

INTRAGROUP CONFLICT AND COHESION IN INTERACTIVE SPORTS TEAMS

Gordana Dobrijević*, Slavko Alčaković

Singidunum University, Faculty of Business in Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

Abstract

The aims of this study are to: (a) identify the most frequently used conflict management style; (b) determine the level of cohesion; and (c) examine the relationship between conflict and cohesion in interactive sports teams. The study was conducted on a sample of 205 professional sports players from interactive sports teams from Serbia (basketball, handball, water polo, volleyball, and football teams). The data was collected through the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (ROCI – II) and the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ). In relation to all of the sports considered, the findings revealed high levels of all four dimensions of cohesion (Group Integration – Task, Group Integration – Social, Individual Attractions to the Group – Task, and Individual Attractions to the Group – Social). The study has shown a positive correlation between cohesion and the collaborative conflict management style, and a negative correlation between cohesion and the competing style. Cooperation proved to be the most frequently used conflict management style, and competing proved the least frequently used style in interactive sports teams.

Key words: conflict, cohesion, sports teams, interactive sports, interdependence

ИНТРАГРУПНИ КОНФЛИКТ И КОХЕЗИЈА У ИНТЕРАКТИВНИМ СПОРТСКИМ ТИМОВИМА

Апстракт

Циљеви овог истраживања су: (а) идентификовање најчешће коришћеног стила управљања конфликтима, (б) одређивање нивоа кохезије и (ц) испитивање односа између конфликта и кохезије у интерактивним спортским тимовима. У истраживању је учествовало 205 професионалних спортиста из интерактивних спортских тимова из Србије (кошарка, рукомет, ватерполо, одбојка и фудбал). Подаци су сакупљени путем Рахимовог инвентара организационог конфликта – II (енг. *Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II, ROCI – II*) и Упитника групног окружења (енг. *Group Environment Questionnaire – GEQ*). У односу на

* Corresponding author: Gordana Dobrijević, Singidunum University, Faculty of Business in Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia, gdobrijevic@singidunum.ac.rs

све разматране спортове, резултати су показали високи ниво све четири димензије кохезије (групна интеграција на основу задатка, групна интеграција – социјална димензија, индивидуална приврженост групи на основу задатка и индивидуална приврженост групи – социјална димензија). Истраживање је показало позитивну корелацију кохезије и кооперативног стила управљања конфликтима, и негативну корелацију кохезије и компетитивног стила. Сарадња је најчешће, а надметање најређе коришћени стил управљања конфликтима у интерактивним спортским тимовима.

Кључне речи: конфликт, кохезија, спортски тимови, интерактивни спортови, међузависност

INTRODUCTION

Intrateam Conflict

Conflicts emerge regularly among people who live, work, or spend some time together, due to personal differences in age, sex, race, opinions, attitudes, and culture, among others, as well as due to opposing interests, and due to their association with different groups, organisations, cultures, departments, etc. (Shetach, 2009). Conflict can be defined as “*a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals*” (Barki & Hartwick, 2004, p. 216). In sports teams, players are in an interdependent relationship, and members depend on each other’s performance and cooperation in order to do well. The competitive environment of elite sports (e.g., Olympic Games, World Championships) is especially suitable for the occurrence of conflicts among athletes, coaches, and support staff (Mellalieu et al, 2013).

Interdependence is one of the causes of conflict in groups and/or organisations. It can be based on joint tasks, outcomes and/or resources. In sports settings, resource interdependence is rare. Task interdependence is described as the level of a complementary interaction of group members needed for achieving a joint task. In a team with task interdependence, the members work on maintaining good relationships and harmony, and on exhibiting prosocial behaviours such as helping one another (Trbojević & Petrović, 2017). Outcome interdependence happens if group members depend on one another to achieve personal and group goals. The study of Van de Vegt and associates (2001) showed that the perception of task and outcome interdependence is positively related to members’ satisfaction with the team and helping others, and negatively related to competing against team members.

In sports, the performance of the whole team depends on the individual members’ efforts. The more people have to work together to attain a goal, the more likely it is for a conflict to emerge. Interdependence ac-

centuates the intensity of relationships, so that small differences or misunderstandings can lead to a major conflict (Evans et al., 2012).

