

# Project Team Cohesion: When Goals Matter Less Than Intrapreneurship

*Coesão da Equipe de Projeto: Quando as Metas Importam Menos que o Intraempreendedorismo*

 **Alberto Alves<sup>1</sup>**

 **Flavio Santino Bizarrias<sup>2</sup>**

 **Isabel Cristina Scafuto<sup>3</sup>**

 **Renato Penha<sup>4</sup>**

 **Luciano Ferreira da Silva<sup>5</sup>**



## Resumo

Projetos ágeis exigem equipes autogerenciadas com coesão suficiente para atingir seus objetivos. Propomos que as equipes de projeto se fortaleçam por meio do intraempreendedorismo e da orientação por metas. Este estudo visa avaliar como o intraempreendedorismo e a orientação a metas de um indivíduo influenciam a coesão da equipe, com a agilidade em projetos atuando como mediadora. Uma revisão sistemática da literatura foi conduzida para fundamentar o arcabouço teórico, complementada por modelagem de equações estruturais e por análise de mediação para testes condicionais. Os resultados indicam que o intraempreendedorismo tem maior impacto na coesão da equipe do que a orientação por metas em ambientes ágeis.

**Palavras-chave:** coesão da equipe, orientação a metas, intraempreendedorismo, projetos ágeis, gerenciamento de projetos

## Abstract

Agile projects require self-managed teams with enough cohesion to achieve their objectives. We propose that project teams can strengthen themselves through intrapreneurship and goal orientation. This study aims to evaluate how an individual's intrapreneurship and goal orientation influence team cohesion, with project agility acting as a mediator. A systematic literature review was conducted to support the theoretical framework, complemented by structural equation modeling and mediation analysis for conditional testing. The results indicate that intrapreneurship has a greater impact on team cohesion than goal orientation in agile environments.

**Keywords:** team cohesion, goal orientation, intrapreneurship, agile projects, project management

<sup>1</sup> albertoalves@uni9.edu.br, Universidade Nove de Julho – São Paulo/SP [Brasil]

<sup>2</sup> flavioxsp@hotmail.com, Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing – ESPM, São Paulo/SP [Brasil]

<sup>3</sup> isabelscafuto@gmail.com, Universidade Nove de Julho – São Paulo/SP [Brasil]

<sup>4</sup> renato.penha.12@gmail.com, Universidade Nove de Julho – São Paulo/SP [Brasil]

<sup>5</sup> lf\_silvabr@yahoo.com.br, Universidade Nove de Julho – São Paulo/SP [Brasil]

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## Introduction

Organizations have been adopting agile project methodologies because the business environment is dynamic, characterized by rapid economic, behavioral, and environmental changes (Dabić et al., 2020), with a higher degree of complexity of variables and increased uncertainty, demanding a constant adaptation of the organizational structure and the compatible business model (Boustani & Boustani, 2017). The long-term success of these companies depends on their ability to mobilize their resources flexibly, improve the efficiency of their use, take risks, and explore new areas (Gonthier & Chirita, 2019). Organizations are hard-pressed to increase their competitiveness in dynamic, turbulent markets (Sousa et al., 2020), where agile project management approaches are a suitable way to navigate volatile environments.

Agile project development tools provide flexibility and increase collaboration among team members (Özkan & Mishra, 2019) and are widely used by development teams to solve complex problems that are subject to constant alteration and change (Klimczyk & Madeyski, 2020). Having better-prepared, more cohesive, and self-managed teams is a crucial asset, consistent with the agile approach, for addressing these challenges.

Forming qualified teams is another challenge for most companies (Costa et al., 2020). The formation of the project team is essential to enable efficient and effective project management (Chau et al., 2009). As a result, in project management, team performance efficiency is generally associated with a balance in team roles (Liubchenko & Sulimova, 2017). The project management success cycle becomes more likely as collaboration among project team members improves, driven by increased trust (Bond-Barnard et al., 2018).

The success of the project product, on the other hand, is the result of the work of an experienced and expert project team (Trzeciak, 2021). The successful completion of a project depends primarily on the project manager's role and skills, in cooperation with the project team members (Vaníčková, 2021). For Hussain et al. (2021), specifically in software development projects, the success of each project depends on the correct selection of team members to ensure that the desired requirements are met.

When there is cohesion in teams, cooperation is better promoted because cooperators have stronger bonds, i.e., group cohesion facilitates positive visualization of results and promotes cooperation (Qu et al., 2019; van Gerwen et al., 2018). Team cohesion is the perceived degree to which the team is attractive to its members and the closeness of interpersonal ties among team members (Fung, 2014). The team builder needs to devote considerable effort to fostering group cohesion to achieve the team's learning objectives (Zhong & Norton, 2019).

