

# Critically evaluate usefulness of theories of groups nursing essay



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Fincham (1999) states that “ In the work place much of our social behaviour occurs in a group text”, however I believe that much of our lives are spent in groups (Lawler (2005)), suggesting that the more individuals interact in these different groups, the more they behave in a certain way.

Researchers like Robbins (2010) have found that there is a difference between a group and a team; “ a group is two or more individuals, interacting and independent who have come together to achieve particular objectives, to help each group member perform within his or her area of responsibility”, whereas a team is “ a set of people structured, whose individual efforts result in performance that is greater than the sum of the individual inputs,” Robbins et al (2010). Mullins (2005) however identifies that Belbin (2000) suggests that there are quite a number of aspects that differentiate groups from teams for example the size (a group may have any number of member whereas team membership is from four to six individuals). Having identified the subtle differences between groups and teams, we can see that individuals behave one way in a team and another in a group.

Groups and teams vary, the difference being the way in which they are structured ranging from a formal group to an informal group (McKenna (1994)) and a problem solving team to a self-managed team (Robbins et al 2010). Through the analysis of my experiences of working in both environments, I can identify the different types that could be used to describe the groups and teams in which I performed.

An underlying example of a formal group I partook in, is the prefect body (21 individuals with an aim to improve the school) to which I was chosen at Fearnhill School. Each individual was set to improve their own performance to achieve their main objective, which was to be chosen to be head girl/boy. I have found that the group setting above differs from The Young Enterprise self-managed team I also participated in, as the team members worked together to achieve the set goal (to make profit) where individual inputs lead to great team performance (Mullins (2007)).

Analysing and looking at the Information I gathered on the different types of teams, The Young Enterprise team I was in was a small team. This team could also be seen as a temporary team as it was only formed to achieve a specific task and then we broke up to do our own things. The team was independent as it did not rely on any other teams for support or skills, as colleagues we just relied on each other. However even though we were only a group of students at school, the team was a formal team as it was to achieve a specific task (to make a profit) officially and we were recognised as Eclipse to the other competitors in the market.

Why work in groups and teams? The answer to this question varies from person to person, (Jim McNally (1994)), but the most common benefit is that groups have diversified information compared to the one individual (Robbins et al (2010)). This identifies that when individuals work together, they are more likely to have more creative ideas than the one individual because they have diverse skills and ideas among them. However Mullins (2005)

recognises there are other reasons why people work in groups and teams

such as the fact that people always want to belong, suggesting that <https://assignbuster.com/critically-evaluate-usefulness-of-theories-of-groups-nursing-essay/>

belonging to a group/teams gives them a sense of identity and value.

Another reason for establishing teams or groups is that individuals in these categories also have common understanding of each other; they support and protect each other when facing problematic situation (McKenna (1994)).

This observation shows that individuals in groups and teams do not only gain from achieving the set goals but also personally and socially (Mullins (2005)).

For example in the prefect body I was involved in at Fearnhill, each prefect was given a task to carry out but for some reason or another, one of us would be unable to carry out the set tasks. If and when this occurred all the group members came together to support and we would all pitch in to make sure that the task was complete until the group member was ready to carry out their own tasks. I found this was one of the benefits of being in the group as if the individual was on their own, no matter what, they would have had to make sure that they completed the task by themselves. Reflecting on Mullins' (2005; 2007) reasons for the formation of groups/teams, they benefit the individuals as well as the performance of the teams by achieving the set goals.

Numerous researchers like McKenna (1994) and Mullins (2005) having identified the benefits of the idea of groups and teams, still need to be developed if they are going to be effective; Figure 1 " Theories of group development" shown below, identifies that groups go through five stages of development which are known as; forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning.

**Figure 1 “ Theories of group development”, (Buchanan et al (1997)) ; Based on Tuckman (1965); Tuckman and Jensen (1977); and Jones (1973).**

**Forming**

-

Confusion

-

Uncertainty

-

Assessing situation

-

Testing ground rules

**Storming**

-

Disagreements over priorities

-

Struggle for leadership

-

Tension

-

Hostility

-

Clique formation

## **Norming**

-

Consensus

-

Leadership accepted

-

Trust established

-

Standards set

-

New stable roles

-

Co

—

operation

## **Performing**

-

Successful performance

-

Flexible task roles

-

Openness

-

Helpfulness

-

Delusion, disillusion and acceptance

## **Adjourning**

-

Disengagement

-

Anxiety about separation and ending

-

Positive feeling towards the leader

-

Sadness

-

Self

—

evaluation

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-

Feeling out others

-

Defining goals

-

Getting acquainted

-

Establishing rules

## **Stage 1**

### **Immature**

#### **group**

## **Stage 2**

### **Fractionated**

#### **group**

## **Stage 3**

### **Sharing group**

## **Stage 4**

### **Effective team**

## **Stage 5**

### **Disbanding**

#### **group**

## **TASK FUNCTIONS**

## **PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GROUP MEMBERS**

### **Interdependence**

### **Cohesion**

### **Conflict**

### **Dependency**

In 2009 I decided to join The Young Enterprise team which was based on a group of 3 people. The group members involved being Carissa Morgan,

Jasmine Rani and I Virginia Simenda. During 2009 (year 12) we entered The

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Young Enterprise competition, we had to come up with ideas on how to make money and bring those ideas to life. The aim of the project was to get into a team with colleagues and therefore establish a small business, and learn to work together to make the project a success by making profit.