The various models of handling conflict range from simple two styles (cooperative vs. competitive) to five styles (Rahim, 2011). Rahim (2011) differentiates two basic dimensions of managing interpersonal conflict: concern for self (the extent to which a person tries to take care of their own interests), and concern for others (the extent to which a person tries to satisfy the interests of the other party). Combining these two dimensions, we get five styles of managing interpersonal conflict:

- The collaborating style, which includes cooperation and the exchange of information between parties;
- The accommodating (obliging) style, which involves playing down the differences, and sometimes even generosity and obedience;
- The competing (dominating) style, wherein the person only cares about their own interests, ignoring the needs of other parties;
- The avoiding style, which involves withdrawal from the situation, and sometimes even refusal to acknowledge that a conflict exists; and
- The compromising style, with in-between concern for self and others. Both parties have to give up something to make a mutually satisfying solution.

The first aim of this paper was to identify the most frequently used conflict management style in interactive sports teams. There has been some disagreement with regard to predominant conflict styles in sports. While Sullivan & Feltz (2001) identified collaborating as the most frequently used style when handling conflict with teammates, some other studies had different findings. For example, Ćirković (2015) found that competition and avoidance are the most frequent conflict management styles, followed by adaptation and collaboration. Mellalieu and associates (2013) report that the UK teams participating in major championships predominantly use avoiding, sharing with others and problem solving in dealing with team conflict. This is consistent with the study of Holt and associates (2012), which describes avoiding as the preferred way of approaching conflict in female teams.

According to previous studies on interdependence (Evans & Eys, 2015; De Dreu, 2007), higher interdependence leads to higher cooperativeness and lower competitiveness, thus leading to our first hypothesis:

H1 – Collaborating is the most often used, and competing the least often used conflict management style among players in interactive sports teams.

Cohesion

Cohesion is one of the most widely studied topics pertaining to group dynamics (Martin et al., 2014). It is the ‘glue’ that holds the group

together. In other words, according to a well-known definition by Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer (1998) cohesion is “*a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs*” (p. 213). The members of a cohesive group support and trust each other, share the same objectives, and remain united in their pursuit of common goals. Cohesion can emerge from relationships between team members (social cohesion), and/or common goals and responsibilities (task cohesion).

Sports teams involve some level of social interdependence, since team members depend on their teammates to achieve common tasks (e.g., passing the ball to a teammate for a shot) and outcomes, i.e. winning a game (Bruner et al., 2015). Some sports (like basketball) are highly interactive, while others, like archery, are co-active, and some, like rowing, include both interaction and coercion (Dobrijević et al., 2020). Several authors (Cotterill, 2012; Murray, 2006, Evans et al., 2012) emphasise the link between interdependence and cohesion in sports teams, meaning that cohesion is more important in highly interactive sports. The work of Brisimis and associates (2018), and the work of Dobrijević and associates (2020) showed high levels of cohesion in professional interactive sports teams, both male and female. Evans and Eys (2015) investigated the influence of task and collective outcome interdependence on cohesion, and concluded that a higher perception of interdependence is related to higher cohesion and lower competitiveness.

Our second aim was to determine the level of cohesion in interactive sports teams. Based on several studies that demonstrated high cohesion in interactive sports teams (Evans et al., 2012; Evans & Eys, 2015; Brisimis et al., 2018; Dobrijević et al., 2020), our second hypothesis is as follows:

H2 – Members of interactive sports teams have a high perceived level of cohesion.

Conflict and Cohesion

Intrateam conflict has normally been considered as contradictory to cohesion. For example, in the study by Paradis and Martin (2012), subgroups formation and low cohesion were perceived to be related to task and social conflict. According to Laios and Alexopoulos (2014), bad communication can lead to conflict and disturb team cohesiveness. Their study points out lower levels of cohesion as destructive outcomes of team conflict.

However, intragroup conflict can have a positive impact on some types of cohesion, as demonstrated by Sullivan and Feltz (2001), and Benard and Doan (2011). Sullivan and Feltz (2001) evaluated the effect of the constructive and destructive styles of conflict management on team

cohesion. The study showed that social cohesion was positively correlated to the constructive conflict style and negatively correlated to the destructive style, while both task and social cohesion were negatively correlated to the destructive conflict style. The study also revealed that the integrative (collaborative) style was the one most often used in handling conflict. As for cohesion, all four dimensions had moderately high scores.

