

Reflective analysis: management project



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In the broadest sense reflective analysis is the report where student's reflections on the AMP (Applied Management Project) writing process, the student's perceived performance, expectations, and lessons learnt can be expressed. This is based on processing the knowledge and feelings during and after the completion of the dissertation rather than just simply looking at the past events and recapping everything without providing any analysis. However, in order to become a reflective learner the qualities that are essentially needed are open mindedness and commitment to change by recognising personal bias.

Reflection on the work done is a vital skill to be learnt that may be easily applied in future life situations whilst working or carrying out some projects. By looking back and critically analysing the events that took place only then you can assess your work and identify the areas in your personality that need improvement. Needless to say that reflective report would be incomplete without admitting the weaknesses and providing the drawbacks as the experience from the project is not expected to be perfect.

Additionally, it has to be mentioned that this reflective analysis report not only includes personal experiences and the skills learnt from the project but it also includes lessons that can be applied in the future projects. Hence, this indicates that reflection is the core of a lifelong learning process as only by analysing the experiences we can learn from them.

Recollection of Experiences

The experiences from this project can be easily compared to the rollercoaster with the expectations, the mood as well as enthusiasm constantly going up and down.

To begin with, the collection the topics itself was the experience that did not leave me indifferent. This was preceded with the anticipation and the anxiety that the topic of our group would be interesting never minding the fact that it might be difficult one. The expectation was to get interesting topic. The title of the topic received was ‘ The Feasibility of Selling to the World’s Poor by the Multinational Organizations as a Means of Poverty Alleviation’ and it was met with the content from the group members meaning that it is a good, interesting and very relevant topic to the group members as some of them come from poor African or Asian countries. Nevertheless, my primary thoughts about the topic were not as positive as I would have imagined they would be.

However, the next day was spent reading the given articles and brainstorming as it was suggested by the tutors and it proved to be of great value. This enlightened me as I started to understand more about the topic and the requirements of the project. This enabled me to attempt to identify the possible aims and objectives of such topic that could be set to be achieved in AMP project.

Additionally, in order to maintain the records of the events and for better, more in-depth reflection keeping the notes of specific happenings, experiences or ideas that came into my mind allowed me to look at them

later with the different perspective and to critically evaluate in order to understand what I have learnt from those experiences. This suggestion by the lecturers to keep notes proved to be very helpful in order to reflect on the experiences and learn from them.

Apart from keeping the diary of the events for the reflective analysis, separate diary was created for literature review which was the main part of the project. As in my previous reports I never used to keep a diary of different reports, articles, books that are needed in order to write the report. This was done simply by taking all the relevant materials and analysing them at the same time rather than keeping the notes of the sources. Due to the vastness of this AMP project keeping the diary of reference sources was essential part of the literature review in order to utilize them efficiently at the stages of writing the project. Generating separate worksheet and dividing the columns into four parts (source, author, page, summary of information) allowed me to easily track the sources in the literature review section of the project. It not only enabled me to be more organized but more importantly it proved to be time saving activity.

Another major part of AMP project that required developing particular strategy was creation of marketing plan for selling to the poor. This seemed to be especially difficult task as there is more literature available about helping the poor through various aid organizations rather than selling to the poor as a mean of poverty alleviation. This different approach to poverty alleviation was initiated by the multinational companies only in recent years therefore the availability of good source material on this matter was rather scarce. This factor created the feeling of frustration. Nevertheless, instead of <https://assignbuster.com/reflective-analysis-management-project/>

trying to find published materials the decision was made to search on the websites of large multinational companies and to seek for the information about poverty alleviation projects that they are undertaking. This enlightenment provided me with numerous case studies and reports from the websites directly and suggested the potential market and product that could make great impact in poverty alleviation in poor areas. This is when the crucial decision about the feasibility of selling irrigation pumps to the poor in Africa was made. Having decided on the product that I believed to be of paramount need in African countries I had to find the country that this product will be sold in. After long hours of research into the most suitable market the decision was made to sell irrigation pumps in Uganda where country has enough rainfall during the year and enough lakes and rivers but the farmers are not able to capture and utilize this water in field irrigation, thus, having over 32 million of arable land laying untapped. This seemed as perfect product for their market in order to expand the business and alleviate the poverty.