To get started we first had to form the group, in the case that we were already an informal group this was not a difficult task to execute. However in a situation where the individuals do not know each other, it would be more difficult and time consuming to form the team as the individuals would need time to accept and understand each other (forming) (Buchanan et al (1997)). We then had to delegate, job roles to each member so they became responsible in their specified area, which embraces Belbin's Teams Theory (Handy (1993)).

The positions were delegated as below;

Carissa Morgan - Marketing and Advertising

Jasmine Rani - IT Director and Sales Rep

Virginia Simenda - Finance Director and Product Shopper

This project tested our ability to be responsible in our specific areas, the importance of teamwork and communication. Below is Figure 2'.. a pattern of behaviour that characterises one person's behaviour in relation to another in facilitating the progress of the team' (Belbin, 1981; 2000).

Assessing the team, there is proof that each team member was valuable as they provided the team with characteristics which lead to the success of the

team, supporting Belbin's idea that each team member has a role to play for the team to succeed (Buchanan et al (1997)).

Carissa's leadership skills contributed to the team and organised the team, she did her best to extract the best out of the team, which the team appreciated. Her interpersonal communication skills proved to be valuable as it meant she had confidence to voice her opinions. Carissa would have been identified as the co-ordinator, monitor evaluator and specialist of the team.

Jasmine's main skill identified as being valuable was her researching skills; she used it efficiently and effectively to the team's advantage. She was good at conveying her ideas to the rest of the team which showed good communication and interpersonal skills. The research Jasmine carried out showed that she was dedicated and indicated she was determined for the team to succeed. Jasmine would have been identified as the implementer, plant and resource investigator of the team

The main skills that set me aside from the rest of the team members were my finance skills. It enabled me to produce the relevant data sheets to enable the team members to evaluate the team's performance financially. I was also able to convey my ideas to the rest of the team, which showed my communication and interpersonal skills. I would have been identified as the sharpener, teamworker and complete finisher of the team. Overall it can be seen that each team member had their own roles which can be identified on Belbin's model. This setting has proven to be successful as the team gained market share.

However reviewing Tuckman's theory (figure 1), the storming stage, I understand that disagreements do not just come about; they may be the result of lack of communication skills. As members of the team had complimentary communication skills, it has led me to believe that that is the reason the storming stage may not be evident in the team's development. The adjourning stage of the team was not dreaded as the individuals were in an informal group first and would continue to be so after this stage was complete. Although being a good basis model, it can be quite confusing the exact stage a team will be at may not be identifiable (the stages may overlap), as well as the fact that it does not guide the user on the times at which they should expect each stage to be complete as individuals work at different paces.

Fincham (1999) states that " this typology reflects the extent to which group members' behaviour is determined by the group process and structure." " The impact on members' behaviour, values, and attributes of interacting and counteracting groups is far greater than in co-acting groups because of the increased intensity of interaction they involve". This suggests that certain behaviours may result because of the way the team is structured. The Young Enterprise team was a self-managed team (Robbins et al (2010)), which meant we depended on each other in order to be a productive team.

This team had no official leader but instead had a supervisor to whom we reported progress. Since our team was relatively small, it was not prone to social loafing (Robbins et al (2010)). Each team member had to play their part so the team would be successful. Ideas of how to profit maximise were brought about by brainstorming. I have found that it reduced conformity  
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within the team as each team member felt encouraged to bring forward their ideas and opinions without feeling the fears of being disapproved (Mullins (2007)). Although brainstorming was an effective approach as it enabled each team member to be creative, hence “ generating more and better ideas than the same number of individuals working on their own” (Mullin (2005)), as a group we discovered that brainstorming could be quite time consuming as we all had to meet up in order to brainstorm the ideas and even then decisions may not result (Mullin (2007)).

I am inclined to believe that groupthink is a behaviour that is mainly identified in teams where there are more individuals as well as the fact that it depends on the team members’ characters (McKenna (1994)). The individuals I was working with were very opinionated and wanted to achieve, so being inactive was not an option. Each team member was continuously raising ways in which they felt the team could develop, every week in the team meetings. I believe groupthink does exist, but it mainly rests upon the characteristics of the individuals.

“ The risky Shift phenomenon is the tendency of a group to make decisions of a group to make decisions that are riskier than those that the members of the group would have recommended individually”, (Buchanan (1994)).

Although during the times at which the Young Enterprise team was active, the existence of this risky shift approach had not been identified, I can recognise that it existed within the team. As a group we gambled when we purchased goods when we did not have evidence of consumer interest, as an individual I would have never taken such a huge risk as it may have resulted as a loss if the products had not appealed to the consumers’ tastes.

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Having identified some of the behavioural theories of groups and teams, the main point I have identified is that different theories are efficient and effective in different situations. The effectiveness of Tuckman's theory (figure 1) for example, I believe would be more evident being applied to a team bigger than The Young Enterprise team as well as people who were not in an informal group to begin with for the full process to take its course. The main disadvantage of this process however is that it can be quite time consuming and would be unsuitable to apply on teams that are constantly changing as they will not have time to apply all the stages as it is suggested that too little time may result in issues not being dealt with satisfactorily at a particular stage (Buchanan (1997)). I therefore believe that the theories of group behaviour may be used to maximise the effectiveness of a team's success depending on how well they are applied to the given circumstance.