Analysis of group dynamics and success in small group

The purpose of this assignment is to analyze two key concepts of group dynamics and how these relate to success in small groups. The key concepts that will be examined through empirical peer-reviewed articles are group formation, structure and leadership. The objective is to examine how these concepts relate to the experience of the group. The group consists of four members from York University. Member A (the author) is a 39-year-old, female psychology student, member B is a 24-year-old psychology student, member C a 24-year-old, chemistry student and member D is a 24-year-old, Kinesiology student. The group's name is " Minds in Motion" and their slogan is " Motivated Mission for Success".

Group Formation and Structure

Collaboration

It is a common belief that group work enhances the performance goals of groups; however, research by Sio, Kotovsky, and Cagan (2018) supports the negative effect of interaction, specifically with verbalizing ideas compared to individuals performing on their own without verbalization. Sio et al., (2018) conducted their experiment by involving 156 participants who were asked to solve 20 verbal puzzles. Participants were split into three randomly assigned groups. These were the " think alone quietly" group, the " alone thinking aloud group" and the " verbalizing pair group" (interacting group) (Sio et al., 2018). The scope of the experiment was to prove that hearing ideas of others actually reduced the variety of ideas. The word problems were presented on a computer monitor and the groups were given specific instructions on how to solve the problems. The " think alone quietly" group

entered their answers independently. The " think alone but aloud group" had to verbalize all their guesses while solving their problems and the " verbalizing pairs" had to verbalize their answers to help the other member (Sio et al., 2018). Their scores were determined by the cumulative responses of speed and accuracy over the test period (Sio et al., 2018). The results indicated that the " think alone" group had better results than the ' think aloud" and " verbalizing in pairs" group (interacting group), thus supporting the finding that verbalizing during groups hindered performance (Sio et al., 2018). This research supports the outcome of Minds in Motion's first group exercise. Member A (the author) and member C were the only participants present on this day. The group had limited ideas and left with the assignment incomplete. When member A (the author) had time to think alone, away from the other group member, she easily came up with the group name and slogan. In-line with Sio et al.'s (2018) research, there was no need for verbalization between either members of Minds in Motion in order to complete the exercise successfully.

In 2018, Sanyal and Hisam were interested in finding out if teamwork significantly impacts performance. Along with teamwork, the impact on work performance of leadership, trust and appraisal were also studied. The researchers used an in-depth descriptive research method to conduct their experiment. The researchers designed their own questionnaires, that were simple and to the point of their study. How does leadership, trust, appraisal and teamwork effect work performance (Sanyal et al., 2018)? These were sent to 100 participants from Dhofar University, ages 26 and above. The questionnaires were based on a rating scale and could be ranked.

Quantitative data was used to analyze the data collection. The correlation data revealed that teamwork, leadership and performance appraisal did in fact have a significant impact on work performance. Team work was found to be the most significant independent variable (Sanyal et al., 2018).

Similarly, Minds in Motion worked collaboratively throughout this experience and produced significant results by receiving full bonus marks for all assigned exercises. Minds in Motion were organized and structured when composing the work assignments. Members always listened to each other and provided positive criticism in order to get the assignments done in an effective and timely manner. This aligns with Sanyal and et al.'s (2018) findings that teamwork leads to higher results in work performance.

Social Support

Social media has become a platform for social support for many around the world and in 2018 researchers Nick, Cole, Cho, Smith, Carter and Zelkowitz looked at the benefits associated with this medium on individuals' well-being. The sub-scales of social support measured were esteem/emotional support, social companionship, informational support and instrumental support (Nick at el., 2018). The researchers designed an on-line self-report questionnaire for 1090 college participants ages 18 to 23 and community participants ages 18 to 42. The self-report measures for the on-line questionnaire was similar to in-person social support scales (Nick at el., 2018). The researchers adapted their questions based on the Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List. Using the Beck Depression Scale, the results indicate that, similar to in-

person support, online support provided a buffer against adversity (Nick at el., 2018).

Minds in Motion's experience with online social support was also significant. On day one, member B was suffering from a family emergency and left class just before the group work was assigned. Member A (the author), who was responsible for uploading the assignment that week, decided to include Member B on the social media app *Whats App* which became the platform of communication for the group. Member A (the author) was empathetic to member B's family circumstance and provided encouraging and caring support to her. Member B was appreciative and returned to the group feeling motivated to contribute to the tasks given. These circumstances support the findings of Nick at el.'s (2018) study in which emotional support in the form of empathy can be given over social media while producing a positive effect.

