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Activity 4

This report will explain the concept of group/team dynamics and will explain the concept of political behaviour in organisations and how it can impact positively and negatively on the achievement of organisational objectives.

According to (Watson, 2014, p. 209), teams/groups are individuals that come together to work towards the same goal. All members bring different personalities, views, experiences, skills and expertise which can often result in either a positive or negative group dynamic. Group dynamics is defined as “the way people interact with one another in a group” (Mind Tools, 2013). A positive dynamic is when members trust each other, help/respect each other and they know what they are working towards. In contrast, a poor dynamic is when people’s behaviour disrupts work and as a result the group may not come to any decision/make the wrong decision. According to (Watson, 2014, p. 210) there are differences between groups and teams. Groups recognise each other as being part of a group. “They contribute individually to a group’s goal and the evaluation of their performance depends on their contribution”. In contrast, “teams are individuals within a group that work towards a common purpose. They hold themselves mutually accountable” (Watson, 2014, p. 212).

According to (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2010) teams/groups can be influenced by a variety of dynamics such as, the nature of the individual, leadership, the structure of the group/team, power and status and communication processes. Google have done research into what makes successful teamwork. They found that psychological safety is the most important where people feel safe to take risks, say their opinion, trust each other and rely on each other (Bariso 2018). Research into effective leadership of surgical teams also found that a high degree of trust, constructive engagement in conflict, clear commitment to the task, all team members holding one another accountable and a team that is focused on results leads to successful teamwork (RCS, 2014, p 13).

Individuals take on specific roles in groups according to (Allorn, 1985,pp.52-58). These 3 roles are:

Task Role which focuses on productivity, development and achievement of organisation goals. They involve *facilitating* (setting goals for problem solving), *seeking information* (seeking ideas/taking part in discussion), *disseminating information* (offering suggestions/viewpoints), *coordinating and monitoring of activities and motivating the group* to achieve high output.

Group maintenance which focuses on creating good relationships between group members. They *involve encouragers* (creating a friendly atmosphere and encouraging others), *harmonisers* (try to keep the peace), *gate seekers* (encourage participation), *standard setters* (give advice/agree on standards). *Observers and followers* (provide feedback and show willingness to follow directions).

Self oriented which refers to individual needs and personal agendas. These involve *aggressors* (competitive, not listening to others), *blockers* (resist agreed decisions), *recognition seekers* (want attention and recognition for efforts/ideas). *Dominators* (control the group by giving orders). Conflict can arise within a positive dynamic group, but the

conflict must be managed and overcome otherwise it will lead to a negative effect on a group dynamic (Watson, 2014). According to (Allorn, 1985, pp. 52-58) groups need to have a balanced mix of all 3 roles.

Groups/teams go through different development stages according to Tuckman's 1965 five stage model (Tuckman & Jenson, 1977, p. 419). These consist of the following, **forming** (this is the development stage where uncertainty and confusion occur and where they test goals, purpose and leadership). **Storming** (where they negotiate roles/duties and decide on leader and how to share information. Conflict and confrontation is likely to occur at this stage). **Norming** (where the group/team members establish independence. This is where performance norms and group structure is formed). **Performing** (where the group/team is fully functional, have a clear understanding of how to share information and know what they are working towards.). **Adjourning** (this is where the objective is accomplished. The group/team can either re-form or part ways).

Belbin 1981 model (Mind Tools, 2016), identifies different roles that team members take which depends on their personality. Roles can be classified into 3 categories. These are, task related, team related and the individual/thinking related. An advantage and a disadvantage of each role have been included in the table below. According to (Mind Tools, 2016) Belbin believes that "all the team roles need to be prevalent at different stages of team work." The Belbin team role test assesses the behaviours and attributes to determine a person's place in a team. Belbin concludes that for a team to be effective they need a mix of the different personality types.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Task		
Shaper	❖ Challenging. ❖ Goal orientated.	❖ Often offends people's feelings.
Implementer	❖ Organised. ❖ Disciplined. ❖ Turns ideas into actions.	❖ Inflexible. ❖ Slow to respond to new possibilities.
Completer finisher	❖ Accurate. ❖ Conscientious.	❖ Worry. ❖ Reluctant to delegate.
Team		
Resource investigator	❖ Enthusiastic. ❖ Communicative. ❖ Develop contacts.	❖ Over optimistic. ❖ Loose interest.
Coordinator	❖ Calm. ❖ Confident. ❖ Participate in decision making.	❖ Can be seen as manipulative. ❖ Off loads personal work.
Team worker	❖ Caring. ❖ Diplomatic. ❖ Sensitive. ❖ Listen.	❖ Indecisive.

The individual-or thinking related		
Plant	❖ Creative. ❖ Imaginative. ❖ Solve difficult problems.	❖ Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.
Monitor Evaluator	❖ Analytical. ❖ Judges accurately.	❖ Lack ability to inspire others.
Specialist	❖ Motivated by pursuit of knowledge.	❖ Dwell on technicalities.
*From undertaking the test myself, my primary team role is a complete finisher (evidence 4.1). My secondary team role is an implementer.		

According to (Horn, 2009, p. 120) political behaviour is taking a view with the intention of personally gaining from that position. Each team member can act as either allies (your friends that help the team), opponents (where they are critical about a teams direction), adversaries (where they try to sabotage the team), bedfellows (where they align with the team because they want to benefit from it) and fence sitters (where they remain neutral). It is important that managers are aware of these and manage them so that objectives are still achieved.

(Owen, 2017) however, has an alternative view. He believes that managers need to act politically themselves to be successful. This can be through fighting for resources for their own teams or establishing relationships with influential people inside and outside the business which helps meet business objectives. According to this article, managers need IQ, EQ and PQ. Organisations assess employees on their IQ before hiring them. Most people with high IQ, are too clever to make things happen. They therefore look for EQ (emotional quotient). This is team work, charisma and the ability to motivate. PQ (political quotient) is about knowing how to acquire power and how to use it. This is at the heart of management where they make things happen through people. Successful managers have all 3. (Rodgers, 2007. p.7) also sees acting politically as good management practice when managing change. He defines it as “engaging with political dynamics; and using power ethically to influence outcomes in organisationally enhancing ways”.

To conclude, teams/groups are when people come together to work towards the same goal which can either result in a positive or negative group dynamic. Tuckman’s five stage model suggests that teams go through different development stages. Belbin also identifies different roles that team members take which depends on their personality. According to (Horn, 2009, p.120) team members can be allies, opponents, adversaries, bedfellows and fence sitters and concludes that managers need to be aware of them and manage them for objectives to be achieved. (Owen, 2017) and (Rodgers 2007. P.7) have an alternative view where they believe that managers need to act politically themselves to be successful.

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