into subgroups. Syntality has, in R. Cattell's view, a series of primary dimensions that the author constructs in a manner analogous to the dimensions of the human personality.

From a methodological point of view, identifying these dimensions of group syntality is, according to R. Cattell, a process of analyzing those dimensions that allow the group to function in the vast majority of situations, multivariate statistical analysis being the key element in identifying the most important dimensions of group syntality. These dimensions, resulting from the factorial analysis, are assumed to correspond to the existing functional units that exist within a group or an organization (Cattell & Stice, 1952).

The variation in the various aspects that make up the group's integrity allows measuring the efficiency and quality of the leadership. Transformations produced on a group level through the influence of a leader can occur in the field of organizational culture (group morality) or in the ability of the group to solve problems, under the influence of the leader's activity. In measuring organizational performance - including leadership performance - along with group syntality, group synergy should also be measured, which is defined as a convergence of energies within the group, directed towards the goals set within the group (Cattell & Stice, 1952).

In his work, entitled *The Psychodynamics of Small Groups* (Cattell & Stice, 1952), R. Cattell identifies a number of dimensions of group syntality that can be the subject of a primary analysis, in order to highlight a syntaletic profile of the group, or more precisely those features that highlight the group and at the same time differentiates it from other similar groups: group organization, leadership techniques, leadership ability (level), the regulation of procedures, the feeling of freedom within the group, the feeling of belonging to the group (the feeling of "people like us"), the level of frustration within the group, the level of interdependence, motivational level within the group, the level of energy / tension within the group, the conflictual dimension within the group, the convergence towards a purpose of group activities, the explicit concerns about procedures and their clarity, leadership evaluation, the evaluation of the foremost leaders.

The formation of groups can be related to the accomplishment of some tasks or to the solving of problems, of geographical, cultural, social proximity or it can be based on interest. Group formation is based on

interaction between members, common activities and feelings (Mishra, 2001). In the context of the interaction between the members of the group and the collective action, a group dynamic takes place in which leaders emerge, group members position themselves towards each other, and an organizational culture is built. In these interactions the group acquires its syntality.

3. Conclusions

The analysis of group syntality is essential especially when we talk about therapeutic groups or task-oriented groups - as is the case of the team, in the socio-economic environment, of the class of students or of the group of students in the educational environment. Because the aggregate behavior of the group is different from that of its members, when it is desired to build and motivate a team (team building), psycho-social action - intervention - on one or another of the constituent elements of group syntality - as those presented above - allows the development of a group synergy and, thus, of an efficiency of the collective action.

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