Teams are more cohesive when they understand one another better, have conflict management skills, increase self-awareness, and communicate effectively among their members (Joubert & Swart, 2019). On the other hand, teams with individual dominance amplify conflicts, reduce collaboration, and lead to lower group outcomes (Trischler et al., 2018). Team cohesion is higher when team members demonstrate greater emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Increased team cohesion

leads to better team performance and participation in other projects and lines of business within the organization (Black et al., 2019).

Project team objectives can be set as goals to guide their actions. In this study, we consider goals as a function of the learning provided, the proof of the result achieved, and the avoidance of negative consequences in accomplishing something. Learning goal orientation is positively associated with knowledge assimilation and recognition of the value of team members' knowledge, whereas performance goal orientation is positively associated with recognition (Ojo & Raman, 2015). In contrast, individuals with a goal-avoidance orientation seek to distance themselves from negative performance judgments or disapproval. At the same time, the individual plays a dominant role, as, in addition to the organization's goal and goal orientation, their characteristics manifest.

In today's turbulent business environment, organizational renewal is critical. Employees are encouraged to act as intrapreneurs (Piecuch & Szczygieł, 2021) and instigate change from the bottom up. Corporate entrepreneurship can continuously revive widespread intrapreneurship (Deprez et al., 2018). Intrapreneurial employees and intrapreneurial projects are essential drivers of strategic renewal within companies (Rigtering & Weitzel, 2013). Intellectual capital plays the leading role in the process of intrapreneurship as a leveraged resource. Intrapreneurship is an individual-level concept (Blanka, 2019). Intrapreneurial behavior is characterized by an individual's favorable profile, opportunistic sensitivity, and ability to learn and develop ideas on exploiting or pursuing opportunities (Kibirango et al., 2018). It is a means by which companies can extend their employees' capabilities (Felizardo et al., 2021).

## Theoretical Background

### Team Cohesion

To improve quality, reduce costs, enhance service, increase adaptability to an increasingly volatile environment, and reduce time spent creating new products, organizations must convert their work teams into more cohesive teams (Joubert & Swart, 2019). Vegt et al. (2018) found that team performance feedback led to greater task commitment and perceived performance, contributing to team cohesion, while elements of personal profiles increased non-work-related conversations among team members.

For Shaikh (2021), teams are more cohesive when formed from specific criteria for this purpose; on the one hand, group work skills: 1. interpersonal social skills, 2. conflict management skills, 3. collaborative problem-solving skills, 4. individual self-management skills, and 5. personality. On the other hand, task work skills are observed: 1. project management skills, 2. group work skills, 3. software development process skills, and 4. analysis and reflection work. This is consistent with a dual and balanced team-building process.

Cohesion serves two primary functions within groups: affective and instrumental. These functions serve to characterize the structure of team cohesion in four related but distinct aspects: interpersonal belonging, group belonging, social elements, and cohesion task (Severt & Estrada, 2015). New product project teams

generate insights for project success, and new product development is driven by the information they provide through social cohesion. High levels of group cohesion lead to improved performance through better communication, reduced conflict, greater empathy, and higher levels of organizational citizenship (Carbonell & Rodríguez Escudero, 2019). Group cohesion is also positively related to achieving management goals (Wang et al., 2006).

### Agile approach

Companies' strategic vision leads them to implement projects to improve their adaptive capabilities. Organizations with limited capacity to develop project management skills are at a disadvantage (Siriram, 2012). In this regard, agile methodologies have stood out, and their use in project management is widely adopted in organizations to address volatility and uncertainty in business challenges (PMI, 2021). The development of agile planning differs significantly from traditional project management (Aoufi et al., 2021; Eder et al., 2014). There is a single project plan in the standard model, which covers the end product, the activity package, and the total project time. In agile approaches, there is no standard for describing activities. Project teams must be creative in conveying the client's exact needs, highlighting the priority of what must be executed (Eder et al., 2014). In agile approaches characterized by flexibility and adaptation, adjustments in scope are standard, allowing the observation of iterations aligned with the updated content (Salaou et al., 2021).

Organizational agility requires consideration of requirements management, structural changes, and stakeholder interests to meet evolving expectations (Shrivastava & Rathod, 2019). Management takes responsibility for monitoring and, consequently, decision-making on any deviations (Walter, 2021). More pragmatic than traditional methods, agile approaches allow for being closer to the customer and involve them as much as possible.

Agile methods exhibit greater responsiveness and adaptability in meeting requirements (Laval et al., 2021). In agile management, the client evaluates, prioritizes, adds to, or changes the project's final product based on experience with the results achieved. Learning is fast and continuous. The team changes activities to obtain the results proposed by the client. In contrast, in traditional management, the project manager evaluates, prioritizes, adds to, or changes project activities to ensure the results comply with the project scope signed with the client.

Agility involves faster adaptation to external and internal environments and can result in improved operational performance, quality, and customer satisfaction (Newmark et al., 2018). Superior business performance is a core objective of any company in an unpredictable environment. Organizational agility is a key to thriving in this environment. Four categories of agility have been identified: agility drivers, agility enablers, agility resources, and dimensions (Walter, 2021).

