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## Group and team dynamics

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## Group and team dynamics



- Purpose: introduce the basic concepts of team building and the main social and psychological dynamics in a group setting
- Main concepts
  - Team task characteristic
  - Team size
  - Team composition
  - Team development
  - Team roles
  - Team cohesion
  - Multi-cultural teams
  - Social conformity
  - Social loafing & Social facilitation
  - Group decision (creativity, polarization, and groupthink)
  - In-group favouritism
  - Out-group hostility
  - Intergroup contact

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## Team



- Definition: Two or more people interact with each other to work towards a common goal
- Widely used in business organizations
- Types of teams
  - Problem solving teams
  - Self-managed teams
  - Cross functional teams
  - Virtual teams




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## Team task



- Three types of team tasks
  - Additive: team performance is the sum of all individual performance
  - Disjunctive: team performance is the best group member's performance
  - Conjunctive: team performance is the worst group member's performance (i.e., the weakest link of the group)

|        | Member 1 Perf | Member 2 Perf | Member 3 Perf | Member 4 Perf |
|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Team A | 8             | 8             | 8             | 3             |
| Team B | 6             | 6             | 6             | 6             |
| Team C | 4             | 4             | 4             | 10            |

- Which team will perform the best?
  - Additive: Team A, Disjunctive: Team C, Conjunctive: Team B

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## Team size



- What is the optimal group size?
- Answer: Depends!
  - additive and disjunctive tasks: group performance increases with greater size – up to a certain point
  - conjunctive tasks: group performance decreases with greater size




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## Composition



- Better to have similar or dissimilar group members?



- Homogeneous group: less conflict, fast team development, better at coordinated and cooperative tasks
- Heterogeneous group: more conflict, longer team development, better at complex tasks that require creativity

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## Composition



- Why are heterogeneous teams better at creative tasks?
  - Team members can create a bigger and more diverse pool of information and expertise
  - Team members can learn new information and skills through exchange and interaction with other members
  - Diverse information and skills can interact with each other to create novel solutions in a complex situation

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## Team development stages



- Teams usually go through several distinct stages during their life span, where members connect with each other in unique ways
  - Forming: Dependency & Inclusion
  - Storming: Counterdependency & Fight
  - Norming: Trust & Structure
  - Performing: Coordinating & Working




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## Team development stages



|                      | Forming            | Storming                                                      | Norming                                     | Performing                        |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Individual Questions | "How do I fit in?" | "What's my role here?"                                        | "What do the others expect me to do?"       | "How can I best perform my role?" |
| Group Questions      | "Why are we here?" | "Why are we fighting over who's in charge and who does what?" | "Can we agree on roles and work as a team?" | "Can we do the job properly?"     |

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## Team roles



- **Roles:** A set of expected behaviors associated with a given position in a team.
- **Role expectations:** How others believe a team member should act in a given situation.
- **Role Conflict:** A situation in which an individual is confronted by divergent role expectations.
- **Role Ambiguity:** A person is unclear about her role.
- **Role Overload:** Too much is expected of someone.
- **Role Underload:** Too little is expected of someone, and that person feels that they are not contributing




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## Team cohesion



- The degree of attraction people feel toward the team and their motivation to remain members
- Is it always good to have high team cohesion? It depends on the team norms




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## Multi-cultural teams



- [Cross-cultural communication and coordination are challenging](#)
- Increase your cultural intelligence (CQ)
  - CQ-Drive: interest and confidence in functioning effectively in culturally diverse situations
  - CQ- Knowledge: systematic information on how cultures differ (e.g., business and legal system, interpersonal interaction, etc.)
  - CQ-Action: one's behavioral capability to engage in verbal and non-verbal cross-cultural interaction
  - CQ-Strategy: one's willingness and ability to learn from first-hand cross-cultural interactions

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## Social conformity



- In a group, people tend to behave in a way that they believe will be approved by the majority of the group members
  - [An real life behavioral example](#)
- Why do people conform?
  - Using group norm as a reference point to decide appropriate behavior
  - Avoid criticism and exclusion
- How to reduce conformity?
  - Appoint a devil's advocate
  - Provide ways for members to express opinions without being criticized
  - Develop the right group culture

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## Social loafing (free riding)



- Definition: people's tendency to withhold effort when performing a group task
- First demonstration of social loafing:
  - 1 p: 63 KG, 2 ps: 118, 3 ps: 160, 8 ps: 248
- Sucker effect: the tendency to reduce one's efforts when believing that other group members are engaging in social loafing
- Reduce social loafing
  - Smaller groups
  - Specialize tasks
  - Measure individual performance
  - Increase motivation




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## Social facilitation



- Definition: people's tendency to work harder in others' presence
  - E.g., gym buddy system, open office space with glass walls
- Social facilitation is especially evident when one is good at the task
  - E.g., some artists/performers do much better when there is an audience
- Social loafing vs social facilitation
  - Individual task vs. group task
  - Commitment to the group
  - Task meaningfulness
  - Individual team member characteristics
  - Team culture




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## Group decision



- Strengths: more information and knowledge, diversity of views, higher quality decisions, more creative, more acceptance of a solution
- Limitations: time consuming, conformity pressure, ambiguous responsibility.
- Main group decision methods
  - Decision by authority without discussion
  - Expert member
  - Average of members' opinions
  - Decision by authority after discussion
  - Minority control
  - Majority vote
  - Consensus

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## Group decision: creativity




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## Group polarisation



- Definition: the tendency of a group to reach a collective decision that's more extreme than the initial positions of individual members.
  - Risk preference (conservative/risky individual positions leads to even a more conservative/risky group decision)
  - Attitude strength (individual members' general negative/positive attitude towards a target will be magnified after group discussion)
- Why?
  - Social identification and comparison: group members tend to compete with others by being more extreme to show loyalty to the group
  - Confirmation bias: group members receive information from peers that confirm and strengthen their existing position

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## Groupthink



- Members try very hard to agree with one another that they make mistakes that could easily be avoided, symptoms include
  - Overestimation of the group (illusions of invulnerability and morality)
  - Close-mindedness (rationalizations, stereotypes about the outgroup)
  - Pressures toward uniformity (self-censorship, the illusion of unanimity, direct pressure on dissenters).
- Example: the Abilene dilemma
- Example: Challenger launch tragedy




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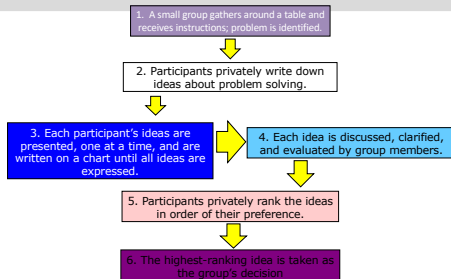
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## Reduce groupthink Nominal Group Technique




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## Intergroup behavior



- What happens when one group encounters another?
- Social Identity Theory & Self-categorization theory
  - We divide people into ingroup members and outgroup members and use group prototypes (fuzzy attribute sets) to represent "us" and "them"
  - Depersonalization (self-stereotyping): when self-categorized, we base our perceptions and behaviors on the group prototype, not our unique characteristics.

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## Intergroup behavior



- Ingroup favouritism: our tendency to favour our ingroup members over outgroup members in evaluation and resource allocation
- Outgroup hostility: our tendency to exhibit hostility toward someone simply because they belong to a different group, especially in a competitive context




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## Intergroup contact theory



- Positive contact with a member of another group (often a negatively stereotyped group) can reduce prejudice toward the whole group
- Optimal conditions of contact
  - Equal status between the groups
  - Common goals
  - Focus on intergroup cooperation
  - The support of authorities, law, or custom

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