

The five stages of group formation essay example

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



During the five stages of group formation (forming, storming, norming, performing, and transforming) that Jim Cain (n. d.) presents in his article “Exploring the Five Stages of Group Formation Using Adventure-Based Activities”, there can be traced leadership traits and principles, which can be applied in various activity domains. Working in the construction operations I found that some leadership principles explored within Cain’s article can be applied to this activity sector, while others are inadequate or require adaptation.

While defining the five stages of group formation based on adventure designed activities, Cain describes various activities that can be applied in each stage for achieving specific outcomes, aligned with the particular stage of the group formation process. These activities, shaped on the adventurous model, have as the main purpose the interaction between the members of the team. “Believe it or Knot” activity from the Formation Stage (Cain, n. d.) enhances the leadership principle of knowing the team and letting the team members get to know each other, for learning who they work with. I share this leadership principle, as it reflects both my philosophy and my personal experience of working with people, learning about their lives and knowing each of them as individuals.

On the other hand, Cain’s other activities mentioned in the first stage, respectively “Commonalities” and “The Bus” (Cain, n. d.) are types of activities that I would not encourage to be unfolded in a formal manner within my team. Although I am convinced that informally these activities can contribute to the group’s cohesion, by finding out shared interests, in the formal context it can cause frustration or the feeling of marginalization,

should individuals not share commonly identified values. I want to avoid this situation, because I want to maintain a harmonious working environment. Some of the activities included in this article, meant to express leadership principles, would be rather time consuming and inappropriate in leading engineers in construction operations. As such, I find “ Photo Finish” or “ Cross the Line”, included in the Storming Stage (Cain, n. d.), inadequate for my team of workers. Nevertheless, I value and approve the effect that such activities intend to achieve, namely, to find each other’s boiling point, for knowing how each of them react in stressful situations. However, I would create other activities, more related to the engineering profile, for reaching this effect, such as presenting a construction operations problem, forming two groups and requiring them to sustain different solutions for addressing the identified problem.

The leadership principles outlined in the Storming Stage are coordination and coaching people to overpass the stressful moments by developing the followers’ negotiations, active listening and assertive communication for avoiding conflicts. I embrace these principles and I implement them in leading my team, by coaching my subordinates to overpass their misunderstanding and by coordinating them to negotiate their conflicts while focusing on meeting the deadlines of our projects as a team.

This brings me to the next stage that Cain (n. d.) explores in his article, the Norming Stage, which targets cohesion, trust building, creativity and skill acquisition, enhancing the leadership principles of developing team spirit and improving team’s skills and capabilities. The activities proposed for this stage, namely “ Inside Out” and “ The Blind Trust Drive”, are effective for

reaching the above-mentioned leadership principles and in a teambuilding situation I would use them just as described in the article. While I did not yet applied these activities so far in exerting my leadership philosophy, I have always been committed to trust building within my team and developing the sense of cohesion, for thinking and acting like one, driven by the same goal. I have experienced these leadership principles while leading by example. I expressed my trust in my team members and allowed them accountability and responsibility for their actions, which increased their self-confidence, respect for their leader and their co-workers, improving their skills and the team's cohesion.

With improved skills, increased group cohesion and team trust, the group is prepared for more challenges, exerting the leadership principle of increasing the team's enthusiasm and developing the group identity. In Cain's article, this phase is transposed into the Performing Stage, which includes more difficult activities ("Grand Prix Racing"), with the purpose of capitalizing on the team's improved skills and group cohesion for solving a complex problem. Unlike Cain's example that values competitive challenges within divided teams, I am more inclined towards fostering cooperation rather than competition at this stage. My leadership philosophy is based on coordinating the followers to clearly understand what is required from them, guiding them towards accomplishing their tasks, by influencing them to adhere to my vision. By understanding my business philosophy, they will understand what skills they need to utilize for accomplishing their responsibilities.

For the last stage of the article, the Transforming Stage, Cain recommends the regrouping of the participants, recognition of leader and disengagement

of the participants, proposing “ A Circle of Kindness” and “ Virtual Slideshow” as suitable activities for this stage. I would associate this stage with the evaluation phase of an engineering construction operations project. In this context, I encourage a consistent feedback (a strong leadership principle in which I believe), which allows me, as a leader, to better know myself, and to self-improve my leadership and teamwork skills, where required. I value open group communication and I consider that each group member can fairly, yet distinctively evaluate the project. Cain’s proposed activities are suitable for this context.

Overall, the article exhibits dynamic leadership traits and principles, translated through playful activities. Play is creative and builds cohesion and reliability, showing each player’s skills, and the need of improvements. Yet, because of its routine and precise activities, the construction operations domain recognizes a limitation to playful activities. Nevertheless, many of the proposed activities can be customized into appropriate actions for setting leadership principles meant to form a united and efficient team.

References

Cain, J. (n. d.) Exploring the five stages of group formation using adventure-based activities. New York: Teamwork & Teamplay.