The performance of agile teams is also consistent with the changing challenges of organizations. A self-directed task-allocation method in which teams and individuals assign and choose their own jobs is considered a hallmark practice of agile teams characterized by autonomy, self-organization, and self-assignment (Masood et al.,

2020). Complementing this, the organization must consider the flexibility that arises from agile project teaming and a focus on human relationships (Korpysa et al., 2020).

### Goal orientation

Employees have personal motivations that lead to varying performance in different situations, regardless of their profiles or attitudes toward team cohesion. Dweck (1986) and Elliot and Dweck (1983), identified that goal orientation could be motivated by learning goals, in which individuals seek to broaden their skills by assimilating and practicing something new.

Alternatively, goal orientation is driven by performance goals. Favorable evaluations of their competencies are considered a priority for individuals who follow this direction to avoid negative feedback. Elliot and Dweck (1988) advanced the view that individuals oriented toward learning goals continue to seek to master new material. The enthusiasm generated by knowledge makes these individuals seek new challenges. Individuals oriented toward performance goals prefer to stay away and avoid taking on new activities; the risk factor is predominant and can lead to low competence.

There is an increase in understanding and growth in team challenges among learning goal-oriented individuals, as learning behaviors and information quality enhance the group's resilience (Brykman & King, 2021). Learning goal orientation is also strongly and positively related to psychological empowerment (García-Juan et al., 2020). To the extent that individuals thrive when they satisfy their psychological needs (Zeijen et al., 2020), high learning goal orientation has positive effects that extend beyond job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2019).

Performance-oriented teams are motivated to share procedures and work interdependently to accomplish tasks. This way, they produce positive results (Mehta et al., 2009; Gong et al., 2013). While learning, goal-oriented teams understand their activities, foster information Exchange, and are open to creative team members; the results are positively related to performance (Gong et al., 2013).

Project teams benefit when they are goal-oriented in both performance and learning; creative information exchange among members contributes to project performance (Alexander & Van Knippenberg, 2014; Chi & Huang, 2014; Gong et al., 2013). Dragoni (2005) found that more frequent interactions among team members lead to the adaptation of personal perceptions of goal orientation to situational demands. Pursuing goals strengthens teams and fosters an agile project management environment.

- H<sub>1</sub> Learning orientation will have a positive and significant effect on team cohesion;
- H<sub>1a</sub> Learning orientation will have a positive and significant effect on agility;
- H<sub>1'</sub> Agility will mediate the relationship between learning orientation and team cohesion.

At the other end of the learning goal orientation and proving performance orientation is the performance-avoidance goal orientation, in which the individual



facing difficulties has the incentive to abandon the task to avoid appearing to have low competence and to avoid negative judgments; individuals oriented to avoid performance tend to give up activities when encountering difficulties in their execution (VandeWalle, 1997).

The avoidance goal orientation is also observed in teams and is characteristic of distancing from the activity to avoid making mistakes and receiving negative judgments. This way compromises open communication and continuous and mutual learning, keeping teams away from new projects, which have higher risks (Gong et al., 2013; Chi & Huang, 2014; Alexander & Van Knippenberg, 2014). Thus, we establish the following hypotheses of the study.

H<sub>2</sub> Avoidance orientation will have a negative and significant effect on team cohesion;

H<sub>2a</sub> Avoidance orientation will have a negative and significant effect on agility;

H<sub>2</sub> Agility will mediate the relationship between avoidance orientation and team cohesion.

In the same direction as learning goal orientation, proving performance goal orientation has the role of contributing to the execution of activities in organizations, with its specific characteristics, in the case of performance goal-oriented teams, members have high motivation to carry out processes and thus obtain positive results (Mehta et al., 2009; Gong et al., 2013), in project teams performance is a result of free information exchange (Alexander & Van Knippenberg, 2014; Chi & Huang, 2014; Gong et al., 2013) and studies indicate that overall project success has a positive relationship with performance goal orientation. Given these arguments, hypotheses aligned with the previous ones were formulated, thus concluding the dimensions of the goal orientation construct.

H<sub>3+</sub> Proving orientation will have a positive and significant effect on team cohesion;

H<sub>3a+</sub> Proof orientation will have a positive and significant effect on agility;

H<sub>3'</sub> Agility will mediate the relationship between proven orientation and team cohesion.

### **Intrapreneurship**

For Antoncic and Hisrich (2003), intrapreneurship is an integrative concept based on previous theories of corporate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation; for them, intrapreneurship has a multidimensional concept with distinct and related components: new ventures, businesses, products/services, and processes; self-renewal; risk-taking; proactivity and competitive aggressiveness. Moreover, the determinants of intrapreneurial behavior include skill set, perception of own capabilities, relationship with the organization, motivation, experience, satisfaction, and initiative (Neessen et al., 2019).