Evans and Eys (2014) emphasise that group processes in a sports team create a contradictory mix of competing for individual members' goals and cooperating for joint tasks and outcomes. Teams must balance the need of the individual members to voice their personal differences with the need to build group cohesion (Engleberg & Wynn, 2007). On the one hand, groups with low levels of cohesion are less productive and less satisfied, but on the other, very cohesive groups can slip into groupthink. Avoiding conflict and focusing on cohesion often leads to bad decision making, while too many (badly managed) conflicts can decrease cohesion. It seems that only constructive conflicts lead to a desirable level of both conflict and cohesion (Engleberg & Wynn, 2007).

Using longitudinal data, Tekleab and associates (2009) confirmed that conflict management not only influences team cohesion but also modifies the impact (either positive or negative) of task and relationship conflict on team cohesion. Leo and associates (2015) argue that conflict and cohesion together create team efficacy. In other words, when a conflict is favourably resolved, the cohesion between team members is enhanced, which increases team confidence and performance. Thus, constructive conflict helps build team cohesiveness. Several studies (Sullivan & Feltz, 2003; Sullivan & Short, 2011; Smith et al., 2013; and Džaferović, 2018) showed that task cohesion had a considerable positive relationship with positive conflict management (communicating in a constructive way regarding interpersonal differences), and a negative relationship with negative conflict management (treating relational differences in a destructive way).

Our third aim was to examine the relationship between conflict and cohesion in interactive sports teams. Based on the above, we put forward our final hypotheses:

H3a – Collaborative conflict management has a positive correlation with cohesion; and

H3b – The competing conflict management style has a negative correlation with cohesion.

METHODS

Participants

Non-probability, purposive sampling was employed in this study. The participants were 205 professional team sports players from Serbia, mainly from Belgrade. The distribution of the players according to the sports they are involved in is as follows: basketball (N=67), handball (N=51), water polo (N=34), volleyball (N=28), and football/soccer (N=25). As to their age groups, the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 (51.7%), between the ages of 26 and 30 (43.9%), and older than 30 (4.4%); 66.3% of the participants were male, and 33.7% were female. The data was collected during February and March 2021.

Design and procedure

All participants filled in the questionnaire before training, at their respective sporting grounds. The athletes read and completed the survey on their own.

Instruments

The data was collected via two questionnaires: the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (ROCI – II) and the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ).

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory – II, created by Rahim (1983), is extensively used to assess the five styles of conflict management - collaborating, competing, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding (e.g., Brewer et al., 2002; in sports setting Balyan, 2018). It comprises 28 statements on a five-point Likert scale (7 for the integrating/collaborating style, 6 for obliging/accommodating, 4 for compromising, 5 for competing, and 6 for the avoiding style), with higher scores denoting the higher use of a style. The original questionnaire contains forms A, B, and C to determine how organisational members manage conflicts with their supervisors, subordinates, and peers respectively. In our research, only form C was employed, so as to measure conflict with peers (other team players). Some responses were reverse coded, so that high scores always indicated the higher use of a given conflict style, and mean scores were calculated for each style.

All 28 questions of the original English version of ROCI - II were translated into Serbian. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the ROCI – II questionnaire was not used to measure conflict in sports teams in Serbia.

The Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ), created by Carron et al. (1985), was used to collect data on cohesion. It is widely used to determine adult perceptions of cohesion in sports teams. It categorises cohe-

sion into two subgroups: group integration and individual attractions to the group. They are further divided into task and social issues, which results in four final dimensions. They are: (a) Group Integration – Task (GI Task), denoting the group’s integration based on joint goals; (b) Group Integration – Social (GI Social), denoting the group’s integration based on social interaction; (c) Individual Attractions to the Group – Task (IATG Task), denoting individual attraction to the group’s tasks; and (d) Individual Attractions to the Group – Social (IATG Social), denoting individual attraction to the group as a whole. The 5-point Likert scale was used, with 5 meaning “I strongly agree”, and 1 meaning “I strongly disagree”.

