

Analysis of group dynamics



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This research assignment analyzes two important areas of group dynamics: Group formation and structure and leadership. The purpose of this assignment is for students to work in small in-class groups, experience the two important areas of group dynamics and to reflect on them. The objective of this paper is to compare and contrast the experiences the group had, with the research and theory that is available on group dynamics. The in-class group was made up of five members. Member A (the author) was a 21 year old male from Toronto in his 3rd year, majoring in kinesiology. Member B was a 22 year male from North York in his 4rd year, majoring in business. Member C was a 26 year old male from Vaughan in his 4th year, majoring in psychology. Member D was a 25 year old female in her 3rd year, majoring in psychology. Member E was a 22 year old Female in her 4th year, majoring in kinesiology. All members were raised in Canada. Members A, B and C agreed upon the group name “ Blazing Tigers”, while members D and E were not present. The members met once a week in class.

Group Formation and Structure

Norm Development

The prescriptive and prospective norms of the Blazing Tigers were generated implicitly. Prescriptive norms such as engaging in small talk before and after discussing about the task in class. Norms such as sitting in the same area as where the members last sat or sitting in an area where most group members were already near to each other. In the first few weeks though, all the members would go sit around member B, because he took leadership on the first day and called out the group number for the members to come join him.

Rotating the work throughout the members every week was another norm which started after a few weeks in. This happened because of the implicit guilt that only member B was doing the assignment questions every week. Member E only showed up once to class, she did not engage in discussions in the group conversations on Facebook outside of class either. It was then assumed, she was not in the class anymore. She then arrived to class a week before the assignment was due and agreed to take on the assignment question.

Group Development

The group got along pretty fast, with personal stories, introductions, and jokes. In the beginning Members A, B and C were having trouble coming up with a group name. After a couple of names proposed, Member A thought the name Tigers would be good. Member C thought flaming tigers would be better. Member A then proposed the Blazing Tigers would be even better. The new name had generated a positive response from the group members, all were very enthusiastic about the new name. Before that though, it was explicitly clear when someone wasn't interested in the name that was being proposed. The indifference and dislike was evident in the members, body language, facial expressions, and the tonality of their voice. All members realized this to some extent and kept proposing names till the desired outcome was reached, which was basically perceiving a positive response from the rest of the group. A similar situation occurred with the two competitions after the midterm tests. The members could tell when one member did not completely agree or was just indifferent about what the majority had decided.

Collaboration between group members

Everyone collaborated well with each other since the start of the group.

Members A and B met first and then member C introduced himself into the group. Members D and E showed up the week after. Member E only showed up twice in total, the week after and then just a week before the assignment was due. Member A had socially collaborated and had personal conversations with Member B, C, and D. For task collaboration, Whatsapp was proposed but Member A did not have a phone and so a group conversation on face book became the medium of exchange. There were instances where the members didn't just see each other as group members for the class but friends in general. Member B invited the group to come see his ted talk, Member D works with Air Canada and so she asked the group if they ever need a discount of some sort they could talk to her.

In a study Dunlop et al. (2011) hypothesized that perceptions of surface – level similarity (physical qualities) among groups would be essential in predicting social cohesion between members and perceptions of deep – level similarity (personal attitudes, values and beliefs) would indicate task cohesion. A study was organized which was composed of 273 employed from 46 exercise programs, split into groups with an average group size of 13 people. The groups met once a week for 8 weeks. They were asked to rate how alike they felt to each other in surface level and deep level categories using the Physical Activity Group Environment Questionnaire. It had 21 items measuring social or task cohesion at both the individual levels and group levels. All categories were assessed on scale which ranged from strongly agree (9) to strongly disagree (1). The findings confirmed the hypothesis and <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-group-dynamics/>

so the findings showed that a people will socialize with people if they seem as similar in physical traits opposed to those that are not. Also, people will get involved in tasks with people they believe share similar beliefs, attitudes, or values (Dunlop et al, 2011).

The Blazing tigers had a diverse group of members in terms of race; an eastern European, a North American, a Latina, an Asian and a Sri Lankan member. All members belong to a similar age group from early to mid-20s. The fact that the members were diverse in some respects but similar in others, the social cohesion was about the same towards all members in the group. The members did not get a chance to express their beliefs or values. Attitudes throughout the group members seemed similar as well. Member A knew he was a procrastinator and asked the group if any of them would wait till the last day to work on the question. They all laughed and raised their hands to affirm they were indeed procrastinators too. So in that aspect, there was a value held between the members and thus were comfortable in working on the assignment questions on the day of.

Leadership

Leadership Style

Member A was more of the relationship oriented leader, while Member B was more of the task oriented leader. When a question was brought up about which leadership style would be the most effective for an emergency where there is no leader in a corporation, Member A and Member B had opposing views. Member A thought it would be best if everyone shared their views, came to a consensus with the majority of the votes and to decide among

themselves who should take lead. Member A thought this path would have the least amount of conflict and could result in a positive outcome. Member B thought that way was absurd. He argued if it went down that path, everyone would have a say, even the workers that knew nothing about the problem would be able to voice their opinion. Member B thought it was better to just come up with the plan weighing the pros and cons, and to just take lead and whoever wants to follow through with can follow through and whoever wants to leave can leave.