Intrapreneurship is a field of research that takes an individual-level perspective, creating a deeper understanding of employees' active involvement and creative ideas

in a company's organizational and business renewal. Intrapreneurship is a broad concept influenced by administrative aspects that can facilitate or inhibit entrepreneurial profiles (Lang & Baltes, 2019). There has been a growing interest in intrapreneurial capabilities (Klofsten et al., 2021). The current business environment motivates individuals to pursue an intrapreneurial approach to capitalize on new business opportunities amid intense market competition (Giner et al., 2020). In challenging times, the organization's need to remain in the market is intensified by employees who exhibit intrapreneurial characteristics (Chandler & Krajcsák, 2021).

Organizations need to seek new strategies to improve the efficiency of their activities. One such alternative approach to contemporary organizations and their management is the concept of intraorganizational entrepreneurship, or intrapreneurship (Maximov et al., 2019). Similarly, employees' intrapreneurial behavior has become strategically crucial for organizational performance (Neessen et al., 2019). Motivated by a gap and scarce and fragmented studies on the topic of intrapreneurship, Gawke et al. (2019) validated a scale based on employees' strategic behaviors focused on creating new business for the organization (i.e., risk-taking behavior) and improving the ability to react to internal and external advances (i.e., strategic renewal behavior). Intrapreneurial behavior is associated with extroversion, openness to experiences, and emotional stability. In contrast, personality traits such as friendliness and meticulousness are negative (Farrukh et al., 2016).

Intrapreneurial behaviors among employees can emerge despite limited time and resources to carry out projects. In addition, discretion at work, mutual trust, and the quality of the relationship between employees and top managers are the most valued factors for intrapreneurs (Badoiu et al., 2020). The combination of employees' ability to conceive new ideas, proactivity, and risk-taking behavior is an individual and organizational-level factor that promotes intrapreneurial behavior (Naksung & Piansoongnern, 2020). Intrapreneurship fosters team cohesion, creating a dynamic, action-oriented environment consistent with the agile approach.

H<sub>4+</sub> Intrapreneurship will have a positive and significant effect on team cohesion;

H<sub>4a+</sub> Intrapreneurship will have a positive and significant effect on agility;

Similarly, the agile approach fosters an environment conducive to innovation and seeks more dynamic performance in project and team management, thereby stimulating team cohesion.

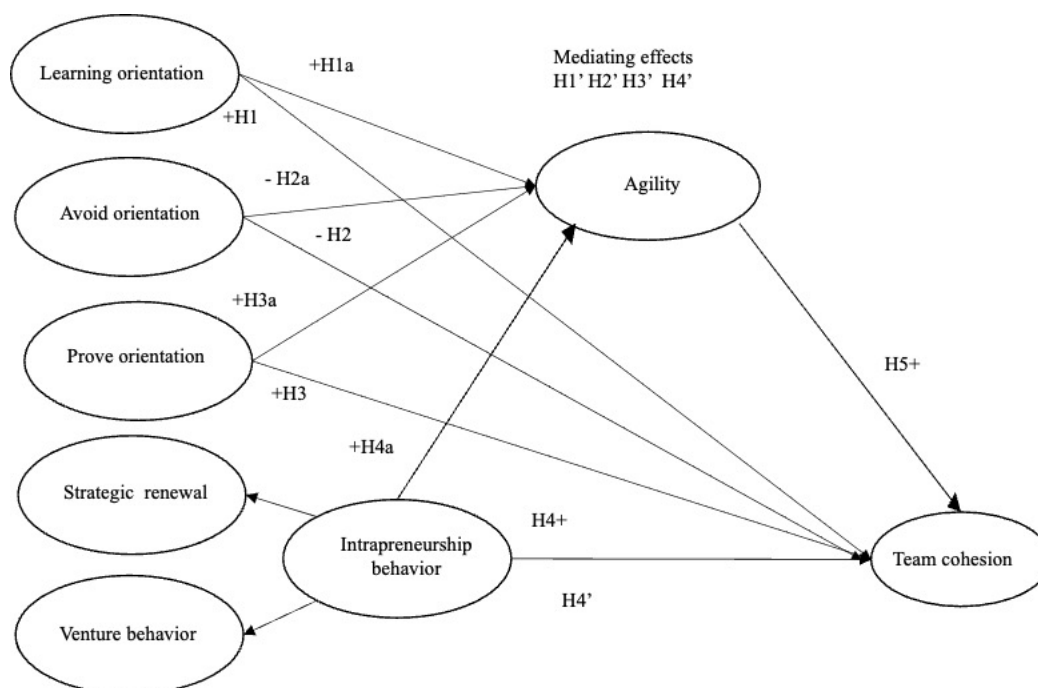
H<sub>4'</sub> Agility will mediate the relationship between intrapreneurship and team cohesion;

H<sub>5+</sub> Agility will have a positive and significant effect on team cohesion.

In a consolidated form, the study's hypotheses are shown in Figure 1.