Several studies were based on a modified GEQ, due to different reasons. For example, Carless and De Paola (2000) reduced it to 10 items to measure overall cohesion. Pulido and associates (2015) also adapted the GEQ in the study they carried out on Spanish sports. Their research proved the shorter version of the GEQ, a version with twelve items, to be valid and reliable. In our study, we used the full 18-questions survey. However, a 5-point Likert scale was employed instead of the original 9-point Likert scale in order to make the GEQ consistent and easier to compare to the other questionnaire. Accordingly, in our questionnaire 5 signifies “I strongly agree”, and 1 signifies “I strongly disagree”.

RESULTS

A composite reliability of the used instruments was computed for each conflict management style (Table 1). The results show that all composite reliabilities are above 0.70, which is the lower limit of acceptability recommended by Nunnally (1979).

Table 1. Reliability statistics for subscales of Conflict management style instrument

Reliability statistics	Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
Collaborating style	.82	7
Accommodating style	.74	6
Competing style	.83	5
Avoiding style	.84	6
Compromising style	.77	4

For the GEQ scale, the sample demonstrated internal consistency with respect to all four dimensions of cohesion (IATG-S, IATG-T, GI-S and GI-T), with Cronbach’s alpha values above the prescribed threshold of 0.70 (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability statistics for subscales: IATG-S, IATG-T, GI-S, GI-T

Reliability statistics	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
IATG-S	.87	5
IATG-T	.82	4
GI-S	.89	4
GI-T	.91	5

Note: GI-S = Group Integration Social. GI-T = Group Integration Task.
 IATG-S = Individual Attraction to Group-Social.
 IATG-T = Individual Attraction to Group-Task.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the five conflict management styles and the four dimensions of cohesion considered by this study. The data shows that athletes achieved the highest score on the collaborating style ($M=4.41$, $SD=.61$), and moderately high scores of all dimensions of cohesion (higher than 4.0). Athletes achieved the lowest score on the competing style ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.06$).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics – management styles and dimensions of cohesion

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min	Max	M	SD	zSkew	zKurt
Collaborating style C	205	2	5	4.41	0.61	-1.04	0.84
Accommodating style C	205	1.75	5	3.74	0.63	-0.16	-0.05
Competing style C	205	1	5	3.03	1.06	-0.15	-0.69
Avoiding style C	205	1	5	3.28	0.95	-0.32	-0.43
Compromising style C	205	1.5	5	3.94	0.70	-0.49	-0.01
ATGS	205	2.6	5	4.21	0.61	-0.40	-0.72
ATGT	205	3	5	4.39	0.53	-0.50	-0.63
GIS	205	2.5	5	4.03	0.61	-0.01	-0.92
GIT	205	2.4	5	4.05	0.70	-0.32	-0.82

Note. n – sample size, M – Mean, SD – standard deviation, $zSkew$ – standardised skewness, $zKurt$ – standardised kurtosis, GI-S = Group Integration Social, GI-T = Group Integration Task, IATG-S = Individual Attraction to Group-Social, IATG-T = Individual Attraction to Group-Task.

Analyses were carried out to calculate the means and bivariate correlations of the main constructs related to conflicts and cohesion. Significant relations are shown in Table 4. All factor loadings are statistically significant at $p < .05$. The collaborating, accommodating, and compromising styles are all significantly related to all four forms of cohesion, with the collaborating and accommodating styles showing a strong relationship, and the compromising style less so. The competing style is negatively related to all four dimensions of cohesion, while the avoiding style shows mixed results. It is significantly related only to IATG-T.

Table 4. Bivariate correlations between cohesion and conflicts

	IATG-S	IATG-T	GI-S	GI-T
Collaborating style C	.363**	.322**	.368**	.375**
Accommodating style C	.270**	.362**	.178*	.373**
Competing style C	-.093	-.082	-.09	-.248**
Avoiding style C	.054	.187**	.039	.033
Compromising style C	.174*	.195**	.162*	.236**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$, GI-S = Group Integration Social, GI-T = Group Integration Task, IATG-S = Individual Attraction to Group-Social, IATG-T = Individual Attraction to Group-Task.

For the purpose of testing hypotheses H3a and H3b, two linear regression models were calculated. Both models, the Social Cohesion model ($F(5, 204) = 10.847, p < .00$) and the Task Cohesion model ($F(5, 204) = 17.979, p < .00$) showed statistical significance in predicting the dependent variables.

