

When the lecturer
asked us to form



When one is at the university, it is advisable to form a study group early enough so that he/she can have people to exchange ideas with. It is said that no one knows everything, and because this implies that we all have our strengths and weaknesses, we should identify people to utilize our strengths and help us correct our weaknesses. I therefore decided to look around for individuals who share the same thoughts with me among the few friends that I had already managed to mingle with. One of the challenges in finding reliable members was the fact that most of the people that I came across were very negative about the whole issue.

Therefore, this paper will focus on my group with regard to how it was formed and how it operates, and the hurdles that it had to go through.

Part 1: Group's Emergent System Characteristics

If you asked how my group was formed, the memories are still fresh because I remember it like it was yesterday. It was on a chilly afternoon during one of my management classes that the lecturer asked us to form study groups because he intended to give us assignments that were to be tackled collectively in small groups. The groups were formed at random and luckily for our group, we were all serious people, unlike most of the groups that were comprised of active members and jokers.

In this regard, the group has five members: three boys and two girls. The objectives of our group include identifying the abilities of every individual member and using them to achieve excellence in academics. Besides, we exchange ideas on a personal level and thus we provide a shoulder to lean on to one another during difficult times. This means that we provide

emotional support to all our members when they are facing challenges in other areas. At times we offer material support when we feel it is necessary. We value the participation of our members and since we are aware that their productivity can be impacted negatively by the problems they are facing in other areas such as illness and loss of a family member, we are under obligation to provide assistance as much as we can.

The mission of the group is what keeps the group intact. Our mission is to achieve academic excellence in all areas of our study, and to support one another in achieving individual goals. We have also addressed issues that can create divisions in the group by establishing rules that govern how we relate with one another. This is very important considering that this group is made up of young boys and girls, and if we are not careful they can ruin the ideas of the entire group.

This is because it is normal for boys and girls to establish romantic relationships within the group, and if there are no clear rules about such issues, their personal disputes can affect the performance of the group because they would not communicate as required, which is one of the crucial principles of group work. We therefore agreed that people are free to get into relationships at their own will, but they should never bring their individual flaws into the group. Hence, if they have any issues to sort out they should attend to them in other places, but not during group meetings. We also value respect for one another because we identified it as one major reason why groups fail to remain intact until they accomplish their mission. All the members are expected to exercise respect in how they address one another, regardless of gender or age. This is because the group is made of

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boys and girls who will some day be men and women, and if they are not taught to respect people early enough, they may not fit into the society. It therefore goes without saying that abusive language or suggestive remarks are not allowed in this group. Although the members of this group are not of the same age, because some are older than others, they handle one another with respect.

Punctuality is another norm that is greatly emphasized in this group because time management is important to all, and considering that time waits for no one, the group utilizes the time that is available so that there is enough time for carrying out the tasks before them. In addition, group members have other things to do apart from group work and thus, it is important to have specific time that is dedicated to group work so that members do not encounter a clash in time allocations. Members are expected to arrive on time to group meetings that normally take place after classes in the evenings, and those that report late are penalized. Likewise, honesty is highly valued because when a member is given a task such as gathering information, he/she is expected to deliver information that is sound instead of providing information that is misleading to the group. It is also against the rules of the group for a member to fake or lie about something such as faking an illness as an excuse of not completing the task assigned. Any one who does not abide to these rules is ejected from the group because it is better to have a small group that is active than to have a big group that is ineffective. Usually, roles are allocated according to an individual's abilities and experience.

This is because one can deliver satisfactory results if he/she is assigned the roles that he/she is knowledgeable in. Manual tasks that are tiring are assigned to boys because they are stronger compared to girls and hence, they are able to tolerate the challenges that may come their way. The tasks that involve gathering information are allocated at random and there are deadlines for accomplishing every task. Furthermore, the group does not have a leader because every member is expected to be responsible hence there is no need of someone to oversee the operations of the group.

Decisions are made through consultations and thus, one cannot make a decision without involving the other group members. However, the group has a spokesperson who was assigned that position due to his strong communication skills. This person is the one who communicates with the other entities in the college when the need arises.