**Fig. 1.**

### Research Model



Source: The authors

The model proposed in Figure 1 presents intrapreneurial profile and goal orientation as antecedents of team cohesion, both conditioned by the degree of existing agility within the project team. It is expected that this set of individual aspects will stimulate more cohesive project teams. On the one hand, in the joint pursuit of learning and achievement goals, the support group and the individual avoid receiving negative feedback; furthermore, the motivation to undertake within the organization, whether with new ideas or new products.

## Method

### Systematic review of literature

A systematic literature review (SLR) was initially conducted to identify factors influencing team cohesion. This initial investigation examined the antecedents of team cohesion and provided an overview of discussions on this topic (Siddaway et al., 2019). The search terms were "team cohesion," "group cohesion," and "cohesive team," linked to "project management." As exclusion criteria, only management-related articles in English published in high-impact journals were adopted. The search for these terms in the Scopus database yielded 198 studies, which were analyzed in full.

As a result, the lack of studies pointed to the individual's motivations for team cohesion was identified. However, studies did emerge suggesting individual traits stimulating team cohesion, such as self-efficacy (Black et al., 2019), trust, and satisfaction (Fung, 2014), although team cohesion is something relevant to organizational performance already identified in the business literature (Wang et al., 2006; Vegt et al., 2018), and in psychology (Severt & Estradam, 2015). This absence



of studies that could address antecedent elements of teams cohesion, even more so in projects, signaled a gap to be addressed, motivating this study.

The team cohesion literature generally addresses the pursuit of essential team outcomes, as in sports teams (Ling & Hien, 2014). This motivated the search for a new RSL that could relate goal orientation to project management. The investigation was conducted with the terms "goal orientation," "prove orientation," and "avoid orientation," with the same exclusion criteria as the previous search. The results yielded 181 articles, indicating an opportunity to examine the relationship between goal orientation and team cohesion in the organizational context. In this study, project team management is examined.

Finally, insofar as the agile approach demands self-managed teams capable of proposing innovative solutions to address the changing organizational environment, we suggest including intrapreneurship as an antecedent of team cohesion. Intrapreneurship encourages innovation and teamwork (Badoiu, 2019). A new RSL on intrapreneurship brought up 82 articles unrelated to project management.

These literature reviews signaled that, although not yet evaluated in the existing literature, the relationship between goal orientation, intrapreneurship, and team cohesion may be beneficial to project management. The goal-oriented mindset is characteristic of project teams, which, within an agile environment, aligns with the intrapreneurial profile of individuals. Agile environments demand innovation, stimulating coherence with the dynamic techniques of agile in project management.

### Quantitative research Procedures

Initially, the data obtained were evaluated for univariate and multivariate outliers using box plots and the Mahalanobis distance, and for multicollinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF; Hair et al., 2009). Then the existence of bias common to the method was observed using Harman's single-factor test (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). These procedures sought to estimate the presence of uncontrolled factors that could affect the data obtained before analyzing the study hypotheses. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted as a technique, and the Sobel test for mediation evaluation (Sobel, 1982) was used. The SEM followed the procedures proposed by Ringle et al. (2014). The respondents were approached via LinkedIn.

For the proposed model, the measures used were the Gawke, Gorgievski, and Bakker (2017) intrapreneurship scale, with the dimensions Strategic Renewal Behavior and Venture behavior. Team cohesion was measured using the Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001) scale. To measure Goal Orientation, the VandeWalle (1997) scale was adopted, with the dimensions of Learning Goal Orientation, Prove (Performance Goal) Orientation, and Avoid (Performance Goal) Orientation. Finally, the team's level of Agility was measured using Rigby, Sutherland, and Noble's (2018) instrument. All items were anchored on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

## Results

### Sample

The study sample comprised individuals involved in projects. A total of 177 responses were obtained, of which 69 (38.9%) were active in traditional projects, 61 (34.4%) in hybrid projects, and 47 (26.5%) in agile projects. The respondents have 10.8 years of project experience, with an average team size of 10.7 people.

These results suggest a highly qualified sample for the research, composed of individuals with extensive project management experience, a diverse range of management approaches and techniques, and 46% of whom are project managers. We excluded 30 individuals as outliers and two items for high multicollinearity (VIF: COE\_EQ08 = 5.938 and COE\_EQ09 = 5.139). Harman's single-factor test (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012) indicated that no common method bias occurred (variance explained = 22.73%, KMO = 0.844,  $\chi^2 = 5.436$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

### Convergent and discriminant validity

For the convergent validity search, 16 items were removed, either because their loadings were below 0.708 or even negative. Insofar as the average variance extracted (AVEs) of a construct is observed through the average of the square roots of the item loadings, values below the limit take the construct explanation to levels below 50%. In a complementary manner, the result of the AVEs was observed, and the Fornell-Larker criterion for correlation between constructs lower than the square root of the AVE (Hair et al., 2014). These results are shown in Table 1, along with the indicators of adjustment for variable explanation ( $R^2$ ), composite reliability (CC), and Cronbach's alpha (CA).