Also in support of emotional support being the main form of support experienced in Minds in Motions is the 2015 study of Rackow, Scholz and Hornug. The researcher's objective was to determine if emotional or instrumental support was more effective on the self-efficacy and physical exercise of 223 participants with a mean age of 34. 6 years of age (Rackow et al., 2015). In the intervention group a sports companion would provide both types support to the participants. They were then were given daily questionnaires over an 8 week period. Emotional support (for example empathetic, encouraging) was assessed using the Berlin Social Support Scale. Instrumental support (for example offering help) was assessed using a sub-scale of the Berlin Support Scale (Rackow et al., 2015). Self-efficacy was assessed with the following introduction: " After having started engaging in

physical exercise regularly on a long-term basis, how confident are you that you will succeed in doing so?" (Rackow et al., 2015). Physical exercise was examined using International Physical Activity Questionnaire. The results indicated that social support had a greater impact on self-efficacy but not on physical exercise. Instrumental support did not impact either (Rackow et al., 2015).

In 2018, Deetjen and Powell conducted an experiment to discover whether emotional or informational support was more prominent on an on-line support group for patients with various medical conditions. The patients ranged in age from 37 to 96 and 40 612 posts were examined. The data was classified through a Naiivee Bayesian classifier which is a technological system designed to identify emotional and informational support messages (Deetjen et al., 2018). The results determined that 58% of the posts were classed as emotional. For example " I am sorry that you are uncomfortable right now" compared to 42% as informational " I have the most success with this type of product" (Deetjen et al., 2018). This research also support Minds in Motions experience of emotional support being the most used form of support throughout their time spent together.

Norm Development

The transition from storming to norming is an essential transition into the development of a group's cohesiveness and Hod and Be-Zvi (2015) investigate this by conducting a case study within a semester-long course at an Israeli University. Their goal was to design collaborative learning norms in a class-room setting. Micro-level data from face-to-face conversations were

collected from audio, video and written documents from 14 students aged 25-54 (Hod et al., 2015). Interviews were conducted before, during and after the experiment to gain insight on their experiences. The group experienced tension early on when one of the members made a remark about another person's minority status and another decided to write " no comment" as their contribution to the group assignment. When asked why they did this, the student ran out of the room. One of the students felt that the group was not collaborating or being supportive. She proclaimed this to the group which sparked motivation for change and the group began discussing their conflicts (Hod et al., 2015). The researchers report their findings by analyzing their data as development of the group occurred over the course of the semester. They discovered that the group needed to break down their discussions, share ideas and give constant feedback to each other and this became an essential part of their group norms (Hod et al., 2015). The group needed to experience the conflict stage to be able to break down the barriers to be able to transition into the stage of building collaborative norms that led to the success of their assignment (Hod et al., 2015).

Minds in Motion started off as a three-person group for the first two weeks and the members were not sharing experiences or communicating openly. On day one, member C nominated member A (the author) as the group leader. Member A (the author) declared that she would be the leader this time but not every time. Further to this conflict, the group did not contribute to the group assignment during the first two classes and left early. Once a new members joined, the group began discussing the assignments in more details. Minds in Motion started to break down the topics and divide the work

between members. Wednesday became the norm for the group to collaborate their ideas online and then choosing which content would be submitted on Friday. Each week a new member would volunteer to be the leader and submit the group work. Although there were no insults uttered by members of Minds in Motion, there were weeks of unsupportive conflicting behaviors that were overcome with open dialogue that ultimately developed the functioning structure and norms of the group.

Leadership

Leadership Styles

In 2017, researchers Shaveling, Blaauw and Montfort were interested in determining what role leadership styles, gender homogeneity and team characteristics had on influencing group performance. A sample of 134 participants, with a mean age of 45 from the Netherlands' police department were given self-report questionnaires assessing their supervisor's leadership style. The Charismatic Leadership in Organizations questionnaire was used to evaluate the leadership styles of being either performance-based, transactional, charismatic or empowering. The team characteristics that were examined were psychological safety, heedful interrelating, policing experience and knowledge of team scores on performance. Team performance was based on the performance records maintained by the Ministry of Security and Justice (Schaveling et al., 2018). A mixed regression analysis suggested that charismatic, empowering and transactional leadership, homogeneity and a team's awareness of their score improved team performance (Schaveling et al., 2018).

