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Professional Practice - FIT5122

Learning and Reflection Portfolio

Chapter 2 - Working in Teams (professional expectations)

In your Reflection address the questions below:

Teams and conflict resolution

1. What factors differentiate a high performing team from a low performing team and what strategies can be applied to improve a team's performance?

2. Why are theories such as Tuckmans model of Team development, Z process and Edward DeBonos six hats important in understanding and improving team performance?

3. What are Kurt Lewin's different leadership styles? Describe team situations where each style would be most appropriate?

4. What strategies can be used to address potential challenges faced by teams? What issues can arise from different leadership styles and multidisciplinary team

5. What are the processes that should be embedded into a team for efficient problem solving and decision making?

| at are some of the major causes of conflict in teams? How can conflict resolution strategies (such as active ing behaviours, I statements and team social contracts) can help prevent or resolve conflict?

7. What are Thomas Kilman's Five Conflict Handling Modes for understanding how you can personally handle conflict? How we canyou use this model to better prevent or resolve conflict in teams?

8. What conflict resolution strategy(s) can you use to resolve conflict in a given situation? How can these strategies be effectively implemented?

9. What are benefits of implementing a social contract in a team? How would you implement and manage a team social contract?

Cultural Differences and conflict management

1. How do intercultural differences can impact team dynamics and working relationships? How can you change your communication style and behaviours to address these issues?

2. Explain the theories of high and low context cultures and polychronic and monochronic cultures? How can you use these theories to help individuals and teams struggling with cross cultural differences to improve?

3. Explain your understanding of intercultural theories such as ethnocentrism, ethnorelativism and DMIS? How can you use these theories to improve cross cultural awareness and team performance?

4. What are the benefits and challenges of working in a cross cultural team versus a homogeneous team?

5. What intercultural strategies (such as cultural translators, mutual learning, understanding and teaching) can help teams struggling with cross cultural differences to improve? When and how would you use these strategies?

6. What are some differences in communicating across countries and cultures? What are the appropriate strategies and intercultural communication skills to adopt in a given situation?

arning Reflection

Notes:

characteristics of a high performance team including clear goals, good strategies of conflict solving, clear communication, and everyone actively contributes. But low performance teams do not have clear goals and have some communication problems. Each team member just does the work independently.

To improve the team working performance, we need to understand the individual strengths of each group member and create a good social environment where each group member dares to share his or her ideas. Group members should also create a safe and trusting environment for their teammates and support their ideas.

Tuckman's stages include forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. These theories provide the foundation for understanding and improving team performance. By using them to guide their work, teams can work together more effectively, avoid potential conflicts, make better decisions, and be more successful in achieving the group's goals.

Kurt Lewins include three different type of leadership:

Authoritarian management styles: Management through clear direction and control; the team leader usually has strong authority, has complete decision-making power, and expects unquestioning obedience.

Democratic management styles: Encourage teams to share their ideas, suggestions and solutions and give them consideration, but managers retain final decision-making authority.

Laissez-Faire management styles: No oversight is provided during the creation or production process. Laissez-faire leaders promote autonomous teams and usually only step in when a problem arises or when the team asks for it

I-statement and Thomas Kilmann's five conflict handling models to solve conflicts. In the Authoritarian management styles, there is a tendency for members to work negatively and to feel that their ideas are not being heard. Multidisciplinary teams may have unclear roles for each team member, and individuals have different objectives and attitudes.

Thomas Kilmann's five conflict handling models are:

Competing: This model involves assertiveness and non-cooperation. In this approach, individuals persuade others to accept their point of view without considering the opinions or needs of others.

Collaborating: This model involves a high degree of assertiveness and cooperativeness. In this approach, individuals work together to find a mutually beneficial solution that satisfies all.

promising: This model involves a moderate degree of assertiveness and cooperation. In this appro individuals are willing to give up some of their own interests y in order to find a solution that satisfies all parties involved

Avoiding: Unassertive and uncooperative. Individuals choose to avoid the conflict or postpone its resolution to a later date.

Accommodating: This model involves a low degree of assertiveness and a high degree of cooperativeness. In this approach, individuals place the needs of others above their own ideas and interests, and may even sacrifice their own interests to maintain harmonious relationships within the project team.