**Table 1**

Convergent and discriminant validity

CONSTRUCT	AVE	CC	$R^2$	AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Agility	0.584	0.918	0.15	0.898	<b>0.76</b>							
2. Learning Orientation	0.669	0.858	0	0.753	0.172	<b>0.82</b>						
3. Team Cohesion	0.615	0.888	0.275	0.846	0.405	0.394	<b>0.78</b>					
4. Prove Orientation	0.717	0.91	0	0.875	0.242	0.097	0.073	<b>0.85</b>				
5. Avoid Orientation	0.694	0.901	0	0.859	0.122	-0.11	-0.01	0.475	<b>0.83</b>			
6. Intrapreneurship Behav.	-	0.89	0	0.858	0.342	0.323	0.198	0.215	0.16	-		
7. Venture Behavior	0.615	0.864	0.81	0.791	0.342	0.286	0.182	0.292	0.197	-	<b>0.78</b>	
8. Strategic Renewal	0.637	0.875	0.819	0.81	0.275	0.298	0.174	0.097	0.092	-	0.628	<b>0.8</b>

Source: The authors

The adjustment of the data to the proposed model was satisfactory, with AVEs exceeding 50% and without confounding the constructs. This was further confirmed by the cross-loadings of the items on their respective variables (Table 2). Thus, the analysis of the study hypotheses follows.

## Hypothesis Testing

To test the study's hypotheses, a structural equation model was estimated using partial least squares, with the primary objective of assessing the model's predictive capacity for the dependent variable, team cohesion. Table 2 presents the results for the study's hypotheses.

**Table 2**

Study Hypotheses

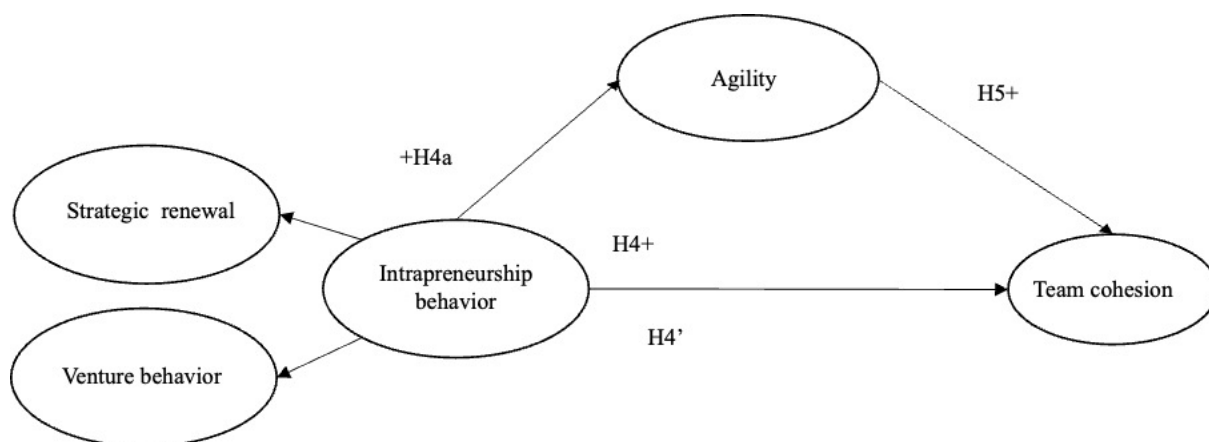
Hyp.	Relationships	$\Gamma$	sd	t-test	p	Status
H1	Learning → Team cohesion	0.346	0.081	4.251	0	Supported
H1A	Learning → Agility	0.063	0.091	0.698	0.486	Not supported
H2	Avoid or. → Team cohesion	0.006	0.106	0.053	0.958	Not supported
H2A	Avoid or. → Agility	0.001	0.105	0.006	0.995	Not supported
H3	Prove or. → Team cohesion	-0.046	0.105	0.434	0.665	Not supported
H3A	Prove or. → Agility	0.175	0.112	1.552	0.123	Not supported
H4	Intrapreneurship b. → Team cohesion	-0.03	0.079	0.379	0.705	Not supported
H4A	Intrapreneurship b → Agility	0.284	0.093	3.057	0.003	Supported
	- Intrapreneurship b → Venture behavior	0.900	0.019	46.782	0	-
	- Intrapreneurship b → Strategic renewal	0.905	0.015	61.113	0	-
H5	Agility → Team cohesion	0.366	0.092	3.981	0	Supported
H1'	Learning*Agility → Team cohesion	Sobel: 0.6877			0.491	Not supported
H2'	Avoid or*Agility → Team cohesion	Sobel: 0.005			0.995	Not supported
H3'	Prove or*Agility → Team cohesion	Sobel: 1.446			0.148	Not supported
H4'	Intrapreneurship b*Agility → Team cohesion	Sobel: 0.042			0.015	Supported

Source: The authors

The results of the hypothesis tests indicate that four of the 13 formulated hypotheses are confirmed. More critically, we observed that the model suggests that goal orientation did not achieve an excellent fit to the proposed model. Goal orientation did not contribute to the theoretical explanation of the model, suggesting that a better model fit could be achieved without this construct. However, team cohesion explained 28.5% of the variance ( $R^2$ ). A new model was proposed based on this result, in which team cohesion is influenced by intrapreneurship, mediated by the organization's project agility, without the goal orientation variable. This model maintains all the formulated hypotheses except those related to goal orientation. This partial model, derived from the original model, is shown in Figure 2.