Linear regression analysis (Table 5) further clarifies the correlation analysis, and supports hypotheses H3a and H3b. The analysis shows the measure of association (R^2) between the variables. The collaborating style can serve as a statistically significant predictor of social cohesion (calculated as a mean value of IATG-S and GI-S, where $R^2 = .21$), while the collaborating, accommodating, and competing styles can serve as statistically significant predictors of task cohesion (mean value of IATG-T and GI-T, where $R^2 = .31$).

Table 5. Linear regression models – Social cohesion and Task Cohesion

Predictors	Social cohesion			Task cohesion		
	β	SE	t	β	SE	t
Collaborating style	.38**	.07	5.53	.28**	.07	4.35
Accommodating style	.12	.06	1.93	.28**	.06	4.73
Competing style	-.06	.03	-1.81	-.12**	.03	-3.89
Avoiding style	.02	.04	.5	.02	.04	.65
Compromising style	-.09	.06	-1.49	-.05	.06	-.83

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

DISCUSSION

The aims of this paper were to: (a) identify the most frequently used conflict management style; (b) determine the level of cohesion; and (c) examine the relationship between conflict and cohesion in interactive sports teams.

The findings confirm our first hypothesis, which states that collaborating is the most often used conflict management style, and that competing is the least often used conflict management style among players in

interactive sports teams. Out of five conflict management styles, collaborating had the highest mean value ($M=4.41$, $SD=.61$), and competing had the lowest mean value ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.6$). This is in accord with the work of Sullivan and Feltz (2001), which proved collaborating to be the most frequently used style in handling conflict. Our results also support the studies of Evans and Eys (2015), and Van de Vegt et al. (2001), who found that interdependence was negatively related to competing against teammates. This means that, in interactive sports teams, players depend on their teammates to achieve their joint tasks and outcomes. Interdependence helps create good relationships and cooperation.

As anticipated by our second hypothesis, our results show high perceived levels of cohesion among members of interactive sports teams. All four dimensions of cohesion had a score higher than 4.0. This is consistent with the results of Brisimis et al. (2018), which showed high levels of all four dimensions of cohesion in the same sports referred to in our study. It is also in accord with Cotterill's (2012) claim that sports that require more collaboration will also require higher cohesion.

Our hypothesis about the relationship between the conflict management style and cohesion was confirmed. All five conflict management styles represent statistically significant models for explaining social ($R^2=.21$) and task cohesion ($R^2=.31$). As expected, our findings show that the collaborating style has a statistically significant relation to all four dimensions of cohesion, and represents a significant individual predictor of both social and task cohesion (Table 5). As shown by previous studies, mentioned above (e.g., Sullivan & Feltz, 2003; Leo et al., 2015), constructive conflict, i.e. cooperation and the exchange of information for mutual benefit, maintains team cohesion and vice versa. When a conflict is favourably solved, it increases cohesion and, consequently, team spirit and performance.

Out of four cohesion dimensions, the competing style has a statistically significant negative correlation only to GI-T, and represents a negative predictor of task cohesion. Not surprisingly, if team players need to work together to win, it would be counterproductive to use the competing style, i.e. it would be counterproductive for team members to take care solely of their own interests and ignore the needs of others. As shown above, sports that require more collaboration will also require higher cohesion.

Our findings corroborate the work of Sullivan and Feltz (2001), who found that collaborating corresponds to a high level of in-group cohesion. They also support the findings presented in other studies (Sullivan & Feltz, 2003; Sullivan & Short, 2011; Smith et al., 2013), which demonstrated a positive relationship between task cohesion and positive conflict management (collaborating), and a negative relationship between task cohesion and negative conflict management (competing).

The compromising and accommodating styles also show a strong positive relation with all cohesion dimensions. Both are conciliatory modes of handling conflict, and it is to be expected that people who have to work together on a common task will try to oblige their teammates or find a compromise in order to solve a problem, if possible.

The avoiding style shows mixed results. It is significantly related only to IATG-T. One explanation could be that IATG-T is defined as an interaction of the motives of individual players to stay in the group to achieve common goals, "individual members' feelings about the group, their personal role involvement, and involvement with other group members" (Carron et al., 1985, p. 248). If members are personally involved and have positive feelings about the team, they will want to avoid any conflict if they want to achieve the collective task.

In addition to competing, which we have already shown is not an optimal way of managing conflict between interdependent players, avoiding is also not a constructive way of handling conflicts within a team. This is because conflicts stay unresolved and can damage relationships in the long run.