The research by Schaveling et al., (2018) partially aligned with the experiences of Minds in Motion. Member D displayed a charismatic leadership style by facilitating the contributions of the members by splitting up their responsibilities which allowed the group to focus on the overall completion of the task in a shared-cohesive and timely manner. This aligned with the definition of Schaveling et al.'s 2018 study of a charismatic style that provides members with a sense of working on a shared task together as well as focusing on organization. Member C would commonly indicate her worry of not understanding the course material and assignment instructions. Member A (the author) led the team with empowering messages " You got this!" assisting member C in becoming self-assured and praising member D for his intriguing ideas during class discussion on the effects of social media and self-actualization. There was no evidence of transactional cost and benefits leadership (Hod et al., 2015) within Minds in Motion.

Choi, Kim and Kang designed an experiment in 2017 to determine the impact of transformational leadership vs. shared leadership styles. They developed surveys for 500 participants working in insurance and financial companies. The surveys were given at time one and time two. The survey used to evaluate transformational leadership was a 12-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire; " My leader encourages me to go above and beyond" (Choi et al., 2017). The shared leadership measure was a 13 item questionnaire based on the Small (2007) questionnaire and the perceived team effectiveness was evaluated with a 9-item input/output questionnaire; " the team meets its commitments" (Choi et al., 2017). Based on multiple regression analysis the results indicated a significant relationship for

transformational leadership and performance whereas shared leadership positively related to planning effectiveness (Choi et al., 2017). Similarly, Minds in Motion experienced transformational leadership in encouraging members C to give it her all where she was able to produce material for the group work each week.

Gender Differences in Leadership

In 2018, Wille, Wiernick, Vergauwe, Vrijdag and Trbovic sought to determine if gender differences in leadership existed in high profile executive positions and to what extent personality traits differed. They used a sample size of 577 executive (43 males and 143 females) and assessed personality using the Business Attitudes Questionnaire which includes 25 work-related personality scales based on the Big Five traits model (openness, contentiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) (Forysth 2014) and a five-compound personality assessment related to professional work (ambitiousness, critical, results orientated, strategic, autonomous) (Wille et al., 2018). Based on the standardized mean differences of the assessments the results indicated no significant gender difference in conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism or the compound personality traits (Wille et al., 2018).

Minds in Motion consisted of one male and three females that displayed no significant gender differences in leadership styles emerging among them. Member A (female author), B (female) and D (male) displayed assertiveness, strategic thinking and decisiveness. Member D and member A (the author) commonly initiated splitting up tasks and motivated the group to do their

share of the task assignments (assertiveness). Member A (the author) frequently analyzed the task and decided on the best approach to answering the questions (strategic thinking). Member B was always quick to make decisions based on group discussions (decisiveness). Member A (female author) and male-member D both displayed conscientious traits by planning ahead and being the first to post on the group's message boards. Member A (the female author), female-member B and male-member D all displayed extraversion by being talkative, energetic and enthusiastic during classroom and on-line interaction. There was no evidence of neuroticism by either gender within Minds in Motion.

Task-Orientated vs. Relational Leadership

In 2018, researchers Odermatt, Konig, Kleinmann, Nussbaumer, Rosenbaum, Olien and Rogelberg were interested in the effectiveness of task-orientated and relational-orientated leadership styles. They recruited 322 employees who participated in 55 team meetings from a variety of employment sectors. To assess the leadership behavior of the supervisors a Leadership Description Questionnaire consisting of 12 items on a five-point scale were given to the respondents (Odermatt et al., 2018). Satisfaction of the meeting was also measured using a self-report questionnaire indicating whether the meeting was " boring, stimulating, annoying, enjoyable, satisfying or unpleasant" (Odermatt et al., 2018). Standard deviation scores did indicate a significant correlation between relational-orientated leadership styles and satisfaction. Therefore, leaders exhibiting open communication, fairness and eliciting equal participation had higher ratings than task-orientated leaders who elicit structure and goal driven styles (Odermatt et al., 2018). This aligns

with the experiences of Minds in Motion's leadership styles of member A, B and D who exhibited friendly, open communication and generated group participation. However, during times of strict deadlines such as the group challenges that occurred during class, it was necessary for member A, B and D to use task-orientated styles to stay focused and complete the task on time.

The purpose of this assignment was to analyses two key concepts of group dynamics and how these affected the success of the group. In regards to group structures and formation, Minds in Motion developed group norms as they worked through a brief storming/conflict stage (Forsyth, 2014). They posted on-line every Wednesday and sat in the back of the classroom every week. The group collaborated well together and provided emotional support to one another, typically through online communication. In terms of leadership, the main leadership style the group encountered was charismatic and transformational styles with no gender differences in these styles. Based on the circumstance the group experienced both task-orientated and relational-orientated leadership which contributed to the success of the group. In order for Minds in Motion to work more cohesively in the future it would be recommended that the group have more face-to-face interaction to determine the what extra benefits this may produce.

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