**Fig. 2**

Alternative model



Source: The authors

This new model was then reanalyzed for convergent and discriminant validity, and the remaining hypotheses were tested without the goal orientation variable. Table 3 presents the convergent and discriminant validity indicators and fit of the alternative model.

**Table 3**

Convergent and discriminant validity of the alternative model

Construct	AVE	CC	R2	AC	1	2	3	4	5
1. Agility	0.582	0.918	0.124	0.898	<b>0.76</b>				
2. Team Cohesion	0.610	0.886	0.172	0.846	0.41	<b>0.78</b>			
3. Intrapreneurship Behav.	-	0.890	0	0.858	0.351	0.203	-		
4. Venture Behavior	0.615	0.864	0.81	0.791	0.349	0.187	0.900	<b>0.78</b>	
5. Strategic Renewal	0.637	0.875	0.819	0.81	0.285	0.178	0.905	0.628	<b>0.80</b>

Source: The authors

After validating the fit of the data to the alternative model, a new hypothesis test was performed, as shown in Table 4. Proof of the three hypotheses was achieved except for the direct relationship between intrapreneurship and team cohesion.

**Table 4**

Hypothesis testing of the alternative model

Hyp.	Relationships	$\Gamma$	sd	t-test	p	Status
H4	Intrapreneurship b. $\rightarrow$ Team cohesion	0.067	0.084	0.788	0.431	Not supported
H4a	Intrapreneurship b $\rightarrow$ Agility	0.351	0.084	4.168	0.001	Supported
H4'	Intrapreneurship b*Agility $\rightarrow$ Team cohesion			2.977	0.002	Supported
H5	Agility $\rightarrow$ Team cohesion	0.386	0.09	0.09	4.279	Supported
	- Intrapreneurship b $\rightarrow$ Venture behavior	0.899	0.019	47.175	0.001	-
	- Intrapreneurship b $\rightarrow$ Strategic renewal	0.904	0.015	59.385	0.001	-

Source: The authors

The hypothesis test shows confirmation of all hypotheses ( $H_{4a}$ :  $\Gamma = 0.351$ ,  $t = 4.169$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ;  $H_5$ :  $\Gamma = 0.386$ ,  $t = 4.280$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), except  $H_4$  ( $\Gamma = 0.067$ ,  $t = 0.789$ ,  $p = 0.432$ ). Since Sobel's test confirmed the mediation hypothesis for agility in the relationship between intrapreneurship and team cohesion ( $t = 2.977$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), we can say that there was complete mediation. Otherwise, the influence of intrapreneurship on project team cohesion occurs through agility. These results suggest that agility promotes project team cohesion, starting with the intrapreneurial profile of the team member.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study assumed that team cohesion is explained by goal orientation and intrapreneurship in an agile context. More specifically, team cohesion positively affects organizational performance. Its members have individual stimuli to unite and remain united in the realization of team activities; thus, considering individuals form teams, we have goal orientation as a particular disposition for self-fulfillment, and intrapreneurship is a set of individual initiatives that transfer capabilities to the organization.

Team cohesion can be enhanced by the strong soft skills of its members (Black et al., 2019) and cooperation among them (Hansen et al., 2002). Communication is effective, and members have a degree of personhood (Joubert & Swart, 2019). There is member satisfaction with participating in the group (Fung, 2014), and this is reflected in spontaneous, habitual knowledge transfer (van Gerwen et al., 2018). From the organizations' side, more cohesive teams are valued for being cores that drive performance and attract other teams to become cohesive (Salas et al., 2015).

The goal orientation construct comprises three dimensions: the learning dimension, according to the literature, contains elements that can contribute to team cohesion; learning goal-oriented individuals can turn to team members to extend their knowledge; and performance goal-oriented individuals participate in teams that perform and deliver group tasks. In the other Direction, goal-avoidance-oriented individuals, the literature indicates that they will not contribute to the team, and little to its cohesion (Black et al., 2019).

Intrapreneurship reflects employees' intent to transfer their ideas for realizing organizational projects to the operating company (Petryk et al., 2020). Organizations that exploit the initiatives of intrapreneurial employees have more excellent prospects for expansion in absolute and relative terms (Antonicic & Hisrich, 2001). Intellectual capital is a focal precedent for operational renewal and the design of the organization's long-term strategies (Rigtering & Weitzel, 2013). Given these positive arguments, organizations need to invest and have policies to foster intrapreneurship (Reuther et al., 2018).

