TEAM DYNAMICS

Dr. Sutapa Bhattacharjee

Professor

Institute of Business Administration

University of Dhaka

Team Dynamics

- Team dynamics is a system of behaviors and psychological processes occurring within a team that affect their performance.

- The good thing about team dynamics is that if you know its parameters and monitor them, you can influence them. This way, if one of your projects started badly, you can do something about it by trying to change the team dynamics rather than observing your project slowly going off the rails.

Positive Group Dynamics

- It means that team members trust each other, are ready to work collectively, provide support, and productively brainstorm ideas, and listen to other group members. In groups with positive dynamics, team members feel comfortable sharing their ideas and having a constructive dialogue.

- **Open communication.** When team members are willing to discuss issues and problems throughout a project.
- **Alignment.** When each team member understands their duties in the project, overall project objectives, and project development direction.
- **Conflict resolution.** When each participant feels comfortable enough to resolve conflicts through discussion or take it to the group for public discussion.
- **Commitment to the project.** When each team member is deeply involved in the project and feels at ease to share their ideas on how to improve it.
- **Optimistic thinking.** When participants are ready to commit to the project even when everything is going wrong.

Get to Know Your Team

Observe your team during the working process and at breaks. Watch the way they communicate and solve problems. This gives you a better understanding of their current interactions and how they work together.
- **Have individual interviews** with team members. Let them share their concerns and feelings about the project and team they work in. Encourage open discussion.
- **Interview team-related employees** such as line managers and others to see their point of view on the effectiveness of your team.

Common problems in a team

- **Inefficient leadership.** This is when your team needs a stronger leader who will delegate tasks, define project development direction, and estimate the accomplished work more effectively.
  - **Groupthink and authoritative approach.** This is the opposite of weak leadership and is when team members feel uneasy in expressing their opinions and contributing to the project. For example, when team members are punished for their mistakes or for disagreeing with the team leader.
  - **Lack of interest** when some team members aren't involved with a project and throw parts of their work on other colleagues. As a result, several members of the team do all the work on a project.
  - **Psychological discomfort.** This is when team members hide their feelings or are motivated at work by their emotions. They may have hidden aggression, recognition-seeking, or negative attitudes. All of these result in poor communication of information and a bad attitude towards a project.

3 categories in team dynamics

- **Task-related dynamics**
- **Social dynamics**
- **Individual dynamics**

Task-related Dynamics

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clear delineation of roles ensures everyone knows what is expected of them.

- **Communication:** Effective information sharing and active listening are crucial for task accomplishment.

- **Decision-making:** How decisions are made, whether collaboratively or through a leader, impacts team effectiveness and cohesiveness.

- **Conflict management:** Addressing conflicts constructively ensures that disagreements do not hinder progress.

Social Dynamics

- **Trust and cohesion:** Building trust fosters a supportive environment where team members collaborate effectively.

- **Team identity:** A sense of belonging and shared purpose enhances team cohesion.

- **Interpersonal relationships:** Building positive relationships boosts communication and teamwork.

- **Diversity and inclusion:** Acknowledging and respecting individual differences contributes to a harmonious team.

Individual Dynamics

- **Motivation and engagement:** A motivated, team leader contributes actively and productively to achieve goals.

- **Skill and expertise:** Utilizing each member's skills optimizes task performance.

- **Personal development:** Encouraging individual growth benefits both the team and the individuals.

- **Recognition and feedback:** Acknowledging achievements and offering constructive feedback promotes continuous improvement.

