

Learnings from individual and group behavior (igb) assignment

[Philosophy](#)



Although annoyed by few such incidents in the past also, I was not at all aware of the techniques to discourage social loafing earlier. However, later on during the course of my classroom study on Individual & Group behavior, as I gained useful information in this regard, I used the technique of ignoring the social loafers and encouraging others to give their best contribution. Very soon after our second group meeting started, I had a glimpse into the leadership and decision-making of the group.

Since, the group was autonomous and had no true leader; collective leadership ran the decisions, with every member laying more or less an equal part in voicing their opinion. There were lot of conflicts initially especially amongst those members who never had a previous experience of working with each other in the past. Being high on the 'openness to experience' factor of the personality, I was looking forward to draw some positives out of this meeting, but could not find any. Later on during my course study, I learned about the basics of group dynamics and how individual behaviors get shaped in due course of time.

I realized that it is very common to have group conflicts in initial stages of group orientation & hence in my later group works for other class assignments, I focused my attention on managing such conflicts rather than being surprised by them. 'Agreeableness' and social acceptance has definitely been a high priority for me as a person, while working in any group during my office days. However, here at NINA I found it very difficult to achieve that sometimes, probably because of the large gap in the background and profile of myself compared to all other members of my group.

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When I tried to explain differently to them, on the basis of whatever I learned during my corporate experience of 3 years, they looked at me like I was crazy, instead of taking in the info and learning that could be applied to our group work. There were a few that were very interested, but most didn't want to hear new things. For instance, when I referred to the whole group (everyone' or 'we need') and mentioned that a task required creative contribution from all of us. For instance, 'can I have everyone's ideas on this topic?

We need everyone to hear all opinions before we decide on how innovative we create our presentation and perform at stage. ' After a couple of such incidents, where I didn't get an encouraging response, I decided to suppress my own creative thoughts to gain group acceptance, something called the 'group think, without aware of the fact that this could have adverse consequences on the group as well as my individual performance. Another issue was that of time management and communication barriers in all our group meetings, except the one before finishing the assignment.

For instance, a lot of time used to get wasted listening to a particular member who gave an account of his journey with alcohol or other times the other members started discussing the merits of the current topic or discussing their social plans after work. Regardless of the topic, these extended conversations were very distracting to the entire group. I was in a dilemma that if even after knowing the fact, I don't step in after a few minutes; the group will have wasted a lot of time and energy.

But if I step immediately, the group may very well lose respect for me forever. In order to solve this issue, I decided to set up the strategy of

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typically ignoring the pair for a minute or two, to let them finish their discussion. Then whenever I realized that the hot discussion has just been employed, two of us started setting the ground rules that everyone agreed with. This helped in a way that after such repeated attempts made, the entire group started to self monitor itself.

On a few such occasions later, if someone started any side gossips then, other members interrupted immediately - ' Hey Mr.. ' X', no side conversations, remember? ' Taking the case of the academic committee work, where I had been an active participant. In the opening meeting of the committee, we had been briefed by our senior batch mates about various roles and tasks to be performed by the committee. Again, a high level of autonomy was given to our group, which has its own benefits and issues.

One of the few issues was that the selection of the group was not done on the basis of any qualification criteria and no individual responsibility was delegated. The non-delegation issue, led to the absence of individual work accountability. Now, many of the tasks were of complex nature and there was interdependence among the members' roles. However, the tasks could not be completed in time sometimes, as one member would be waiting for the other to finish his role which was a prerequisite for his own work. Besides, there was no formal leadership to resolve such a bottleneck situation in the group.

A large number of members were included in the committee, probably with the idea that a few among us will display their proactive personality, and this would move the tasks forward. Indeed it exactly turned out to be the same.

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Some of us identified this as a learning opportunity and took extra initiatives to execute tasks which could not be done in time by the other members. My personal strategy was to first allow other members certain time to finish those tasks and take my extra initiatives into his work, t a stage where it appears that the particular member would be crossing a tentative deadline.

Another strategy was to execute the tasks based on their priority, and not the duration. This way the group somehow managed to finish the major roles in time. Then in the committee work, we had to deal with attitudes conflicts and differences in perception as well. For instance, other students were of the perception that the committee must deliver the notes and study materials of all the subjects well in time, without knowing the limitations and boundaries under which we have to work.

The working members know that it is upon the individual discretion of the faculty, whether and when he/she wants to distribute any class material or notes. Thus to manage the balance between both sides, we conducted meetings twice in a month, and essentially before the examinations and updated the students with the information. I personally tried to make sure that the communication whether from the committee's official e-mail or through meetings, was appropriate enough to avoid any gaps. We took the help of the administration office in this regard as well.

To conclude with, I would say that as a part of my work in the above two groups, and also among other groups either formally or self-created, I got face to face with several aspects of group dynamics. Some key aspects that were automatically observed were of social loafing, collective leadership,

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group think, perceptual differences, attitudes conflicts, communication barriers, work delegation & personality types etc. Earlier when I was not aware, I used to get confused about certain observations. Also, many a times, certain aspects would just happen, without catching my attention.

The learning from the KGB Course, helped me identify the reasons determining these aspects, and what are the best techniques that have been proven to be effective in certain situations. Some of these techniques I could personally adopted in my group works so far, and will further like to apply in future to perform more effectively and efficiently. The experiences also helped me transform my working style, as until now I used to focus my attention on my individual roles only, but the learning helped me align my performance with the overall team goals.