We sought to understand whether team cohesion is more or less favored when influenced by goal orientation and intrapreneurship, and whether the contribution of the agile project management approach, when influenced by goal orientation or intrapreneurship, leads to stronger or weaker cohesion.



The study could initially, through model 1, confirm that the learning dimension leads to team cohesion ( $H_1: \Gamma = 0.346, t = 4.251, p = 0.001$ ). That is, the higher the pursuit of learning, the higher the project team cohesion. This result favors an atmosphere of engagement in pursuing education as a collective activity. This learning may be related, for example, to project activities that bring learning that, when shared among team members, will lead to greater unity and favor the achievement of project results.

This transposition of learning from the project to the team has been related to gains for the project. In the study by Savolainen and Ahonen (2015), changes in project teams, from their capture to their immersion within the organization, lead to a loss of learning, harming the project. This study is compatible with the result of  $H_1$ .

However, contrary to what was expected, learning did not reach a statistically significant result with agility ( $H_{1a}: \Gamma = 0.063, t = 0.698, p = 0.486$ ). This result is surprising because the pursuit of learning leads one to believe that new knowledge brings benefits to the organization. We can attribute this unexpected result from  $H_{1a}$ , and the other unsupported hypotheses ( $H_2: \Gamma = 0.006, t = 0.053, p = 0.958$ ;  $H_{2a}: \Gamma = 0.001, t = 0.006, p = 0.995$ ;  $H_3: \Gamma = -0.046, t = 0.434, p = 0.665$ ;  $H_{3a}: \Gamma = 0.175, t = 1.552, p = 0.123$ ) to the poor fit of goal orientation to the project management setting, particularly in its relationship to agility. Goal orientation deals with the individual's pursuit of personal targets. Perhaps this meets the goals of a cohesive team or an agile approach, where customer-centricity is most relevant in this technique.

There may be a conflict between the individual's goals and the project's goals. Empirical evidence suggests that resolving previously identified conflicts should contribute to better performance of organizational models that use goal orientation (Hassine & Amyot, 2017). In this study, goal orientation was an individual attribute and may have conflicted with the perspectives of team cohesion and project agility, which require a more collective view.

This balance between the individual and the collective may explain the failure to confirm the hypotheses related to goal orientation. The fourth hypothesis of the study, about intrapreneurship and team cohesion, was not supported ( $H_4: \Gamma = -0.030, t = 0.379, p = 0.705$ ). We suggest that, to the extent that the intrapreneurial individual (or this trait) manifests itself, it brings with it a more individualistic stance (Fatehi, Priestley, and Taasobshirazi, 2020), generating conflicts of perspective for team cohesion and, in this way, for the agile approach, which demands collective action.

This explanation gains prominence as we observe that the mediation of agility is not observed for the relationship of the OM constructs ( $H_{1'}: \text{Learning} * \text{Agile Cohesion}$ , Sobel = 0.687,  $p = 0.491$ ,  $H_{2'}: \text{Avoid} * \text{Agile Cohesion}$ , Sobel = 0.05,  $p = 0.995$ , and  $H_{3'}: \text{Prove} * \text{Agile Cohesion}$ , Sobel = 1.446,  $p = 0.148$ ) only occurring for the relationship of agile-mediated intrapreneurship ( $H_{4'}: \text{Intra} * \text{Agile Cohesion}$ , Sobel = 0.042,  $p = 0.015$ ). These results suggest that the optimal model should be a better fit without using OM as an antecedent variable for team cohesion.

Based on the second model, without OM, the hypotheses were tested, concluding that agility fully mediates the relationship between intrapreneurship and team cohesion. Intrapreneurship leads to team cohesion only with the mediation of

agility. The hypothesis test shows confirmation of all hypotheses (H4a:  $\Gamma = 0.351$ ,  $t = 4.169$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; H5:  $\Gamma = 0.386$ ,  $t = 4.280$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), except H4, which points out the direct relationship between intrapreneurship and team cohesion ( $\Gamma = 0.067$ ,  $t = 0.789$ ,  $p = 0.432$ ).

Agility in project execution creates an atmosphere of customer orientation that serves as a mechanism to mediate between the more individualistic, intrapreneurial individual and the more cohesive, united group. Agility mechanisms, as an orientation in projects and even as a capability (Khan, 2020), are gaining increasing attention from researchers and practitioners to improve organizations' performance. Identifying the factors that may affect agility is essential for advancing the project management literature and practice in companies.

In sum, the results indicated an interaction between intrapreneurship and agility in achieving team cohesion, an aspect highly relevant to the project's success and organizational goals (Joubert & Swart, 2019). These results advance previous studies by proposing alternative explanations for team cohesion. Team cohesion can be achieved by combining the intrapreneur profile, characterized by the transfer of capabilities to the organization, and agility, which guides projects with value for the customer.

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