Having examined the key stages of the AMP development the next part of the report provides the feelings and experiences during and after each of these phases with the identification of the lessons learnt.

Personal Feelings and Learning from the Experience

As it has already been mentioned AMP experience was never stable during the whole process. Personally, I saw this topic as unclear and rather difficult as I did not know a lot about the NGOs or other aid organizations in poverty alleviation process not even mentioning the fact that I would have to act as a consultant for the multinational company that aspires to sell to the poor in

order to alleviate poverty. Not only I felt confused about the topic but worried as well. Thus, after reading numerous topics regarding poverty alleviation the confidence and excitement returned to me. Nevertheless, the excitement about the topic diminished as I began to understand the broadness of the topic. However, this experience is positive as it demonstrated that in the future the things should be expected with a more realistic approach and taken more cautiously. The projects that initially appear either difficult or easy may not be as they seem to be once you start reading relevant materials. This firstly required broader reading around the topic area and brainstorming while researching. Only then it was possible to build a more realistic approach and reduce the possibility of project failure as well as to minimise the stress level that was received due to lack of understanding.

After reading numerous articles and journals I learnt how to select mainly the sources that are relevant. Due to vast availability of secondary data (journal articles, government reports, case studies, researches, etc.) on the issues of poverty and poverty alleviation some of the articles seemed to be relevant judging from the title whilst the information inside the article was not really relevant to the topic given. Thus, this needed to develop effective method of selecting the right articles. After reading several articles I noticed the pattern of the articles that are relevant and the ones that are not. The use of CRAP (currency, reliability, authority, purpose of the source) test suggested by the University of Bedfordshire librarian Peter Godwin helped greatly in selecting the right sources for the project.

Besides the skills mentioned above I distinguished more of them that I learnt while doing this project:

Self management and motivation. As dissertation is unsupervised project unlike the undergraduate dissertation this allowed me to learn from this experience the ways to self manage and motivate myself by giving some rewards to myself after each stage of dissertation was complete and on time.

Team effectiveness. This is essential skill that I have learnt as it is the basis of the success in team work. The ability to work effectively within a team has helped me a lot in trying to find solutions to various issues and is greatly appreciated by the managers in future employment. This also showed that the ability to share the knowledge within a team is priceless. In addition to this, I learnt to work effectively in a group in a time constrained situation.

Problem solving. Having faced with various problems during AMP such as time management, motivation, etc. allowed me to understand how well I can cope in the unplanned situations in the future.

Planning and organization/Project management skills. This is the skill that I acquired in the initial stages of the project and proved to be not only useful but time saving as well. Always seeing myself as rather organized person during AMP project I learnt the ways to improve these skills (note taking, time management). Moreover, I learnt how to be specific and efficient by specifying the area of the study and setting the boundaries. In this sense, planning and organization is very valuable lesson for future projects.

Self studying and evaluation. This is closely connected to self management and motivation as it is the skill which demonstrates how well one can concentrate on the project and work consistently to achieve set goals. Moreover, the ability to evaluate the success in the project is essential part of any project. The area of self reflection appeared to be quite new to me as I rarely tried to evaluate my previous projects

These the core skills carry significant role in the future projects as well as employment because the employers look how you adapt the skills that you state you have in different situations.

In brief this project taught me:

Better time keeping practice.

Better note taking and summarising practice.

Better learning and group work practice.

All this gives valuable lesson which will be very useful at later years in life while working on some project in the company or just working with some people that are from different background. Also prove that sharing the ideas is valuable.

Group Dynamics and Learning from the Experience

This experience turned into good learning practice as sharing knowledge among the group members provides the ability to analyse the matters from different perspective. Then you can reflect on what you where primarily thinking about the topic and what you think now after the group meetings

and compare how this knowledge has changed. I always thought that individual reports or projects have to be done on individual basis meaning that you only consider writing down only your personal thoughts or ideas. But by doing so I may be ignoring the ideas of the others as they might think in totally different way and would not accept my ideas. Thus, the first stage of AMP project as being group work has given very valuable lesson. I became more aware of the benefits of sharing the ideas among group members. Given that most of the group members come from different cultures and different backgrounds it implies that with different levels of knowledge allow the ideas to be shared and reflected upon from many different perspectives.

