

3.19: Summary

In this chapter, we have introduced task, group building, maintenance, and self-centered group member roles. We have described nine role characteristics, as well as five positive and five negative roles of group members. We have defined group norms and considered how people respond to norms, how norms are enforced, and how they may be challenged and changed. We have defined status; analyzed its origins and meaning within a group; and identified risks associated with it. We have examined the features of trust in groups, including ways to cultivate and reinforce it through such measures as self-disclosure. Finally, we have discussed the nature and implications of social media for groups and their members and made recommendations for actions to be taken by members of digital groups.

Review Questions

1. Interpretive Questions

1. If a group member objects to the group's norms, what responsibility do you feel the other members bear for responding to the objection? Under what circumstances might the other members be justified in dismissing the objections out of hand?
2. Competing for status in a group is considered by some people to be a healthy process which causes people to work hard and strive to excel. Given your experience in groups, do you endorse competition for status? Why or why not?
3. What changes do you foresee in the technologies that can be used by digital groups? Which of the changes do you feel most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why?

2. Application Questions

1. How do different types of member behaviors affect a group's behavior according to circumstances? Talk to someone who's part of a group you know something about. Ask for an example of how a dominator, a recognition seeker, or a self-interest pleader helped the group and have the person explain why this positive outcome took place.
2. What risks are associated with status in groups? Interview at least one individual from three groups that you're not a member of yourself. Ask each person to recount a situation in which the status of an individual in the group caused misunderstandings, repressed communication, or brought about other negative outcomes within the group.
3. What are reasonable bounds of self-disclosure in a group? Ask four people to identify a group of which they are members and describe circumstances in which they have found or might find it appropriate to share information within that group about their financial, marital, religious, or political status.

2.1 Individual and Cultural Factors in Employee Performance

How do managers and organizations appropriately select individuals for particular jobs?

Because people enter organizations with preset dispositions, it is important to be able to analyze important individual characteristics, effectively select individuals, and appropriately match them to their jobs. However, this must be done carefully in light of both ethical and legal issues that face managers today.

2.2 Employee Abilities and Skills

How do people with different abilities, skills, and personalities build effective work teams?

Ability refers to one's capacity to respond, whereas motivation refers to one's desire to respond. Abilities can be divided into mental abilities and physical abilities. Personality represents a stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determines the psychological behavior of people.

Personality development is influenced by several factors, including physiological, cultural, family and group, role, and situational determinants.

2.3 Personality: An Introduction

How do managers and employees deal effectively with individual differences in the workplace? Self-esteem represents opinions and beliefs concerning one's self and one's self-worth.

Locus of control is a tendency for people to attribute the events affecting their lives either to their own actions (referred to as internal locus of control) or to external forces (referred to as external locus of control).

2.4 Personality and Work Behavior

How can organizations foster a work environment that allows employees an opportunity to develop and grow?

Authoritarianism represents an individual's orientation toward authority and is characterized by an overriding conviction that it is appropriate for there to be clear status and power differences between people.

2.5 Personality and Organization: A Basic Conflict?

How do managers know how to get the best from each employee?

Dogmatism refers to a cognitive style characterized by closed-mindedness and inflexibility.

The basic incongruity thesis asserts that individuals and organizations exist in a constant state of conflict because each has different goals and expectations from the other. Employees want organizations to provide more autonomy and meaningful work, while organizations want employees to be more predictable, stable, and dependable.

2.6 Personal Values and Ethics

What is the role of ethical behavior in managerial actions?

A value is an enduring belief that one specific mode of conduct or end-state is preferable to others. Instrumental values are beliefs concerning the most appropriate ways to pursue end-states, whereas terminal values are beliefs concerning the most desirable end-states themselves.

Ethics are important to individuals because they serve as (1) standards of behavior for determining a correct course of action, (2) guidelines for decision-making and conflict resolution, and (3) influences on employee motivation. The work ethic refers to someone's belief that hard work and commitment to a task are both ends in themselves and means to future rewards.

2.7 Cultural Differences

How do you manage and do business with people from different cultures?

Culture refers to the collective mental programming of a group or people that distinguishes them from others. Culture (1) is shared by the members of the group, (2) is passed on from older members to younger members, and (3) shapes our view of the world. Six dimensions of culture can be identified: (1) how people see themselves, (2) how people see nature, (3) how people approach interpersonal relationships, (4) how people view activity and achievement, (5) how people view time, and (6) how people view space.

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