

# Gliding between team members’ similarity versus diversity toward performance: the role of technological advancements

**Elena-Mădălina Vătămănescu**  
*Full Professor, PhD, SNSPA, Romania*

**Andreea Bunica**  
*PhD student, Doctoral School in Management, SNSPA, Romania*

**Elena Dinu**  
*Lecturer, PhD, SNSPA, Romania*

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The current endeavor aims to provide preliminary insights into the dyad similarity – diversity of team members by considering two main factors, that is, performance achievement (as outcome) and technological advancements (as potential moderator). To this end, the remainder of the extended abstract will briefly look at the benefits of similarity versus the benefits of diversity among team members from the group and organizational perspectives, also introducing the role of technological advancements in the overall analytical framework.

The composition of a team can significantly impact its overall performance and the success of the organization it serves. Researchers have identified factors like leadership, empowerment, and team structure as contributors to team effectiveness (Chen et al., 2005; MacMillan et al., 2002) Nevertheless, one factor garnering growing attention is the role of team member similarity in enhancing business performance (Vătămănescu & Mitan, 2023).

Existing research suggests that teams with members sharing similar backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics may be more cohesive and effective in achieving their goals (Yeager & Nafukho, 2012). This is because individuals with similar attributes tend to better understand each other's perspectives, facilitating effective communication, coordination, and decision-making within the team. Furthermore, perceptions of differences among team members can negatively impact trust development and team

cohesion, ultimately hindering individual and team performance (Vătămănescu et al., 2018). Perceptions of differences will negatively affect the development of trust among team members, adversely affect team cohesion, and ultimately hinder individual performance. This aligns with the notion that team synergy and performance are the compilation of individual contributions, and maximizing individual performance is key to optimizing team outcomes.

Team member similarity can enhance effectiveness in a few ways: improved communication, increased cohesion, and enhanced coordination. When team members share similar backgrounds or experiences, they often find it easier to understand each other's perspectives and communicate more effectively (Mas, 2009), leading to fewer misunderstandings and quicker decision-making. Similarity can also foster a sense of camaraderie and unity, motivating members to work together and support each other. Shared understanding and mental models, often present among similar individuals, can streamline task coordination, resulting in smoother workflows and increased efficiency.

Conversely, the literature also indicates that diverse teams can bring a wider range of skills, knowledge, and perspectives, leading to more innovative solutions and better problem-solving. Diverse teams, with their broader range of skills and knowledge, may be better equipped to handle intricate problems. Therefore, it is important to strike a balance between member similarity and diversity. Highly diverse teams may face challenges in coordination and communication, potentially offsetting the benefits of diverse perspectives (Jehn et al., 2008).

When placing the technological advancements into the equation, it may be observed that technological developments are able to influence the similarity or diversity of team members in an organization in several ways. On the one hand, rapid technological advancements often create a demand for specialized skills and knowledge. Organizations may need to recruit individuals with specific technical expertise, potentially leading to teams with higher similarity in terms of educational backgrounds and skill sets. On the other hand, technology has enabled remote work and virtual teams, allowing organizations to assemble teams with geographically diverse members. This can increase diversity in terms of cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. Ultimately, as automation and AI become more prevalent, certain job roles may become obsolete, while new ones emerge. This can lead to a shift in the required skills and potentially increase diversity within teams as organizations seek individuals with expertise in emerging technologies. Still, it is important to note that the relationship between technological

advancements and team composition is complex and can vary depending on the specific industry, organizational culture, and the nature of the technological change.

**Keywords:** team members, similarity, diversity, performance, technological advancement.

## REFERENCES

- Chen, G., Kirkman, B L., Kanfer, R., & Allen, D. (2005). A multilevel quasi-experimental study of leadership, empowerment, and performance in teams. *Academy of Management*, 2005(1), D1-D6. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2005.18780372>
- Jehn, K.A., Greer, L.L., & Rupert, J. (2008). Diversity, conflict, and their consequences. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511753725.007>
- MacMillan, J., Entin, E.E., & Serfaty, D. (2002). From Team Structure to Team Performance: A Framework. *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, 46(3), 408-412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/154193120204600341>
- Mas, A. (2009, March 27). Peers at Work. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.99.1.112>
- Mas, A. (2009). Peers at Work. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.99.1.112>
- Vătămănescu, E.-M., Andrei, A.G., & Pînzaru, F. (2018). Investigating the online social network development through the Five Cs Model of Similarity: the Facebook case. *Information Technology & People*, 31(1), 84-110. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-06-2016-0135>
- Vătămănescu, E.-M., & Mitan, A. (2023). *Managerial Relationships and SMEs Internationalization. Unweaving the fabric of business performance*. Routledge.
- Yeager, K L., & Nafukho, F M. (2012). Developing diverse teams to improve performance in the organizational setting. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(4), 388-408. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090591211220320>