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PROJECT PATHWAY 1

LEADERSHP & ENTREPRENUERSHIP

REFLECTIVE REPORT

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A reflective report on the experience and skills gained leading a group in the project about leadership and entrepreneurship

The time and opportunity that I have had working with the school group as a leader has impacted greatly both in my academic and professional life, helping me develop a lot of leadership and group skills that I never really knew I had. From the formation, norming, storming, performing, to adjourning of the group, it has all been a learning curve for me. The last part hurt the most as the group did not want to disband. According to Tuckman (1965) these stages in the group development stages are a true test to an individuals' cohesions, dependence, conflict and functional roles, in a real group situation they represent emotionality, orientation, emergency of solutions through relevant opinion exchange. And Belbin (2004) suggested that for the effective functioning of the group, there is need for the correct mix of members. I was required to turn to group roles such as resource investigator, group worker, coordinator, plant, monitor evaluator, specialist, shaper, implementer, Finisher.

There are several skills I learnt while working with the group as explained below.

Personal Development

In many ways that may be indescribable, working with the group as a leader helped me find myself, especially in discovering and building on several skills that I already had.

Lots of the activities we engaged in as a group helped me improve identity and awareness, develop talent and grow potential, build human capital and facilitate employability. The whole quality of my life was improvements and the realization of my dreams and aspirations was contributed to. All the formal and informal roles that I had to fit into during my time in the group helped me develop a lot of skills and abilities that I consider personal.

Some of the activities that got to be improved as a result of the new level of self-awareness I achieved included, improved self-awareness, increased self-esteem, improved skills and the learning of new ones, being able to do a personal SWOT analysis, improved career prospect, knowing how to identify and improve potential in other people, and improved social status among my peers.

Communication Skills

As a leader of the group, I must confess how much leading the group has helped me improved in my communication. While I led the group through series of researches, I just knew that my communication skill was coming up. The skill has proven to be all important as I can now communicate both in formal and informal situations, especially when it's about communicating effectively with subordinates and group members.

I have improved in some areas of communication skills such as:

Listening: I have come to understand how important it is for a leader to listen well if they must engage in effective communication. Overtime, I've learnt to listen to feedback with a mind open enough to understand the emotions that go with it. My listening skill has strongly improved, especially as regarding looking out for facts and not allow for any form of distraction

Giving compliments: This is virtually another part of the communication skill. During the time I was with the group, I learnt to compliment hard work especially if communication will not be broken. I learnt the effect of giving positive compliments as a means of motivating group members to greatness.

Leadership Management

Without good leadership skill, no leader can function well enough to deliver the desired results. This would require me to go through phases I had never imagined I would while working with a group. However, it improved my leadership skills, and I can now work with just any group and successfully motivate them to succeed in meeting the desired objectives. Other skills such as delegation where I had to break down tasks into smaller manageable task and assign my team members to work on while supporting them; conflict resolution where resolving disagreements that arose during out group discussion and meetings and finally organization skills which involved making sure that the team were able to see measurable progress in terms of the feedback I gave them regarding our group assignment.

Leading a group required me to find my position into the group both as the vision barer and at the same time as a contributor. With the Impact this experience has had in me, it is now necessary for me to say that I am a better group leader. I have attained the skill of working with am group without appearing too assertive of condescending to my group members by giving them allowance to feel like they are in charge of their own team. Working with an open mind to encourage inclusion considering the cultural diversity of the members of the group and building trust among the members I lead.

Research and analyzing skills.

It was mandatory for me to be able to research often more than my group in order to validate their opinions and submitted data through analysis. As a result, my research and analysis skills were greatly improved as I evaluated the relevant data that was submitted in by my group members in terms of contribution to the group work. Being able to tell chose between the correct sources and those that were not academically validated was of great importance in developing the skills and comparing and contrasting the various ideologies on the different theories they submitted.

Writing Skills such as formatting and representation of the submitted information by my group members into the desired format was one of the skills I had to improve on. Due the to the diversity of backgrounds in the members in my group, each member would write in the way the best understood the data they analyzed. However, I was tasked with formatting and representing the data in a uniform way that would best communicate one voice through our group presentation. This required, rewriting most of the work that my members had to send through and checking and correcting the grammar, making sure that same concept they intended to communicate remains at all times regardless of the words used.

Some of the aspects that I paid credence to are:

- Managing the time, I had to spend on a particular topic and starting the research and analysis in time. Technically setting realist deadlines with in which I expected my self to deliver the desired results.
- Breaking down my research topics into smaller manageable topics that I would be able to thoroughly research about and analyze extensively. This included the individual contributions from my group members being carefully selected and assigned to each member based on their strengths.

Leadership theories and Skills

While a lot of leadership skills abound from different sources, I've chosen to write on this few that I've learned overtime while working with the group. Getting first hand school of thought in some of my group members who actually believed religiously in some of the listed theories below and also understanding the theories themselves was great experience to me.

Some member exhibited the Great Man Theory actually believing that they were born leaders and even mentioned some of the experiences with their families. While other group members described some of my leadership style bent on the Traits Theory thinking that my character defined my leadership style. Was introduced to other theories such n the Contingency Theory where members disagreed with other theories saying that no leadership style was perfect for all situations and that one required to move between them all. This I particularly found interesting. I was also introduced to a theory which was often referred to as the situational theory by one of my group members who believed that the course of leadership action a leader took was solely based one the situation at hand. Other behavior theories which strongly contested the great man theory included the behavioral theory which emphasized that leadership was based and the way they behave rather than being born leaders.

Entrepreneurship theories and their mode of application during my time with the group were something of interest to me as well. Some of these theories included the Economic theories: where entrepreneurs are seen as risk takers. The theory is focused on entrepreneurship skills as a function of economic conditions and the opportunities that they create. The resource-based theories which focuses on the way individuals leverage different types of resources to get entrepreneurial efforts going. Availability of capital is seen as a major boost for good economic skills. The psychological theories where the main focus is on the individual, and all emotional or mental elements that drive the entrepreneurial individual. It is suggested that certain personality traits may drive entrepreneurial behaviors and lastly opportunity-based theories where it is believed that entrepreneurs excel majorly by seeing and taking advantage of possibilities created by social, technological and cultural changes.

Conclusion

Generally, these skills that I've learnt will help me achieve a lot of academic, personal and professional success and I'm looking forward to another opportunity when I can work with the group again. And hopefully next time I will be better equipped to handle the stress that comes with managing a multicultural group and improve my communication skills. I will lay down some ground rules straight away from the beginning to avoid hiccups that I faced during the previous group session.

References

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Tuckman, B.W., 1965. Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological bulletin*, 63(6), p.384.