Group Formation in Hybrid Meetings

Seminar Thesis

in the context of the "IIS Research Seminar"

at the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Law

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

Chair of Digitalisierung in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft

Prof. Dr. Sven Laumer

Supervisor:	Prof. Dr. Sven Laumer
Tutor:	Tim-Julian Schwehn, M.Sc.

Presented by:	First name Middle names Surname
	Example Street 1
	Example City
	+49 911 123456789
	student@fau.de
	Matriculation Number

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Abbreviations

BBN	Bundeseinheitliche Betriebsnummer
CCG	Centrale für Coorganisation
DFÜ	Datenfernübertragung
dpi	dots per inch
EAN	Europäische Artikelnumerierung
GoM	Grundsätze ordnungsmäßiger Modellierung
VBA	Visual Basic for Applications
WWS	Warenwirtschaftssystem
ZfB	Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft
ZuO	Zuordnung

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Symbols

a_0	Initial payment in $t = 0$
C	Capital value
d_t	Deposit surplus in relation to t
i	Target rate
n	Operating life
q	Interest factor $1 + i$
r_s	Distance of step s from the margin in cm
s	Step index
t	Period index

a_0 Initial payment in $t = 0$

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1 Extended Abstract

1.1 Motivation and Research Question

In current times, where COVID-19 has brought about radical changes to professional environments. Aside from working on-site, new working methods have evolved. This covers hybrid and remote work environments where team members choose to occasionally be present on-site or to work exclusively from a distant location.

Along with these developments, there are also changes occurring in the kinds of meetings that are required for effective team coordination. Meetings that include elements of both on-site and remote attendance, with some members participating from a co-located location. These types of meetings are called as Hybrid Meetings.

People are using hybrid meetings more frequently for daily coordination because they allow team members to participate without being restricted to being in person at a particular place for a meeting, while also ensuring that team members have a complete work-life balance. However, a difficulty that arises with this new strategy is the development of social groups inside the teams. These groups are mostly created among the team members who are co-located, or present in the same physical area and work together.

As these social groups take shape, due to enhanced collaboration and bonding between themselves the individuals who are co-located may grow unwelcome towards the remote participants and the remote participants may feel isolated. This might even result in distant participants being left out of critical decisions that participants who are physically present might take on their own, which would lower the degree of job satisfaction among the remote workers.

This exclusion of members within the same team can negatively impact the collaboration, productivity and overall morale of the team. We are focusing our study on the fundamental causes of this group formation among co-located coworkers and minimizing the exclusion of distant players, hence our research question is "**How are social groups formed within hybrid meetings and how can the exclusion of remote participants be diminished?**"

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1.2 Theoretical Background

This is theoretically supported by a few previously developed ideas, such as the Social Identity theory, which holds that people who work together begin to identify as members of the same group and perceive those who work remotely as members of other groups. Discrimination resulting from this type of identification eventually pushes distant individuals out.

We'll also examine ways to strengthen the team's cohesiveness. We'll look at the potential for group projects and communication approaches that might affect the cohesiveness of the group no matter where they are.

We will also explore the idea whether a technology-mediated communication medium affect group formation and dynamics or not. We will explore the technical tools needed to make the communication better.

Another theory which we will go through will be Equity Theory, which deals with the lack of appreciation towards the remote participants thereby making them feel undervalued of their contributions.

1.3 Intended Method

The minimal need for on-site participation is two participants. For instance, if a team of ten individuals is assembled, with two of them co-located and the other members at a remote location, the meeting would be classified as hybrid.

The planned method for answering this research topic is qualitative investigation. When a questionnaire is ready to be asked to certain individuals through interviews. These individuals regularly attend the hybrid meetings and work in a hybrid environment. These individuals may participate remotely or as co-located participants. The questionnaire would not change since we anticipate that each participant would provide a different response.

The questionnaire would cover the topics such as

- Introduction
  This will look at the attendees' frequency of participation in hybrid meetings, their preparation methods, the overall setting, and the way the meetings operate.

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- Team Identification

  It aims to examine the variations in engagement and their respective roles in both on-site and remote work environments. This will enable us to determine whether the participants who are co-located on-site have formed any subgroups. This will ascertain whether they contain any possible biases or opinions against any group, as well as how it might affect the success of the team as a whole.

- Setting of Hybrid Meeting

  To improve communication and cooperation, this section will examine the tools people use to participate during meetings, compare the benefits of virtual and in-person participation, and discuss the difficulties associated with hybrid meetings.

- Open Ended Questions

  Additional thoughts or suggestions to improve the hybrid meetings and their personal preferences for meeting setting.

1.4   Expected Contribution

The main goal will be to propose elements that, regardless of the team members' workplaces, can improve inclusion. The purpose of the meeting should be to accomplish a team goal, which can only be accomplished by improved cooperation and equal involvement from all attendees. This can involve using a variety of techniques to increase the remote participants' sense of inclusion.

We will have a deeper grasp of team social dynamics and the underlying causes of subgroup formation because of of this research. Some suggestions can be made after taking into account the factors that cause remote players to be excluded. It is also possible to offer some improvements to the meeting designs, such as integrating better technology or tools to increase the participation of participants who are not in person and strengthen team cohesion.

Due to the socio-technical nature of this research issue, it will aid in our understanding of organisational psychology, communication technology, and team management, all of which contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of hybrid meetings.

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1.5   Project Timeline

The project's development can begin as early as the final week of May 2024. The questionnaire has been discussed and approved by the supervisor. People still need to be contacted and asked for permission to participate in these interviews. Beginning in the final week of May 2024, this is possible.

We can begin conducting interviews with people starting the first week of June in order to get some early feedback. Interviews with at least 7–10 individuals are planned. All of the interviews would take place online. All of their answers would be recorded, and the transcripts would be available to us. Depending on who is available, this should take no more than two or three weeks.

We may begin gathering these responses and organising the viewpoints starting the week of June 3. This would be a significant step because it would enable us to answer our study question. The same week, we can begin composing our preliminary theses. By the deadline in the second week of July, the Final Thesis can be sent in.

In Summary

Tasks	Timeline
Reaching out people and asking for their consent for interview	27 May 2024 - 31 May2024
Scheduling interviews	3 June 2024 – 21 June 2024
Compiling result of Interviews and Preliminary thesis writing	24 June 2024 – 30 June 2024
Final thesis Submission and presentation creation.	14th July 2024

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2   Main Section

2.1   First Subsection

2.1.1   First Subsection on Third Level

2.1.2   Second Subsection on Third Level

2.2   Second Subsection

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3 Another Main Section

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4   Further Sections

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5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

5.2 Limitations and Further Research Needs

References

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3. Hacker, J., vom Brocke, J., Handali, J., Otto, M., and Schneider, J. (2020). Virtually in This Together – How Web-Conferencing Systems Enabled a New Virtual Togetherness during the COVID-19 Crisis. European Journal of Information Systems (29) 5, 563–584.

Appendix

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IX

Declaration of Academic Integrity

Ich versichere, dass ich die Arbeit ohne fremde Hilfe und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Quellen angefertigt habe und dass die Arbeit in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen hat und von dieser als Teil einer Prüfungsleistung angenommen wurde. Alle Ausführungen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß übernommen wurden, sind als solche gekennzeichnet.

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