Team work was not something totally unfamiliar to me as we managed to gather very hard working group members since the first lectures of Postgraduate studies. This has proved to be very dedicated and hard working group in many occasions when preparing group works. Thus, without any hesitation the same group was formed for AMP project with the addition of other 4 member as the groups had to be of formed of 8 people. Even though we still were in our small group of 4 that we have known each other for almost a year, we were able to broaden our minds with the other group members. This turned out to be even more productive than we thought because all the other 4 members were from Africa, thus, the issues of poverty were their everyday life back home. In this sense, the decision has been made to concentrate on the countries of Africa so that we would be able to hear from the primary source the effectiveness or non effectiveness of various aid organizations in African countries. In this sense, they were able to share important information about the poverty alleviation in Africa and the

methods that work and the ones that do not. Moreover, we were able to have very productive discussions because for most of us the things that we thought were true turned out to be only superficial imitation of poverty alleviation and usually lasting for some short term. This enable us to reflect on the ideas that we initially were going to discuss in our project and to formulate the aims and objectives in a better way. In this sense we were able to question the given materials better and with the more real to life perspective. This is because the research was based merely on the secondary research and we could not go to Africa carry out the research and see what methods work and what do not so the possibility of having group members who come from African regions was really rewarding for our group.

In addition to group work group dynamics was not something that we have never encountered before as we had numerous projects prior to this one. However, in this group due to it being larger and due to the importance of the project it was possible to notice the behaviours that were not seen before. Some group members felt demotivated, others felt scared of the importance this project was carrying. Therefore, more arguments and variations of ideas could be observed as compared to smaller group that we had before. Hence, some group members thought that it is better to work on their own and not to listen to the variety of opinions. But for me personally group work always was and always will be the set where I can learn from the others and I can share my thoughts with the others as well. I rarely relied only on my personal opinion when it comes to doing projects or reports, thus, I was always seeking for someone that I could share my ideas with and to get some different insight while hearing other person's opinion. This is for a

very simple reason. If 9 people are saying one thing and one is saying another it is very unlikely that those 9 people can be wrong. Even if there are cases that we had conflicting ideas group work allows to come up with some kind of solution that is usually suitable for everyone.

However, to be a successful member of the group is never easy as you have to question yourself constantly whether you contribute sufficiently, whether they see you as a valuable member of the group or whether you gain more from the group work rather than being on your own. Chapman (2006) in his studies states that group work is one of the most important factors in today's society as this proves to make work more efficient and increases productivity. This idea is further elaborated by Brodbeck and Greitemeyer (2000) suggesting that the interaction within the group allows to develop new ideas as well as to critically evaluate the existing ones.

The possibility to share the ideas and complement on each other has always attracted me as this allows me to learn something new, to correct myself if my perceptions are wrong and to share my knowledge with the others. I have always seen the group work as a better way to success in comparison to individual work. In addition to this, Forsyth (1999) supports the idea of group work rather than members working separately.

Lessons for Future Projects

Despite the fact that I have learnt numerous lessons while carrying out the project there are still certain areas that need to be improved and applied in future projects or group activities. These can be suggested as following:

Open mindedness to the ideas and suggestions expressed by the group members.

Accept the criticism and learn from it.

Better time management.

Improve awareness of reflection on the events.

These are the activities that I personally found challenging to accept and change my attitude towards them. Therefore, they are the ones that I will attempt to improve in future projects.

Conclusions

As this report suggests the reflective analysis of the events and experiences is the key to life learning process as it allows getting deeper insights into the experiences and improving on them. This reflective report not only included the events that took place while undertaking AMP project but it also revealed the weaknesses of my personality as well as provided with some valuable lessons for the future projects. The first section of this report presents the various stages of AMP whilst other sections provide with the lessons learnt and the personal feelings at every stage of the project. Besides reflecting on my personal experiences this report also gives the reflection on group dynamics as group work was one of the initial stages of the project. It has been suggested that group work is perceived as more productive approach to work allowing to share the ideas among other members of the group.

Overall, this report suggests that undertaking AMP project was a very practical experience which awarded with numerous lessons for the future projects.