Factors of Team Effectiveness
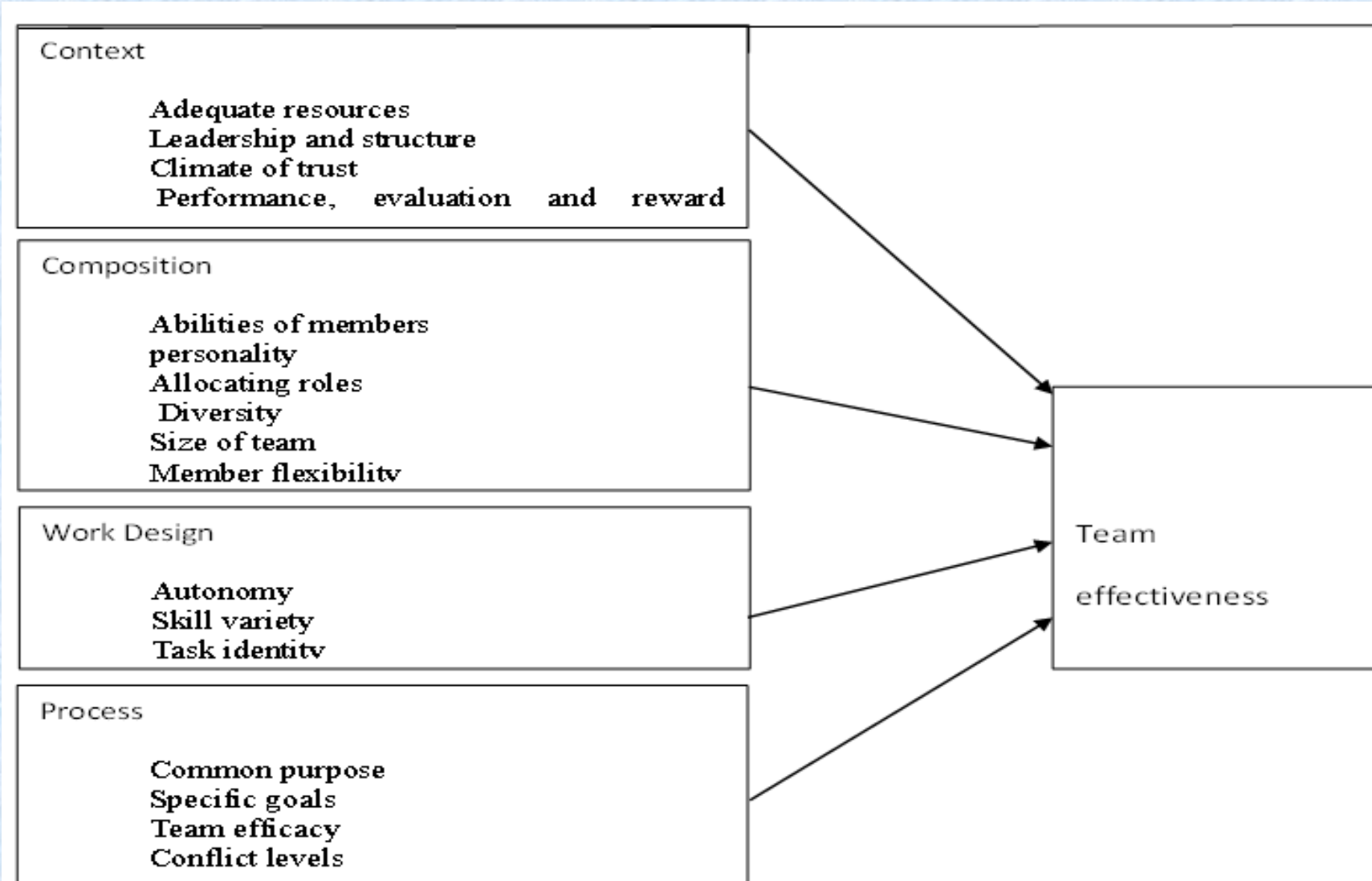
What makes teams successful? – Google's Project Aristotle

- **Psychological safety:**

    Team members feel safe taking risks and being vulnerable in front of each other without the fear of being embarrassed, ridiculed, or facing any other consequences.

    Psychological safety refers to an individual's perception of the consequences of taking an interpersonal risk or a belief that a team is safe for risk-taking in the face of being seen as ignorant, incompetent, negative, or disruptive.

- **Dependability:**

    On dependable teams, members reliably complete quality work on time. The opposite of dependability is shirking responsibilities.

Project Aristotle

- **Structure and clarity:**

    Team members have clear roles, plans, and goals. Every team member clearly understands job expectations. He/she also knows the process of fulfilling these expectations. The consequences of the individual team member's performance are also clear.

    They can set goals individually or at a group level. The goals must be specific, challenging, and attainable. Google often uses Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) to help set and communicate short and long-term goals.

Project Aristotle

- **Meaning:**

    Finding a sense of purpose in either the work itself or the output is important for team effectiveness. Work is personally important and meaningful to the team members. The meaning of work is personal and can vary amongst many factors. These factors can be: financial security, supporting family, helping the team succeed, or self-expression for each individual.

- **Impact:**

    When teams see their efforts contributing to the organization's goals, they feel that their work impacts. Team members believe that their work matters to the company and the customers.