Internal Competition – A Curse for Internal Performance

The study of Organizational Behavior is devoted to understanding the behavior of individuals in teams. The two main outcomes of Organizational Behavior are job performance and organizational commitment; these outcomes are defined as behaviors that contribute to the goal of an organization and an individual’s attachment to an organization respectively. In the ERP training manual project, there was a substantial lack of both of these individual outcomes. This in turn created an unfinished product and unhappy clients. By using a resource based view, – which analyzes the resources that are profitable to an organization- this report will analyze the team’s characteristics and diversity, the team’s processes, and the team’s consequences from the lack of cooperation.

A topic that is often stressed in Organizational Behavior is the difference between groups and teams. A group is considered to be a collection of people while a team is considered to be a group of people with a common goal. A team creates dependence among employees in order to fulfill a task. There are 5 classifications of teams in organizational behavior and the FIS project team would be considered a project team. A project team is a team that is created to accomplish a “one time” task. Even though all the members of the project team were considered to be technical experts, they still could not deliver the product at the end. This could be attributed to the lack of teamwork and the structure of the project. The structure of the team had many problems such as the fact that opportunities for promotions were all decided by the project manager. This would create outcome interdependence within the team. Outcome interdependence is where the team is focused on the feedback and rewards that come out of a successful task. This kind of interdependence creates competition between teammates and puts a priority on individual performance rather than team performance. The general layout of this system hinders teamwork and creates individualistic roles which are reflected by behaviors that are beneficial to specific individuals rather than the team. While the team was considered to have an outcome interdependence there is also a task interdependence between them. Task interdependence is the extent to which teammates interact with each other to finish the task at hand. Additionally, the type of task interdependence that the team has would be pooled interdependence. Pooled interdependence is a type of task interdependence with the lowest required coordination. The team project was structured in such a way where group members would complete their assigned component individually and then add the work to create a finished module. This disregards the need for teamwork and makes the employees feel like individuals performing their task rather than contributing to the larger team task. Furthermore, diversity is defined as the difference between members of the team. As for this team, diversity was nonexistent. This was a problem because according to the similarity attraction approach, similar people attract each other. This, in addition to the fact that there were members of the group who already worked together created factions amongst the team. The lack of proper team structure and unwieldy characteristics could explain why a mature group of experts could create so much conflict amongst themselves.

In addition to the difference between a group and a team, the idea of process gain and loss is discussed in Organizational Behavior. Process loss and gain are the expectations that a team is held upon, based on the individual’s capabilities. Since all of the members of the FIS project team were experts in their fields, the team experienced a process loss because the team did not deliver a worthwhile product. Many of the team processes led to process loss which inevitably led to the demise of the team. For instance, the team manager, Philly seems to be going through some withdrawal behavior. To be more specific Philly is going through physical withdrawal as seen by his tardiness in his duties and his lack of motivation. This withdrawal from work creates production blocking. Production blocking is when a component on the team ceases to work which slows down the whole process. In Philly’s case, this was where he would refuse to take calls from clients. This would trickle down to his co-workers forcing them to stay late in order to meet deadlines which created frustration. The reason for this odd behavior could be attributed to Philly’s alleged divorce. This information was found out through political deviance that was occurring in Rishi’s faction. Political deviance can be defined as actions that harm individuals in the workplace. An example of this would be the gossip that was occurring in Rishi’s group. However, this information shows why Philly’s work ethic has been nonexistent for the term of this project. In organizational behavior, Philly would be going through a non-work hindrance stressor. Essentially, the divorce is causing strain because he is not coping well with the events in his life. These stressors could also be the reason for Philly’s withdrawal. The political deviance in the workplace did not stop at gossip sadly. The interactions between Abey Sidharth and Sara were a clear example of counterproductive behavior. When asked for important information by Sara, Abey clearly told her he would not give them to her. This kind of behavior is counterproductive because it creates coordination loss. This is because by forcing Sara to find the information herself, she is spending extra effort to accomplish her tasks. Quite possibly the only positive thing about this situation was Sara’s response. There are 4 categories of responses to counterproductive behavior. These are exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. Sara showed that she is an exemplary employee by voicing her opinion on how to improve communication within the team by proposing a community folder to share information. The same cannot be said for Rishi. Rishi has multiple cases of counterproductive behavior where he has shown that he looks out for himself. The reason for his behavior could be attributed to his motivation. Since Rishi considered the current project as a way to his promotion, his motivation would be extrinsic. This type of motivation causes behavior to be affected by external rewards like money and praise. As a team leader, Rishi did not fulfill the needs of the team and rather chose to fulfill his wants. This kind of behavior can be seen in his interactions with Sara. Rishi was gossiping about Sara’s incompetence when it came to created curriculum. In addition to this, Rishi’s attitude towards his junior members is very counterproductive. This is because it was stated that Rishi derived pleasure from making his junior members feel inferior. When Sara approached her team leader, Rishi, about Sara’s problems with Philly, rather than help her, Rishi suggested that she avoid creating more problems. This behavior that Rishi showed here shows why he couldn’t work in a team. The reason is because Rishi’s teamwork processes are nonexistent. To be more specific, Rishi does not have the ability to manage conflicts that rise from task related activities, or interpersonal processes. In addition to a lack of teamwork processes, Rishi couldn’t manage activities that directly relate to completing the task at hand, also known as task work processes. An example of this is seen in Rishi’s ambassador activities which is his communication with the clients. Since Rishi is motivated by money, he would do anything to make himself look better. This made him show the first draft to the clients and Philly. This not only caused Sara to report this behavior to the HR manager, but also forced the clients to report the work. The various characters in the FIS project team and their various processes shows why the project was a failure.

While the consequences of the characteristics and processes of the team have already been described, they have been done so for the short term. Many of these actions have long term consequences on motivation, stress, and job performance. These repercussions can be seen in all the members of the team. For instance, Philly’s job performance was massively dropping throughout the course of the project. This could be attributed to the multiple stressors in his life. The divorce in his life is affecting his ability accomplish his tasks. This behavior then goes further and affects every one of his subordinates. Sara was also a great example of being broken down by the team. Sara initially was very resilient towards the counter productiveness of the team. She would try to give feedback on how to improve the teamwork within the project. Throughout the span of the project however, her peers in the team became more hostile towards her. While Sara eventually reported this, her motivation and commitment to work was definitely reduced. In addition there was a considerable amount of stressors on Sara, not only from Philly but from Rishi also. Rishi not only promoted a competitive team structure, but also harassed those who would work in a team. This behavior ruined the whole team dynamic in regards to the performance and commitment of the team as a whole. Needless to say, FIS project team had no teamwork properties at all and that reflected in the work they provided.

During the project’s term, it became apparent that there needed to be improvements made to the current system. Sara made suggestions that were ignored but are still very valid. Sara suggested that a common folder be created in order to share documents. As described before, the current system in place creates a pooled interdependence. Sara’s suggestion would create a comprehensive interdependence where the team would have a very high level of interaction and collaboration. One other change that needs to be implemented would be appraisal method. The current method creates a competitive system because everyone would try to get the “exceed expectations.” This places priority on the individual rather than on the team. A better alternative would be to implement a hybrid outcome interdependence system. This system would mean members would receive rewards for their individual contribution in compliance with the team’s performance. This would allow teamwork to flow more freely and help the comprehensive interdependence system work more effectively. Through the analysis of the various attitudes, actions, and behaviors of the FIS project team, it has become very apparent that these are changes that need to be implemented. More focus should be placed on the team rather than the individuals in order to create less competition and more teamwork.