Zopiatis et al.(2012) explored the relationship between leadership styles and the Big Five traits among 131 managers working in the hotel industry in Cyprus. They were given questionnaires that included the tools to measure personality traits as well as to describe their perceived leadership style. The results showed that transformational leadership is positively correlated with extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness. In contrast, a passive/avoidance leadership style is negatively correlated with conscientiousness and agreeableness (Zopiatis 2012).

Comparing the findings from this study to our group, it wasn't clear if Member B was a transformational leader. He seemed to take it all on himself, very self-reliant. We did conclude that the best leader is the one that is situational. A leader that can switch from being task oriented to relationship oriented when needed, the members thought was the most effective quality in a leader.

Power Tactics

There weren't any hard power tactics, everyone treated each other equally, there was no hierarchy or any harsh and demanding treatment of any sort. Member E did not show up or contribute to any group efforts and still received the bonus marks, so eventually Member B reached out to her. Member E said she had been caught up with things and will be in class the next time. This kept going on and eventually Member B had deleted her from the group conversation online. Member E then finally showed up the week before the assignment was due and it was implicitly decided that she would do the question and which she took initiative and stated she would in fact do it herself. It's clear Member B had used soft power tactics, talking to her, before he had to resort to a hard one, removing her from the conversation.

Belanger et al. (2015) gathered 152 employees from 4 Italian employment organizations, they completed a Need for Closure Scale (self-report test with 42 items which measures individual differences in the need for closure) and a 33-item measure of compliance with power tactics. The Interpersonal Power Inventory was also completed to evaluate employees' readiness to obey their supervisors power tactics. The objective of the study was to test the relationship between the inferior's and their supervisors in conflict situations. Employees were then given 33 statements of which represented 11 power tactics statements, which they were to rate in it's reasoning to comply (1 being weak and 7 being strong). Results showed that the employee's need for closure (to know the full reason for something) was negatively correlated with obeying harsh power tactics of a supervisor (Belanger, Pierro, Kruglanski)

Comparing this study to our group, there was no hard power tactics and no such hierarchy. Since there were good interpersonal relationships with the leader and the members, it was easier and more comfortable to come to a decision via soft power tactics rather than having to comply to hard power tactics.

Personal Qualities relevant in leadership

It was Member B who got up and waved a paper with the group number on the first day, who then Member A and C went and sat next to. While all three of the members had an equal say on the group name and slogan, it was Member B who decided to jot down notes. He was the one who also posted the answers to the assignment questions online. While member A tried to initiate and gave a short answer for the assignment of his own to the group, member B had posted a much more complete articulated answer to the question. It was then assumed member B was the most competent for the weekly assignments. While the group would procrastinate till the day when the assignment question was due, waiting for someone else to initiate and take lead, member B would already post his answer in the group conversation online. He would then indirectly delegate and/or leave tasks to be accomplished by the rest of the group members, such as proofreading and posting it on Moodle. In group discussions, members usually wait for Member B to start it.

In a study, Emery et al, (2013) hypothesized that high extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness were key traits in how a person is elected as a relationship or task oriented leader by

group members. A three-month study was done with 41 white North American undergraduate students which took place in Europe. They were split into groups of six and worked on three classroom projects with the notion of measuring personality traits and leadership dynamics once every month for a total of 3 times (Emery, Calvard & Pierce). The personality traits were measured using the Big Five Inventory, a scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) of 44 self-descriptive items. To measure leadership, students were given a definition of task and relationship oriented leadership and were asked to check a member's name off the list they had been provided when a behavior defined was executed. The effects of personality on leadership nominations were tracked, and the effects of reciprocity, transitivity and centrality were also observed to produce precise outcomes. The results matched the hypothesis, the members high in extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness received more recommendations for task and relationship oriented leadership, while high agreeableness was more towards relationship oriented leaders. The study thus proves the Big Five traits are connected to the development of task and relationship oriented leadership and traits like extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience are significant in leaders (Emery et al, 2013).

While Member A was extraverted, open to experiences and agreeable, he wasn't as conscientious relating to Member B. Member A was more of a relationship oriented leader, valuing the relationships more than the task itself, Member B was the opposite. In a study, Meng et Al (2012), found that participants had chosen strategic decision-making capability, problem-

solving ability, and communication knowledge and expertise are the most important qualities in a leadership. Both studies above give an accurate prediction to if the group had to decide who would be the leader among Member B and Member A, it would be Member B that would be chosen, because he employs all those qualities and traits himself.

Conclusion

The key area that may improve the group's performance in the future for this group, is to work on the interpersonal relationships a bit more. The group was pretty comfortable with each other and friendly, but it could've been much better if they had went out and socialized outside of school, or if to do that was part of the assignment as well. To get to know your peers in an informal setting. If the class had more of a competitive environment, the members in groups would have stronger bonds and would work together to achieve the common goal they share as a group.

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