

Team performance assessment and Conflict resolution

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is more likely to occur when people with different beliefs and backgrounds, work together. Businesses will not be able to achieve their goal if employees fail to work together in teams. Managers should be familiar with the causes of conflict in order to develop relevant strategies on how to deal with conflict in the workplace.



Overview

TOPIC	CONTENT	CONTENT DETAILS FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
Team Performance assessment & Conflict management	<p>TEAM PERFORMANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team criteria • Characteristics for successful teams. • Stages of team development • The importance of team dynamics theories in understanding team performance. • The nature of each team dynamic theory <p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of a conflict • Causes of conflict in the workplace • Conflict resolution techniques/ steps/ procedures • Definition of a grievance • Correct procedures to deal with grievances. • Ways/strategies of dealing with difficult people • Ways/strategies of dealing with difficult personalities. 	<p>TEAM WORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline/ Describe/ Discuss the criteria for successful team performance e.g. interpersonal attitudes and behaviours, shared values, communication, etc. • Describe/Discuss the characteristics for a successful team • Identify/ Explain/ Discuss the stages of team development, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forming ○ Storming ○ Norming ○ Performing ○ Adjourning • Elaborate on the importance of team-dynamic theories in improving team performance • Explain/Describe the nature of each team dynamic theory. <p>CONFLICT RESOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define/Explain the meaning of conflict. • Identify/Discuss causes of conflict from given scenarios/case studies. • Explain/Apply conflict resolution techniques (steps and procedures). • Apply these steps from given scenarios • Define/Explain the meaning of grievance. • Explain the differences between conflict and a grievance. • Discuss/Explain the correct procedures to deal with grievances. • Suggest different ways/strategies of dealing with difficult people (personalities).

8.1 Key concepts

These definitions will help you understand the meaning of key Business Studies concepts that are used in this chapter

Term	Definition
Team	Group of people who work together to achieve a common goal.
Conflict	A disagreement/a clash of opinions in the workplace.
Task/Work	Activity/function performed by an individual or team members.
Teamwork	Interactions with team members to achieve a common goal.
Team dynamics	A way in which team members work together in a group.
Forming	Team members get to know each other and accept their roles in the team.
Storming	Team members confront each other with their different ideas.
Norming	Team members accept each other and set common goals and values for the team.
Performing	Teams are achieving their goals.
Adjourning	Team members have to leave a team after completion of the tasks.
Team dynamic theories	Assist to allocate tasks according to the roles of individual members.
Grievance	A formal complaint laid by an employee when he/she feels that he/she has been ill-treated by the employer.
Co-operation/ Collaboration	Willingness to co-operate in the team to achieve objectives.

8.2 Characteristics and team criteria for successful team



ACTIVITY 1

1.1 Outline the characteristics of a successful team

(8)

Answers to the activity 1.1

Characteristics of a successful team

- Clear objectives/goals✓ which will make the business more productive. ✓
- An openness✓ which will resolve conflict quicker. ✓
- Mutual respect✓ which will reduce conflict in the team. ✓
- Support and trust each other✓ so they will be loyal and reliable. ✓
- Good interpersonal relationships, ✓ which will lead to job satisfaction. ✓
- Successful teams review team's progress✓ and rectify their mistakes and align themselves to the goals. ✓

Max (8)

Criteria for assessing for team performance

CRITERIA	EXPLANATION
Interpersonal attitudes and behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members have a positive attitude of support and motivation towards each other. • Good/Sound interpersonal relationships will ensure job satisfaction/ increase productivity of the team. • Members are committed/ passionate towards achieving common goals/objectives.
Shared values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows loyalty/respect/trust towards team members despite differences. • Respect the knowledge/skills of other members.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear set of processes/procedures for team work ensures that every team member understands his/her role. • Ability to communicate well and make quick decisions. • Communicates with team members' and allows for feedback. • Encourages discussion about the problem so that solutions can be found. • Continuous review of team progress ensures that team members can rectify mistakes/act pro-actively to ensure that goals/targets are reached.
Co-operation/Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined realistic goals are set; so that all members know exactly what is to be accomplished. • Willingness to co-operate as a unit to achieve team objectives. • Agree on methods/ways to get the job done effectively without wasting time on conflict resolution. • All members take part in decision making.