Social contract can help the group communicate more effectively and develop common goals and work ethics for the group. We can also set rules for group communication in social contract, such as response time, number of formal meetings, and how to solve problems.

Different cultures may have different approaches to how they communicate. Some cultures are more direct in their communication, and the literal meaning is what they want to say. But some cultures are more euphemistic in their communication, and often the true meaning of what they want to say is not in the literal meaning.

High context cultures: indirect, implicit, and body language is important. When dealing with conflict, disagreement is personal and non confrontational style preferred for high context cultures

Low context cultures: direct, simple and clear messages. Disagreement is not personal and direct conflict resolution styles when dealing with the conflicts.

Ethnocentric: Including denial, defence, and minimisation. Avoid culture differences. At this stage people are not interested in other cultures and will judge or ignore the different cultures of others.

Ethnorelative: Including acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Seeking culture differences. At this stage people begin to accept different cultural habits and will begin to feel interested. People respect different cultures and change their behaviour and communication in a work environment with a different culture.

Benefits of cross-cultural teams: different perspectives of thinking problems, new ways to resolve conflict, different leadership for different situations, more points of view when making decisions.

Challenge of cross-cultural teams: different communication methods, different languages, Insufficient understanding of other people's culture

The benefits of working in a **homogen** ⓘ s team include using the same language and communicating in a consistent manner, but not having enough new ideas and insights when dealing with problems

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re translator: act as facilitators or intermediaries when two cultures are meeting or working together.

Mutual learning: Discovering what other team members do

Mutual understanding: grasping why they do it.

Mutual teaching: Help group members familiar with each other's norms.

Cultural translators can be used when group members have problems or conflicts due to different cultures. This can help resolve conflicts within the team and make members more aware of each other's cultures

Strategies to help multicultural teams perform:

Communication: finding differences in communication and decision making styles

Languages: Pick a common language to avoid slang. Select a universal communication app.

Work style: choose the best work style for the team; find the value of collaboration and encourage every member to cooperate.

Design collaborative work: be clear on whether tasks are divided or everyone will contribute; start with well-defined tasks.

Reflection:

After the study, I realised the impact of different leadership styles on the team. I think the current leadership model of our group is Laissez-Faire management styles, where there is no one group member in a leadership role to supervise everyone's tasks in the actual collaboration process. We also feel free to express our own ideas in the meetings. But whenever we had a problem that was difficult to solve, the group members in the meeting fell silent. So I think maybe Democratic management style will be more suitable for our group. In the future decision making process, I, as the only MIT student in the group, should be more active in making decisions about the project functions.

The members of our group are all from Asian countries, so the cultural gap between us is not very huge, basically we all belong to high context culture. In terms of communication, we are all familiar with each other, but our teammates are more direct than me, so I have changed my communication style to become more direct. When dealing with conflicts in the team, I would express my problems and grievances directly, and I think this would be more efficient in dealing with conflicts. I can also use I-Statement to express myself, so that I can be more considerate of the feelings of teammates. Similarly, Thomas Kilmann's five conflict handling models can also be used. It is useful in understanding how individuals approach and manage conflicts in different situations. By recognizing which model group members tend to use, I can become more self-aware and develop strategies to deal with conflict more effectively in this IE project and in future group work.

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In the IE project group， we are in the adaptation stage from ethnorelative. We will respect each other for our different cultures and be curious about different cultures. Hopefully I can improve myself in my future encounters with the group so that I can reach the stage of integration.

Buddy Perspective

During the iceberg discussion, I had a discussion with a team member about whether a different conflict was potential or visable. During the discussion, I think 'Disagree with another team member' is a hidden conflict, because I don't express it immediately if I don't agree with the other team member's point of view. But my buddy thinks that if you disagree with a team member's point of view, you should speak up and solve the problem, even if it's a conflict over a different point of view. But in my opinion, if I can barely accept someone else's point of view, even if I don't strongly agree with it, I don't choose to refute it right away. After discussion I realised that my approach might not be good for the group and that having different ideas is a good thing for the group, we will have more and different perspectives. so I agreed with my buddy's idea and put 'Disagree with another team member' in the visible section.

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