CONCLUSION

This paper investigated the perception of cohesion and conflict in different interactive sports teams (basketball, football/soccer, handball, volleyball, and water polo). Our results showed moderately high levels of cohesion in all sports. The findings revealed that cooperation is the most frequently used conflict management style, and that competing is the least frequently used style in interactive sports teams. We also found a positive correlation between cohesion and the collaborative conflict management style, and a negative correlation between cohesion and the competing style.

Our study was limited to professional team players in Serbia, with five sports included. The sample would have been more relevant if it had involved more participants. Including athletes from other sports, with different levels of interdependence, could contribute to a more complete understanding of the relationship between conflict and cohesion. There could also be a broader, international study which would include players from several countries in the region, and enable a cross-cultural comparison of players' perceptions of conflict and cohesion. Future research could also be directed toward investigating gender differences in sports teams, considering the growing body of literature on the influence of gender differences on the choice of the conflict resolution style.

As seen above, both conflict and cohesion can influence overall team functioning and performance. This study could have practical implications for sports teams and their coaches, and could help them manage intragroup conflict and increase cohesion in order to boost team performance.

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ИНТРАГРУПНИ КОНФЛИКТ И КОХЕЗИЈА У ИНТЕРАКТИВНИМ СПОРТСКИМ ТИМОВИМА

Гордана Добријевић, Славко Алачковић

Универзитет Сингидунум, Пословни факултет, Београд, Србија

Резиме

Конфликти су уобичајена појава међу људима који живе, раде или проводе неко време заједно, због разлика у годинама, полу, раси, мишљењима, ставовима, и култури, као и због супротстављених интереса. Међузависност је један од узрока конфликта у групама и организацијама. У спортским тимовима она се углавном заснива на заједничком задатку и/или резултату. Што људи више морају да раде заједно, већа је могућност избијања конфликта. Постоје различити стилови управљања конфликтима. Рахим (2011) разликује две димензије управљања конфликтима: бригу за себе и бригу за друге. Њиховом комбинацијом добијамо пет стилова управљања конфликтима: (1) сарадња или кооперативни (енг. win/win) стил, који подразумева сарадњу и размену информација између страна у сукобу; (2) прилагођавање, које подразумева малу брзину за себе и великодушност према другима; (3) надметање или win/lose стил, које укључује само бригу за сопствене интересе; (4) избегавање, које представља повлачење из ситуације и понекад негирање постојања конфликта; и (5) компромис, који подразумева налажење на пола пута, уступке и поделу ресурса.

Кохезија је процес који држи чланове групе на окупу. Може да се заснива на заједничком задатку и/или на међусобним односима чланова групе. Досадашња истраживања су показала високи ниво кохезије у интерактивним спортским тимовима.

Тимови морају да направе равнотежу између потребе чланова да изразе своје мишљење и потребе за стварањем групне кохезије. Групе са ниским нивоом кохезије су мање продуктивне и мање задовољне, док групе са врло високим нивоом кохезије могу да западну у групну заслепљеност. Избегавање конфликта и стално наглашавање кохезије често води до лоших одлука, али превише конфликта може да смањи кохезију.

У складу са циљевима истраживања, постављене су следеће хипотезе: сарадња је најчешће коришћени, а надметање најређе коришћени стил управљања конфликтима у интерактивним спортским тимовима; чланови интерактивних спортских тимова имају високи перципирани ниво кохезије; кооперативни стил управљања конфликтима и кохезија имају позитивну корелацију; конкуритивни стил управљања конфликтима и кохезија имају негативну корелацију.

У истраживању је учествовало 205 професионалних спортиста из пет спортова: кошарка, рукомет, ватерполо, одбојка и фудбал. Подаци су сакупљени путем Рахимовог инвентара организационог конфликта – ИИ (РОЦИИ – ИИ) и Упитника групног окружења (ГЕО). Резултати су показали умерено високи ниво кохезије у свим спортовима. Од пет стилова управљања конфликтима, сарадња (кооперативни стил) се користи највише, а надметање (конкуритивни стил) најмање. Такође, утврђена је позитивна веза између кохезије и кооперативног стила, као и негативна веза између кохезије и конкуритивног стила управљања конфликтима.