Activity 2

2.1 Discuss the following criteria for assessing successful team performance:

2.1.1 Interpersonal attitude and behaviour (4)

2.1.2 Communication (4)

Answers to the activity 2

2.1.1 Interpersonal attitude and behaviour

- Members have a positive attitude of support✓ towards each other. ✓
- Good/Sound interpersonal relationships✓ will ensure job satisfaction/increase productivity of the team. ✓
- Members are committed/passionate✓ towards achieving a common goal/objective. ✓
- Team leader acknowledges/gives credit to members✓ for positive contributions. ✓
- Team members must respect each other's✓ skills and knowledge. ✓

Max (4)

2.1.2 Communication

- A clear set of processes/procedures for team work✓, ensures that every team member understands his/her role. ✓
- Effective communication between team members✓ can lead to quick decisions. ✓
- Quality feedback✓ improves the morale of the team. ✓
- Open communication✓ allows for effective solutions to problems. ✓
- Continuous review of team progress✓ ensures that team members can rectify mistakes/act pro-actively to ensure that goals/targets are reached. ✓

Max (4)

8.3 Stages of team development

Forming

- In this stage, team members get to know each other and accept their roles in the team.
- This is a comfortable stage to be in.
- People focus on being busy with routines, such as team organisation e.g. who does what, when to meet each other

Storming

- At this stage, there is conflict because they confront each other with their ideas.
- Teams go through a period of unease/conflict after formation.
- Different ideas from team members will compete for consideration.
- Team members open up to each other and confront each other's ideas/perspectives.

Norming

- Team members accept each other and set common goals and values for the team.
- Team members form agreement and consensus.
- Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted.
- Processes, working style and respect develops.

Performing

- In this stage, the teams are achieving their goals.
- Team members are aware of strategies and aims of the team.
- They have direction without interference from the leader.
- Leaders delegate and oversee the processes and procedures.

Mourning/Adjourning

- In this stage, team members have to leave a team and prepare themselves for the next team.
- The focus is on the completion of the task/ending the project.
- Breaking up the team may be traumatic as team members may find it difficult to perform as individuals once again.
- All tasks need to be completed before the team finally dissolves.



Activity 3

3.1 Identify the stages of team development illustrated in EACH of the following scenarios.

- 3.1.1 Team members have differences of opinion but resolve them quickly in order to achieve their goals.
- 3.1.2 Team members are not working together as they are competing for the team leader's position.
- 3.1.3 Teams work together are together to achieve a goal.
- 3.1.4 Teams must first complete the task before they dissolve. (8)

Answers to the activity 3

- 3.1.1 Norming √√
- 3.1.2 Storming √√
- 3.1.3 Performing √√
- 3.1.4 Mourning/Adjourning √√

Max (8)

8.4 Importance of team dynamics theories in improving team performance

- Team dynamic theories explain how effective teams work/operate.
- Businesses are able to allocate tasks according to the roles of team members.
- Team members with similar strengths may compete for team tasks/ responsibilities that best suit their abilities/competencies.
- Conflict may be minimised when team members perform different roles.

8.5 Causes of conflict/Reasons for conflict

- Personal differences/Different personalities
- Poor communication
- Competition
- Ignoring rules/procedures
- Poor organization/leadership/administrative procedures and systems
- Workload and stress/Unrealistic expectation
- Confusion about scheduling and deadlines
- Unclear responsibilities
- Distracted by personal objectives
- Lack of/Insufficient resources
- Constant changes



Activity 4

Read the scenario below and answer the question that follows.

Cynthia is a project manager for a construction company. Her employees are not satisfied about shortage of resources and unfair workloads. Most employees are frustrated by poor leadership. Stress level run high because of personal differences.

- 4.1 Identify FOUR possible causes of conflict from the scenario above. (4)
- 4.2 Discuss the causes of conflict identified in QUESTION 4.1 (8)

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY 4

4.1 Possible causes of conflict from the scenario

- Shortage of resources ✓
- Unfair workloads ✓
- Poor leadership ✓
- Personal differences ✓

(4x1) (4)

4.2 Discussion of the above mentioned FOUR causes

Shortage of resources

- Team members may fight over the limited resources available ✓ to accomplish their/the team's tasks. ✓

Unfair workloads

- Some employees may depend on their colleagues ✓ to help them to complete their work. ✓
- Some employees may be given more work than others.

Poor leadership

- If there are not enough guidelines for team members ✓, they will be unorganized/uncoordinated in their work. ✓

Personal differences

- Conflict is inevitable when people from different backgrounds/cultures/values races/gender ✓ work in the same environment. ✓

Max (8)

Additional notes on the causes of conflict

CAUSES OF CONFLICT	EXPLANATION
Poor communication	Poor communication can lead to all types of misunderstanding and can become very destructive.
Competition	Team members who always lose when competing, may feel incompetent/ demotivated and may not complete their tasks/reach deadlines.
Ignoring rules/procedures	Employees who do not follow the rules/procedures can cause conflict as tasks may not be performed according to the business specification.
Confusion about scheduling and deadlines	Individual deadlines and the team schedules that are not clearly communicated/are not easily available can cause confusion.
Unclear responsibilities	They may not effectively perform their task as expected.
Distracted by personal objectives	They may lose focus of the task at hand and distract others from performing their tasks effectively
Constant changes	People may have less patience and fail to understand the reasons for change

8.6 Conflict resolution steps/techniques

- Acknowledge that there is conflict in the workplace.
- Identify the cause of the conflict/Evaluate the situation objectively.
- Make intentions for intervention clear, so that parties involved may feel at ease.
- Arrange a meeting between the conflicting parties and management.
- Blame shifting should be avoided and joint team solutions must be found.
- Devise/Suggest strategies to solve the conflict.
- Parties must agree on the best solution.
- Direct conflicting parties towards finding/focusing on solutions.
- Select the appropriate solution and implement it.
- Expertise on handling conflict may be sourced from outside the business.