The decisions of the group are made collectively and they include disciplinary and rewarding issues. If a group member is to be disciplined for failing to adhere to the rules and regulations, the verdict rests on the other group members and their decision cannot be recalled. If there are any disagreements among the members during decision making process, the members sit in a round table meeting and engage in dialogue until the issue is resolved; each side is given an opportunity to give their story so that the mistake can be identified. Consequently, the group has a rewarding system that is meant to motivate members to work harder. Rewarding takes place at the end of the semester and it is allocated to the member who has tackled the most challenging task.

In addition, the group acknowledges members who excel elsewhere, such as in extracurricular activities and in academics. During such sessions, members gather in a designated food joint and have lunch together. The rewards are meant to make members feel appreciated and thus, work harder. The group members emphasize on the success of the group because they think that this success will eventually be reflected in individual members in other areas. Members are also expected to communicate on regular basis with each other so that they can share ideas. Members are under obligation to express their views where they feel they are not satisfied with the explanation provided by a group member. The decisions of this group are made through brainstorming sessions; everyone's argument is equally important.

Besides, when members are out in the field they communicate through the phones or the Internet, thus improving group cohesiveness.

Part 2: How the Characteristics Emerged

The mentioned characteristics were addressed because members of this group come from different cultural and family backgrounds. If the diversity in our backgrounds was allowed to manipulate us then the group would not achieve its goals.

This means that members had to put their differences aside for the sake of the group. Communication was found to be essential because it would help the members to understand one another. This is because it would be difficult for the group to move ahead when they barely understand one another. The decisions of the group are made collectively so that every member can have

a strong sense of belonging and perform like the group depends on his/her efforts. If members were left to make decisions individually, their decisions would clash with the interests of the group. Involving the group members in decision making provides a window of opportunity to criticize and improve the solutions provided. Besides, if the role of making decisions was left to one member, that person would probably make wrong decisions because his/her thinking is not broad compared to the combined efforts of members. Having strict deadlines was important because it ensured that members delivered their findings right on time.

If the issue of time management was not addressed, I am sure some people would complete their tasks late, which is not beneficial to the group. This is because management as a course has many areas that have to be covered and if members are not punctual, members would not have their own time to study for other subjects. For instance, last semester we were behind schedule due to some delays caused by two members for failing to complete their tasks before the deadline. They were in deed experiencing some problems, but then they did not communicate about these problems early enough because if they had done so the other members would have come up with other alternatives of achieving the same results. In this light, group work requires a lot of collaboration hence team work is very important because it makes tasks that are difficult to be easier as the members share the efforts that are required. Studying alone has many shortcomings because every individual has weaknesses and besides that, there is no one to correct him/her hence when he/she is headed in the wrong direction, it would be difficult to get assistance. In the management course outline,

students are expected to handle some assignments collectively and make their presentations to the rest of their class once the assignment is finished. This is why a spokesperson was put in place to carry out this task.

Everyone cannot speak before people because some are shy or do not speak fluently. This is because the person who is presenting the findings of the group should speak boldly to imply that he/she is sure of what he/she saying. The group assignments are allocated points that are included in the final exams hence this is a serious issue.

Part 3: Consequences

There are various achievements that have been made by our group, both collectively and at personal level. First, the group was able to achieve its mission, owing to the high level of discipline among the members. Each member has appreciated the importance of being disciplined and they are committed to applying the same trait in other areas.

Group members are now excelling in their studies because of the group's cooperation and hard work. Being in this group has made the members to know one another better and establish strong bonds. One thing that will continue to be remembered is how the members put their differences aside to focus on the goals of the group. This would not have happened before because there was no need of coming together.

So far, most members have managed to furnish their interpersonal skills owing to the exposure they have had in this group. Personally, I have learnt that everyone sees things differently and therefore I have learned to respect the opinions of other people. Besides, it has come to my knowledge that I

have to give more of what I want so that I can get it back in plenty. For instance, I have learned that if I want to be respected by my peers, I have to respect them more and in the final end all of them will appreciate me and cannot despise me in any way. I am an outspoken person, and prior to joining this group I had many ideas that were laying idle in my mind because I was afraid of putting them to test, but today when I look back at how far I have come, I do not fear putting my thoughts into tasks.

This is because being part of this group has helped me overcome fear and instead earn self-esteem through my achievements. Through the exposure I have had in this group, I am now able to mingle with people from diverse backgrounds. I know this is just the beginning because more challenges are yet to come, but then the experiences I have encountered in this group have prepared me for other challenges in future, possibly in the working environment.