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A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEAM FORMATION ON ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE IN MANAGEMENT GAMES

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ABSTRACT

In this study of teams formed by self-selection versus being appointed, the performance of appointed teams is statistically higher than self-selected teams. Two of 14 attitudinal measures are statistically higher for the self-selected teams.

PURPOSE

This paper reports on a study of attitudes and performance by game players formed into teams in two different methods. One group of students was assigned based on the skills believed necessary for successful game play. A second group of students was permitted to form their own teams based on personal preference. This study may provide some useful insights regarding the appropriate method of team Formation in game play.

EXPERIMENT

Four classes of the Business Policy course at a mid-atlantic comprehensive regional university were involved in this research. Two of these classes were taught by instructor A and two were taught by instructor B. Each of the four classes played a management game that represented 25 to 30 percent of the course grade. Decisions covered a simulated three year period of time. All four classes played the two product Small Kitchen Electrical Appliance version of MANSYM [11]. Where possible, teams included three members. Teams in one section taught by each instructor were permitted to select their own team members. Teams in the other section for each instructor were appointed by the instructor.

The assigned teams were assigned to ensure a mix of majors, a mix of grade point averages, and a mix of sexes in that order. The self-selected teams were free to select members as they wished. Since 10 of the 18 self-selected teams were composed of a single major, the students major dominated his/her preference.

Performance (productivity) data included grade on the game and return on equity (ROE). The additional questionnaire was taken from the Raid [10] and Boseman [1] studies. Attitudinal data included attitudes toward the instructor and the course in addition, student perceptions of interest were gathered. Further, data on the fulfillment of course objectives were gathered. Finally data on hours devoted to the course were gathered. The attitudinal questionnaire was turned in after the course was over. The total sample size was 114; 55 in assigned teams and 59 in self-selected teams.

HYPOTHESIS

The authors review of the literature suggests that self-selected teams will have a more favorable attitude and greater cohesiveness. It suggests that skill deficiencies on self-selected teams will not be overcome by greater cohesiveness. Thus it is hypothesized that appointed teams

will perform better and that self-selected teams will have more favorable attitudes. This study will use the .05 level of significance.

COMPARABILITY OF GROUPS

Statistical analysis showed that the demographic characteristics of each of the four sections were similar. Moreover, the demographic characteristics of the students on assigned teams were similar to the characteristics of students on the self-selected teams. The demographic variables checked were age, GPA, sex, major, and marital status.

The hours devoted to the various parts of the course as well as absences were obtained and statistically analyzed and no statistically significant differences were found. It is concluded that the two groups are comparable.

RESULTS

Both of the measures of performance are significantly higher for the appointed teams. The average ROE for appointed teams is 14.77 and for self-selected is 13.13. This difference is statistically significant at .025. The game grades for appointed and self-selected teams are 88.34 and 85.25. This difference is statistically significant at .036.

The attitudinal instrument included six questions on attitudes toward the course and the instructor. No statistically significant differences existed between the two groups on any of these questions. The instrument also included attitudes about the fulfillment of course objectives. Two of the eight objectives show statistically significant differences in the hypothesized direction. The self-selected students felt that the objectives of: 1) the ability to apply concepts and techniques of management and 2) an understanding of the functions of managers, were fulfilled to a greater degree than appointed students.

CONCLUSIONS

Appointed teams perform better than self-selected teams in these circumstances. With two significant differences out of 14 it is different to infer that self-selected teams have more favorable attitudes.

REFERENCES

References will be furnished upon request.