8.7 Procedure for dealing with grievances in the workplace

- An unhappy employee must verbally report the incident/grievance to his supervisor/manager, who needs to resolve it within 3 to 5 working days.
- Should the employee and supervisor not be able to resolve the grievance, the employee may take it to the next level of management.
- The employee may move to a more formal process where the grievance must be lodged in writing/completes a business grievance form.
- The employees should receive a written reply in response to the written grievance.
- A grievance hearing/meeting must be held with all relevant parties present.
- Minutes of the meeting must be recorded and any resolution passed must be recorded on the formal grievance form.
- Should the employee not be satisfied, then he could refer the matter to the highest level of management.
- Top management should arrange a meeting with all relevant parties concerned.
- Minutes of this meeting should be filed/recorded and the outcome/decision must be recorded on the formal grievance form.
- Should the employee still not be satisfied, he may refer the matter to the CCMA who will make a final decision on the matter.



Do not confuse 'conflict resolution procedures' with 'grievance procedures' and 'steps in problem solving'.

8.8 Ways to deal with difficult people

- Get perspective from others who have experienced the same kind of situation to be able to understand the difficult employee.
- Act pro-actively if possible, as a staff/personnel problem is part of a manager's responsibilities.
- Regular meetings with supervisors/departmental heads should help to identify difficult/problem behaviour.
- Ask someone in authority for their input into the situation.
- Identify the type of personality which is creating the problem.
- Meet privately with difficult employees, so that there are no distractions from other employees/issues.
- Make your intentions and reasons for your actions known so that they will feel at ease.
- Employees should be told what specific behaviours are acceptable by giving details about what is wrong/unacceptable and also an opportunity to explain their behaviour.
- A deadline should be set for improving bad/difficult behaviour.
- The deadline date should be discussed with the employee and his/her progress should be monitored/assessed prior to the deadline.
- Guidelines for improvement should be given.
- Do not judge the employee but try to understand him/her/Understand the person's intentions and why they react in a certain way.
- Keep communication channels open and encourage employees to communicate their grievances to management.
- Build rapport/sound relations by re-establishing personal connection with colleagues, instead of relying on e-mails/messaging/social media.
- Help difficult employees to be realistic about the task at hand.
- Remain calm and in control of the situation to get the person(s) to collaborate.
- Treat people with respect, irrespective of whether they are capable/competent or not.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to ignore but monitor a difficult person.
- Identify and provide an appropriate support program to address areas of weakness.

Ways to deal with difficult personalities

PERSONALITY	STRATEGY
Complainer	Listen to the complaints but do not acknowledge them. Interrupt the situation/move to the problem-solving process as soon as possible.
Indecisive	Guide them through alternatives. Stay in control and emphasise the importance of making a decision.
Over-agree	Be firm and do not let them make promises that they cannot keep. Follow up on their actions.
Negative	Be firm with them and do not let them draw you into their negativity. Listen to them but do not agree with them.
Expert	Be firm and assertive. Do not accuse them of being incorrect and do not get caught in their game. Know your facts.
Quiet	Do not fill their silence with words. Wait for their response. Prompt them through the process so that they give input. Restrict the time of the discussion.
Aggressive	Allow them time to speak and blow off some steam/aggressiveness. Be firm, but do not confront them. Do not allow them to be hostile towards others.



Activity 5

Read the examples of dealing with difficult people in Column B and match these with Column A.

COLUMN A		COLUMN B	
5.1	Quiet	A	Lawrence gets very frustrated as Jacob does not provide inputs during meetings, however he emphasizes the importance of solving the problem
5.2	Aggressive	B	Justice constantly interrupts Cynthia when she starts to complain and moves her back to the problem-solving process
5.3	Indecisive	C	James is very firm and does not let Sipho's bad attitude affect him
5.4	Complainer	D	Clinton waits for John to calm down and does not allow him to bad-mouth others
5.5	Negative	E	Clara is very careful not to fill Linnie's silence words and waits for her response.

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY 5

- 5.1 E✓✓
 5.2 D✓✓
 5.3 A✓✓
 5.4 B✓✓
 5.5 C✓✓

(5x2) (10)